



The *Lion* of St. Mark's

JANUARY 2005

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A Retirement and a New Appointment

Recently Mary Schultz has found it necessary for health reasons to announce her retirement on December 31 from the position of Youth and Family Ministry Coordinator focusing on education. She has given 1½ years of dedicated and very capable service to St. Mark's in that capacity. We also offer thanks to God for Mary's prior years of volunteer work in a number of areas. She will be continuing to serve with enthusiasm wherever her health

Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Education and taught in a multicultural urban setting in Boynton Beach Florida for 15 years. She also has service in one of the Lutheran parishes there in youth ministry, Christian education, and Bible study leadership. She is of gentle but determined personality, and evinces a deep Christian commitment. Our congregational leadership is pleased to recommend her and looks forward to her service.

Alice Alt continues to serve in the other half of the Youth and Family Ministry Coordinator's position, and we anticipate that Sharon and Alice will make a fine team. Each has strengths that complement the other. In the past year, Sharon, Mary, and Alice have all worked together in Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Bible study, and Child in Our Hand projects, and so we anticipate a speedy and smooth transition in leadership.

permits. Mary has been very diligent in curriculum development and preparing materials for our Sunday School teachers. She has been a strong proponent of our Milestone Ministry developments through the Child in Our Hands emphasis. Her work will continue to bear fruit in the years to come.

The Mutual Ministry Committee has acted speedily to confirm a candidate to succeed Mary in the position. Sharon Comini has accepted the nomination and will begin on January 3, 2005. Sharon and her husband Eric and children have been members of St. Mark's for a year, coming to us from their previous residence in Florida. Eric is a teacher in the Montoursville Schools, and the family resides in that town. Sharon holds both

COUNCIL UPDATE

A Special Assembly of the St. Mark's congregation met Sunday, December 12, following the 10:30 service. The order of business was the presentation of the budget for the calendar year 2005, explained by treasurer Barb Thomas and approved by a voice vote. The next scheduled council meeting will be on Monday, January 17 at 7:30 PM.

MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT RETREAT

"The Five Love Languages"
Mark Basinger, LCSW - Retreat Leader

Friday, Jan. 28th 7 - 9 PM
Saturday, Jan. 29th 9AM - 3PM

Cost: \$10 per couple
Christ Lutheran Church, 100 S. 3rd St., Lewisburg
To register, call 570-322-7873

The Kids' Clothes Closet

will receive 8 scarves, 34 hats, 51 pairs of gloves and 6 pairs of socks. This clothing will be given to needy children within the community. The Williamsport Police Department will receive 35 Teddy bears to distribute to children during traumatic times. A very special thank you to all!

USED EYEGLASS COLLECTION POSTPONED

The North Central Sight Services, Inc. Annual Eyeglass Collection is being postponed from January 2005 until the spring of 2005. You are welcome to bring your used eyeglasses, hearing aids, and old jewelry, anytime during the year, to North Central Sight Services, Inc., 901 Memorial Avenue, Williamsport. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Watch future newsletters for details on the spring eyeglass collection.

"Give the Gift of Sight"
Your support is greatly appreciated.

Lunch 'N' Fellowship

Wednesday, Jan. 19th at 12:00 noon
Pork, sauerkraut & mashed potatoes will be provided. Bring a friend and a dish to share along with your own table service.



MILESTONES

On Dec. 12th, Bibles were presented to these third graders:

Haley Miller	Stephen Boone
Riley Weber	Emily Newcomer
Devin Owen	Christina Comini

On Dec. 19th, a key chain bearing Luther's seal was presented to this new driver:

Jeremy Bittner

MILESTONES

The term "milestone" keeps popping up in conversations around St. Mark's these days. It stems from our participation in the Child in Our Hand workshops over the past several years that have helped us to realize just how important it is to bind together Sunday worship and study to the weekday experience of the life of the faith at home. Milestones are markers along life's way, significant moments that need to be recognized, celebrated, and carried on so that their benefits help to shape all other areas of life.

Some Milestones are things that we have been doing for a long time, such as celebrating Holy Baptism. These things we continue and augment by suggesting other resources. We added to the recent Milestone of giving of a Bible to Third Graders by asking parents, grandparents, baptismal sponsors, etc. to add prayers, messages, and photos to the Bible, underline favorite passages, to the end that the Bible is a personalized treasure for the student. They were very pleased with the gift, and spent considerable time excitedly reading the messages from their families aloud to the Pastor.

A newly-identified milestone is the blessing of young driver and keys as a teenager begins the driving permit process. Prayers are offered for the youth, the family, and the whole community! In this milestone we recognize that the matter of a new driver is not only a civil matter, but also a matter of responsible stewardship.

This spring, we hope to develop another milestone, having to do with wedding anniversaries. We're also very glad to welcome folks who would like to help develop this and other milestone events. The Council has officially recognized the Milestone Ministry Task Force, and it is ready to receive suggestions or assistance. Please contact one of the members such as Alice Alt, Bob and Mary Schultz, Sharon and Eric Comini, Stephanie Fortin, Vicki Haussmann, or the Pastor.

A New Milestone Marked

One of the very important days in the lives of young persons is the granting of the driver's learning permit and the attendant family anxiety as responsibility is learned and earned. On December 19, Jeremy Bittner became the first of our youth to mark a new Milestone that we are establishing, the Blessing of the Young Driver and Car Keys. A key chain that bears Luther's seal was given to Jeremy as a reminder that the gifts which God continues to grant to us day after day in every place we travel must be exercised with responsibility to God and to all the people around us. The keys that some see as a sign only of their independence we acknowledge as signs of our interdependence and responsibility. When you see him, please do express your encouragement to Jeremy, and remind him that you have added him to your prayers during this season of learning.

(We might also pray for patience and wise discernment on the part of his parents, Scott and Brenda!)

FROM THRIVENT FINANCIAL FOR LUTHERANS

Everybody Wins In Charitable Giving

The Bible reminds us that God loves cheerful givers. There is a spiritual blessing in honoring God in heartfelt giving (2 Corinthians 9:6-8). As 2004 draws to a close, each of us has an opportunity to review our giving to the Lord this year.

While giving is a very personal decision, there may be significant tax benefits for yourself and your family by including this congregation and other institutions of our church (such as colleges, Bible camps and Lutheran social ministry organizations) in your giving plans this year. In addition to outright gifts of cash, there are many ways to make a gift in support of the Lutheran faith. These options include: will or trust bequests; beneficiary designation gifts (life insurance, annuities, trusts, IRAs or other legal contracts), life insurance gifts, investment gifts, gift annuities, traditional IRAs, charitable remainder trusts and more.

You don't need to be wealthy to take advantage of these potentially tax-advantaged giving means. However, you should always consult with legal and tax experts for advice before you put a plan into action or make a charitable gift.

Keith Wood, a financial associate with Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, together with a team of other financial professionals, can help you understand the variety of charitable giving techniques that are available. To ask for a free, no-obligation meeting, call (570) 323-9727. You will receive valuable information as you determine which option best meets your specific charitable giving needs.

Remember, everybody wins in charitable giving.

Neither Thrivent Financial for Lutherans nor its respective financial associates and employees provide legal or tax advice. For complete details, consult with your tax advisor or attorney. Registered Representative for securities offered through Thrivent Investment Management Inc., 625 Fourth Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415-1665, 1-800-THRIVENT (800-847-4836) a wholly owned subsidiary of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. Member NASD. Member SIPC.

A Time for Thoughtful Remembrance

The Advent-Christmas-Epiphany season is a happy and exciting time, but it can also be sad and stressful for many persons. The world goes rushing by while one may be thinking about Christmas seasons past with loved ones who have since died. It is appropriate that we take time to remember, whether the sadness you feel is one month old or 10 years past. Plan to come to the **Service of Remembrance at 7:00 P.M. on Twelfth Night, Wednesday, January 5, 2005 in the Nave.** In the course of the Holy Communion, the name of loved ones whom you nominate will be read aloud, and you will have opportunity to light a candle on the Memory Tree. You will also receive a keepsake of the event to hang at home. The mementos are again being crafted by John Burkholder. Please **phone the church office at 323-4619** with the name of the person you wish to remember.



Even if you do not have a specific person that you wish to name this time, by all means come and support your brothers and sisters in the faith in this tender and meaningful event. It can be of great help to gather for God's meal of consolation, and also to receive the encouragement and support of friends and fellow members of the body of Christ. This evening's service has become another of our much-appreciated Milestone events.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY NEWS

"A Time for Conversation in Response to the Report of the Task Force on Sexuality"

The West Branch Conference,
 Sunday, January 30, 2005
 3:00 - 5:00 PM
 Messiah Lutheran Church
 South Williamsport

Pastors, rostered leaders, and congregational members of the West Branch Conference are invited to a time of conversation to be held on Sunday, January 30, for the expressed purpose of responding to the report of the ELCA Task Force on Sexuality. Our Synod Council members will be present to listen to our conversation so that they may report to the Synod Council which will meet on Saturday, February 12.

It is the intention of Bishop Main and the Synod Council to formulate a response to the Church Council which, in turn, must develop specific recommendations to the Churchwide Assembly as to what should be the church's response concerning the "Report and Recommendations" of the Task Force. The report will be available after January 13 on the ELCA website (www.elca.org).

DIAL - A - DEVOTION

Have you called yet?

The number is 322-5762.

It's available 24 hours a day. Devotions are three minutes or less, change each weekday and once on the weekend, and are designed to lift your spirits and help you to have "A Closer Walk with God."

The devotionalists for January include:

1/3-9 Rev. Nessie Whaley

1/10-16 Rev. Joe Harris

Listen today and tell others about this ministry!



We need YOU!

SHEPHERD OF THE STREETS

ⓓⓓ YOU KNOW..... *By Dr. J. Morris Smith*

Did you know that 55% of Williamsport's residents live in rental units and 35.2% of those renters live below the poverty level. The median total family income in Lycoming County is \$34,016 and that is 18% lower than the average for this state. The people most negatively effected are the children. According to the State Department of Education, 24.7% of the children in Lycoming County live below the poverty level. They do not perform as well in school and exhibit greater behavioral problems than children of homeowner families. *(Taken from a recent letter from Jerry Falco, Exec. Dir. for Williamsport/ Lycoming Habitat for Humanity, Inc.)*

Did you know that the Shepherd of the Streets receives about 20 calls per week from people being evicted for lack of ability to pay their rent? Did you know that there is no place for us to put evicted families beyond a few days in a motel.....no place for them to recover or learn beyond what they currently know, or begin to overcome and move out of the treadmill of loss?

One of the ways we are able to reach out to help the 250+ people who come to our office each month is with personal hygiene items and bedding that you so generously donate. Items we use and continue to need are:

Items for Babies:

baby diapers (all sizes)
 baby powder, baby oil, baby shampoo

Items for Men and/or Women...All in regular sizes

Deodorant, shampoo, razors, shaving cream, soap, toothpaste & toothbrushes, feminine products, paper towels, toilet tissue, wash cloths, bath towels, good used bedding: blankets (urgently needed), sheets, and pillowcases.

Bins will be provided in the Narthex for your donations.



Thank you to all who have assisted in worship leadership in recent months and who continue to serve:

Altar Guild

Deb Buckman
 Judy Fortin
 Beverly Hieber
 Shirley Hill
 Ray & Cindy Huff
 Jane Kline
 Jean Knowlden
 Marian Larson
 Roxie Larson
 Lucille Weaver

Greeters

Mary & Donald Armstrong
 Dottie Bingaman
 Doris Brown
 Marie & Hugh Byerly
 Kitty & Cecil Calvert
 Elizabeth Chrisman
 Ruth Ditchfield
 Beatrice Doebler
 Walter Doebler
 Blanche & Wilson Doebler
 Lois & Kenneth Goldy
 Shirley & Bill Hill
 John & Gail Hoffman
 Shirley Kinney
 Jackie Kinney
 Ernie, Nancy, Jamie & Sara Larson
 Helen Ochs
 Michael Ochs
 William & Prudence Poff
 Becky Miller Pryor
 Ruth & John Rees
 Helen & Tom Schramm
 Robert & Mary Schultz
 Marguerite & Robert Smith

Pam, Mike, Ryan, Katlin & Sean Jensen
 Elda Zeigler
 Brenda, Scott & Jeremiah Bittner
 Shirley Campbell
 Cathy Fenderson
 Tim & Deborah Maggs
 Michele, Robert & Hannah Ramsauer
 Norma Prato
 Bobbie Yetsko
 Ethel Chambers
 Ernestine Doane
 Donna Boston
 Lillian Skeeby
 Catherine & Larry Lundy
 Annabel Smith
 Carl & Lucille Weaver
 Carol, Ashley & Caitlin Butters
 Deb Holmes
 Jane Angle
 Phyllis Holmes
 Creighton & Christine MacGill
 June & Art Decker
 James & Elizabeth Kreider
 Beverly & Carl Hieber
 Carol McMorris
 Kay Crane
 Carol & Bill Confer
 Louise Kneeder
 Ray & Cindy Huff
 Alona Hopley
 Ann Kuntz
 Tait, Tali & Taigen Thorne
 Russ & Lois Smith
 Elsie Sechler
 Gladys Knauss
 Bonita Crossley
 Annabel Smith
 Randy, Jeanette, Janelle, & Owen Lukens
 Connie Shaible
 Barron & Darla Zimmers
 Donna & Gary Clark
 Henrietta Tyson
 Linda Rosini
 Barb McCullough
 Marion and Bill Waldeisen
 Gene & Reba Jacobs
 Henry Formwalt
 Aletha & Bob Swartz
 Shirley & Frank Vognet
 Ruth Burkholder
 Mary & Don Armstrong

Ushers

Charles Fortin
 Carl Hieber
 Larry Lundy
 Elsie Sechler
 Ken Shafranko
 Louise Kneeder
 Roxie Larson
 Lucille Weaver
 Harold Hershberger
 Brenda Gair
 Carl Albright
 John MacMinn
 Frank Vognet
 Donna Clark
 Frank Doebler
 Robert Swartz
 Shirley Campbell
 Mike & Marc Kinney
 Robert McCullough
 Richard Miller
 Robert Miller
 William Poff
 Robert Schultz
 Phil Thomas
 William Waldeisen
 Dottie Bingaman
 Jack Burkholder
 Cindy Huff
 Irma Logan
 Connie Shaible
 Bobbie Yetsko
 Norma Prato

Acolytes

Jeremy Bittner
 Caitlin Butters
 Ashley Campbell
 Brett Campbell
 Lauren Campbell
 Stephen Dewar
 David Elkin
 Derek Gilbert
 Seth Greninger
 Matthew Hartsock
 Nick Hessert
 Declan Jones
 Marc Kinney
 Alex Larson
 Aric Larson
 Jamie Larson
 Sara Larson
 Janelle Lukens
 Emily Satijka
 Tait Thorne
 Tali Thorne
 Taigen Thorne

Peter Zeigler
 Andrew Zeigler

Assisting Minister

Alice Alt
 Matt Alt
 Lou DeSeau
 Andrew Haussman
 Janet Hessert
 Becky Miller Pryor
 Ray Huff
 Susie Burd Hill
 Tim Maggs
 James Buckman
 Kathy Dancho
 Joyce Hershberger
 Ray Huff
 Ken Shafranko
 Philip Thomas
 Dan Zeigler

Lectors

Alice Alt
 Jeffrey Byerly
 Lou DeSeau
 Andrew Haussmann
 Vicki Haussmann
 Bernadette Jones
 Declan Jones
 Jane Kline
 Lou Kolb
 Becky Miller Pryor
 Ruth Rees
 Marion Waldeisen
 Nick Buckman
 Kathy Dancho
 Gregg Dancho
 Ray Huff
 Bernadette Jones
 Phil Thomas
 Ruth Rees
 Jeremy Bittner
 Joyce Hershberger
 Audrey Albright
 Barron Zimmers
 Ralph Zeigler Jr.
 Dot Berndt
 Gary Weber
 Anne Rhodes
 Donna Clark
 Donna Boston
 Lisa Weaver
 Stephanie Fortin
 Scott Bittner

(continued on next page)

Lectors (continued)

Harold Hershberger
 Carl Weaver
 Art Decker
 Joe Peluso

Communion Assistants

Christina Ciesielski
 Lou DeSeau
 Bob & Mary Schultz
 Scott & Brenda Bittner
 Gary Weber
 Walt Doebler
 Connie Shaible
 Jane Larson
 Janet Hessert
 Paul & Jane Zimmerer
 Donna Elkin
 Henry Fornwalt
 Gregg & Kathy Dancho
 Dottie Burd
 Denny Logan
 Jim & Deb Buckman
 Ken & Beth Shafranko
 Carl & Lucille Weaver

Nursery

Brenda Bittner
 Vicki Haussmann
 Vicki Hospes
 Susan & Jim Newcomer
 Annette & Joe Peluso
 Jennifer & Rick Robertson
 Holly, Tait, Tali, and Taigen Thorne
 Karen Boone
 Deb Buckman
 Renee & Andrea Hinds
 Lycoming College Girls
 Mike & Pam Jensen
 Dr. Larry & Emily Satifka
 Matt & Wanda Fortin
 Shelby & Gary Weber
 Alice & Matt Alt

Flower Delivery

Ralph & Lou Ann Zeigler
 Louise & Richard Kneedler
 Nancy Bieber
 Merritt Hunt
 Catherine & Larry Lundy
 Ann Kuntz
 Ernestine Doane
 Carl & Audrey Albright
 Pam & Michael Jensen

Beth & Ken Shafranko
 Jane Kline
 Tim & Deborah Maggs
 Gary & Donna Clark
 Blanche & Wilson Doebler
 Carl & Lucille Weaver
 Shirley & Jackie Kinney
 Scott & Brenda Bittner
 Lois & Russell Smith
 Henry & Harriet Fornwalt
 Randy & Jeanette Lukens
 Alice & Matt Alt
 Jim & Deb Buckman
 Janet & Buddy Hessert
 Doris Brown
 Irma Logan
 Roxie Larson
 Shirley Campbell
 Cathy Fenderson
 Shirley & Bill Hill
 Connie Shaible
 Bill & Prudy Poff
 Susan Baker
 Marie & Hugh Byerly
 Jane Angle
 Tracy & David Heaps
 Bud & Joyce Hershberger
 John & Renee Hinds
 Beverly & Carl Hieber
 Nancy & Ernie Larson
 Ernestine Doane
 Dot Berndt
 Dottie Burd
 Beulah Wade
 Matthew & Wanda Fortin
 Robert & Michele Ramsauer
 Charles & Judy Fortin
 Carol & Bill Confer
 Deb & Jim Buckman

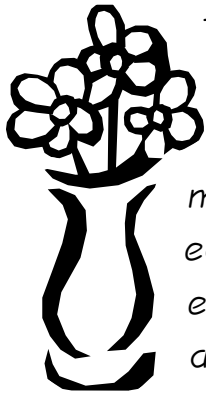
Hospitality

Kitty Calvert
 Jackie Kinney
 Marie Byerly
 Becky Miller Pryor
 Bob & Mary Schultz
 Stephen Ministers
 Shirley Kinney
 Prudence Poff
 Ruth Rees
 Elizabeth Chrisman
 Lucille Weaver
 Shirley Vognet
 Louise Kneedler

Ethel Chambers
 Judy & Wanda Fortin
 Trish Hershey
 Harriet Fornwalt
 Mary Armstrong
 Mary & Bob Schultz
 Jim & Deb Buckman
 Carol & Dave McMorris
 Michele Ramsauer
 Brenda Brown
 Karen Pelleschi
 Erick & Stephanie Fortin
 Luann & Elda Zeigler
 Susan Newcomer
 Pam Jensen
 Katy & Donna Elkin
 Blanche Doebler
 Ernestine Doane
 Candy Dewar
 Dot Berndt
 Ernie, Nancy, Sara & Jamie
 Larson
 Marian Larson
 Doris Griggs
 Stephanie Fortin
 Connie Shaible
 Irma Logan
 Beulah Wrede
 Dottie Burd
 Marlene Vollmer
 Chris & Creighton MacGill
 Deb Buckman
 Shelby Weber
 Frank & Mary Lou Doebler
 Joyce Hershberger
 Donna & Gary Clark
 Roxie Larson
 Larry & Catherine Lundy
 Barb & Phil Thomas

Thank you again to all of you who serve the church in a variety of ways. If we missed your name in any of the above listings, we apologize for the omission (and please let Joan know by calling her at the church office 323-4619).

A very, very long (and very sincere) THANK YOU



For more than 30 years, the voice on the telephone that members have heard when they wish to arrange for altar flowers has been that of **Eleanor Sobers**. She has delighted in making these calls, conversing with so many different people each year, and keeping the records straight. Recently, her eyesight has become so poor that she cannot manage the task accurately and so, with great reluctance, she has offered her resignation. With even more reluctance, it has been accepted with tremendous thanks for her long and dedicated service.

Someone needs to step forward to carry on this task. Please call Gregg Dancho, chair of Worship & Music, at 435-2716 to accept. Eleanor will be pleased to meet with a new person to explain procedures and hand on her records. The term of service does not have to be 30 years, although that would be welcome!

YOUTH & FAMILY NEWS

Retreat Day for Catechetical Students and Parents

On **Saturday, January 8, 2005** our catechetical-age students and their parents will meet with folks from the other area Lutheran congregations at Messiah Lutheran Church, South Williamsport. The seventh annual event is unique in several ways, especially in that the students get to choose which sessions the parents and students both attend.

Five area pastors and one lay person are the leaders of the discussion groups, and they will

be covering a wide assortment of topics that intrigue young persons. The topics this year are: "**Does God make a difference when life gets frustrating?**", "**An apple a day and other sinful subjects**", "**Help, help, I want to be me!**", "**Parents, Teens, and Money**", "**Telling it like it isn't**", "**The fear factor or faith factor.**"

Remember the students and parents in your prayers that day as they wrestle with complex subjects.

YOUTH & FAMILY NEWS

Faith Life Weekly, a take-home resource, is available in the Narthex every Sunday. This resource offers an at-home plan for nurturing faith and faith practices based on Sunday's worship service. Also, *Kids Celebrate* is available for youth to use during the worship service or to take home to add to family devotional time throughout the week. Stop and pick up a copy!



Children's Church will be held on Sunday, January 9, 2005 at 10:30 a.m. in the Chapel.

CONFIRMANDS:

The student, mentor, parent meeting will NOT be held January 9, at 7:00 p.m., in Fellowship Hall because of the Catechetical

Retreat taking place at Messiah Lutheran Church. A pamphlet may be picked up at the church office if you have not received one in Sunday School. Registration forms are due back to the office as soon as possible! Thank you!

LUNCHEON MEETING for WOMEN OF ST. MARK'S



All women of St. Mark's are invited to our winter meeting at Hoss's Steak House on Wednesday, January 12. Meet in the private room at 12:00 noon. Following our meal, we will

discuss the charities and congregational needs to which we will contribute. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has matched the funds we made at our rummage sales. Your help is needed. Please plan to come. Notify Louise Kneedler or Shirley Hill if you can come.

Mark Your Calendar!

Following is the January schedule for the John Bower Basketball League games. Come and cheer on our teams!

Jan. 8 ~ 11:30 AM - Beginner Pee Wee @ Curtin
3:00 PM - Pee Wee @ Curtin

Jan. 15 ~ 10:00 AM Pee Wee @ YMCA
11:00 AM Beg. Pee Wee @ YMCA

Jan. 22 ~ 10:00 AM Beg. Pee Wee @ YMCA
2:00 PM Pee Wee @ YMCA

Jan. 29 ~ 10:00 AM Beg. Pee Wee @ PCT
1:30 PM Pee Wee @ PCT



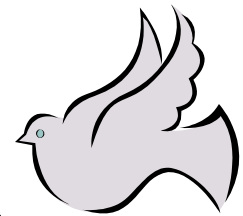
PRESENTATION OF FAITH CHESTS

On Sunday, January 9, 2005, The Baptism of Our Lord, St. Mark's will be giving out the Faith Chest milestone to those baptized in the 2004 calendar year. **Micah Charles Alt, Amalie Lynn Robertson, Ryan Robert Clokey and Owen Edward Gair** will be recipients of the milestone. This milestone is a reminder that the St. Mark's congregation is a huge part of this Child in Our Hands' faith journey. The chest may be used as a tool for nurturing faith in the home. Please make yourself known to the children and their families and wish them well on this day!

A Time for Thoughtful Remembrance

The Advent-Christmas-Epiphany season is a happy and exciting time, but it can also be sad and stressful for many persons. The world goes rushing by while one may be thinking about Christmas seasons past with loved ones who have since died. It is appropriate that we take time to remember, whether the sadness you feel is one month old or 10 years past.

Plan to come to the **Service of Remembrance at 7:00 P.M. on Twelfth Night, Wednesday, January 5, 2005 in the Nave.** In the course of the Holy Communion, the name of loved ones whom you nominate will be read aloud, and you will have opportunity to light a candle on the Memory Tree. You will also receive a keepsake of the event to hang at home. The mementos are again being crafted by John Burkholder.



It is time now to make your nominations by **phoning the church office at 323-4619** or by dropping off the form printed in the December 19 or 26 bulletins or this *Lion*.

Even if you do not have a specific person that you wish to name this time, by all means come and support your brothers and sisters in the faith in this tender and meaningful event. It can be of great help to gather for God's meal of consolation, and also to receive the encouragement and support of friends and fellow members of the body of Christ. This evening's service has become another of our much-appreciated Milestone events.

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REMEMBRANCE SERVICE FORM

Your Name: _____

Your Phone Number: _____

Person or Persons you would like remembered at the service on Wednesday, January 5, 2005.

SPECIAL DATES



1/1	Nicholas Hessert Suzanne Hutchins Shelby Weber Linda Wolfe	1/17	Nathan Kimble Ruth Lamade Barbara McCullough Ruth Rees Beth Miller
1/2	Cecil Calvert Jeremy Hinds Fred Stover Ashley Ciesielski	1/18	Zayne Dietterick Jessica Garverick Brenda Bittner
1/3	Katherine Crane Charlotte Hughes John Shaible	1/19	Courtney Bieber Jeffrey Wolfe Elizabeth Ruesskamp
1/4	Gregory Calvert Elizabeth Chrisman James Newcomer	1/20	Christina MacGill Tara Thorne Walter Doebler
1/5	Laurie Marchese	1/22	Bonnie Eyer David Heaps Marc Kinney
1/6	Mary Lou Doebler Louise Kneedler	1/23	Robert Smith Ruth Burkholder Dustin Kimble
1/8	Shirley Dieffenbach Ruth Lunger Susan Baker Andrew Zeigler	1/25	Phyllis Ulman Sean Buckman Kristopher Caster
1/10	Peter Zeigler Toby Zimmerman	1/26	Jonathan Phillips Theoron Hershey Linda DeSeau
1/12	Kathy Kolb	1/27	Devin Owen Travis Thorne Makaylee Goertz
1/13	Mary Armstrong Jackie Smith Kinney	1/28	Kathleen Caster
1/14	Riley Weber	1/29	
1/16	Lee Doane Julia Garverick	1/30	
1/17	Donna Boston	1/31	

Anniversary

Art & June Decker January 20 - 32 years
 Charles & Ruth Homan January 23 - 60 years

**Special congratulations to Charles & Ruth Homan
 on their 60th wedding anniversary!**

SPECIAL THANK YOU'S



Pastor Elkin and Donna would like to thank everyone for the gracious cards, greetings and gifts received during the Christmas season.

To Pastor Elkin, Jane Larson, Stephen Ministry, Bread and Soup, and Friends in Christ:

As we are healing and rejoicing in Mother's "New Life", thank you each for your support, prayers, cards, concerns, visits, your strength, love and acts of kindness.

~ Mrs. Pauline Loveland Family

To the members of St. Mark's,

We would like to thank you for the beautiful church flowers and plants. The soup and bread was quite delicious and greatly appreciated. Thanks again for all of your kindness as well as your thoughts and prayers.

Sincerely
Eleanor & Kes Sobers

Dear St. Mark's Family,

Many heartfelt thanks for the very delicious soup and bread and the many Get Well cards you sent to me after my accident. It is heartwarming to be part of such a thoughtful, caring "family"!

In Christian Love, Henrietta Tyson

Dear St. Mark's -

Thank you for the bible and the dinner. The dinner was nice and I loved the bible.

Love, Devin S. Owen

Our friends at Buffalo Valley Lutheran Village write to us:

We are in need of and grateful for your involvement. There are three important ways that you can help:

- ❖ **We need your prayers.** Please continue to remember in prayer our residents who are in need of healthcare and our residents who find comfort in our caring community. Also please lift up our staff in prayer. These are dedicated individuals who are committed to providing compassionate and quality care.
- ❖ **Become a volunteer.** Volunteers are essential to our community of caring. Volunteers assist us with resident activities on a daily basis in the Nursing Care Facility, Assisted Living, and Independent Living. Each volunteer enriches the lives of many residents. If you are interested in visiting our campus or volunteering, please contact Emily Kerstetter at 570-524-4451.
- ❖ **Make a charitable gift.** Your gift to *The Friends of Buffalo Valley Lutheran Village Benevolent Care Endowment* will enable us to continue to provide benevolent care to your neighbors in need. If you are interested in learning more or making a charitable gift, please contact Donna Warman at 570-372-2397.

Special Concerns List

Patricia Alexander
1745 Chestnut St.
Williamsport, PA 17701

Ruth Best
Sycamore Manor
1445 Sycamore Rd., Rm 213
Montoursville, PA 17754

Larue Dieter
12150 Warrensville Road Apt. 2
Montoursville, PA 17754

Jane & Luther Doebler
Wmspt. Home, Apt. #115A
Williamsport, PA 17701

Doris Fortin
Rose View Court
1251 Rural Ave., Apt. 308
Williamsport, PA 17701

Earl Foulkrod
Sycamore Manor
1445 Sycamore Rd., Rm 412
Montoursville, PA 17754

Emma Geschwent
1900 Ravine Rd.,
Woodland Vista, Suite 4
Williamsport, PA 17701

Anna Harris
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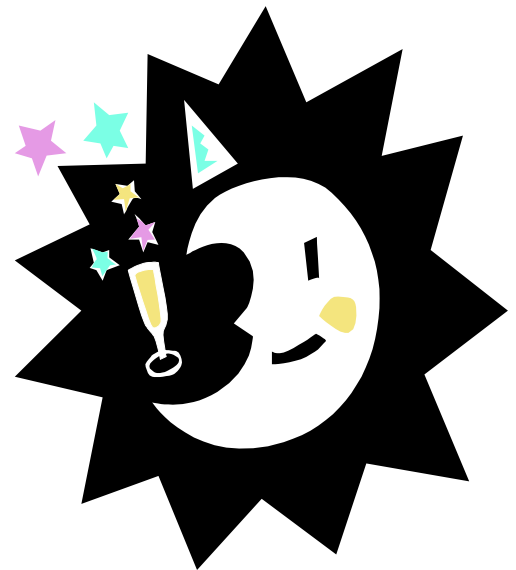
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HEALTH, HEALING AND WHOLENESS

Although it contains only thirty-one days – the same as seven other months - to someone suffering from loneliness, January can seem endless! The lights of Christmas have been taken down, untangled, and put away for another year. The wrapping paper has been gathered, and there are no longer any packages which served as visible reminders that someone cared. The ground is now frozen and barren, and when it snows or sleets, we can feel even more isolated, especially as we grow older. And so we sit and wait, for someone or something, which will lift us out of our slump. But what if I told you that life doesn't need to be lived like this?

January brings us once again, to Epiphany – the celebration of the presence of the light of Christ in our lives. We live in a paradoxical society, where we sometimes confuse the concept of loneliness with being “alone”. I believe that what we may think is January loneliness is really our adjustment to the sudden lack of over-stimulation produced during the holidays.

For some of us, silence can be very threatening, so we rush to fill the void with *anything* other than the emptiness. If you have ever attended a retreat in which you are required to spend at least part of the time in silence, you may soon come to realize that the sound of silence can seem deafening! Yet we need time alone – it's integral to our development into mature and self-actualized adults.

Constructive aloneness can foster creativity. It promotes insight into ourselves, and allows us to get in touch with, and sort out our feelings – to come to terms with loss, and to assist us in changing our attitudes and perspectives. Learning, thinking and innovation are all facilitated by solitude. Those who elect to take time alone, soon discover that the time apart makes us enjoy our social interactions with others that much more! Yes, loneliness can hurt – but aloneness can heal. It is our human condition to experience the pain of death, departure, breakup and rejection in our relationships, but the light that Christ brings is always available to accompany us through the dark times and experiences. When Hagar and her son were dying in the desert after being cast out by Sarah, God heard. When Elijah sat alone, the Lord encouraged him.

If you are suffering from loneliness, there are choices you can make, and steps you can take to assist you in overcoming or working through your sense of isolation, such as:

- Keeping a journal. Write what you are thinking and feeling – get to know yourself more deeply.
- Set aside time for devotion to God. As a wise person recently told me, even the monks had to schedule their devotional time into their daily lives. Reflect on your relationship with the creator – where is God lighting your life at this point in time?
- Reach out to others. This is especially important if you have experienced the death of a loved one. Others don't always know when the time is appropriate to invite you to participate in life again.
- Reflect the love of God. Giving to others can often lead to meeting our own unmet needs, but balance this time, with embracing God's love reflecting inside yourself.
- Get some regular exercise and steady doses of sunlight. Never underestimate the power of endorphins!
- If your loneliness leads to feelings of despair, please seek help. Speak to your pastor, your parish nurse, or a trained professional. Sometimes the love of God needs to be reflected onto you through the loving help and guidance of another.

In the words of St. Teresa of Avila, *“Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you. All things are passing, God never changes. Patience gains all things. Who has God wants nothing.”*

Winter blessings,

Debbie Best, Program Coordinator

Congregational Health Ministries and Family Life Services, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries

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It is an old custom that is fun to renew. Pastor Elkin will be accept-
ing invitations to the homes of members during the Epiphany season,
January 6 to February 8 for a house-blessing. It is appropriate for all
sizes of families and types of house or apartments. It is a way to re-
member that the travelers, the "wise men" of Matthew's nativity nar-
rative, were outsiders who were welcomed into the Good News, just
as we are welcomed by the Lord Jesus. Last year the pastor visited more than 20 homes
and is looking to increase that number this year. Use the slip, or call the office to make
your request. The Pastor will call and set up the day and time with you.

Yes, I'd like Pastor Elkin to call and arrange to stop briefly at my home
for a house blessing sometime during the Epiphany season, following
the tradition of the eastern churches.

Name _____
Telephone _____

**HOUSE-BLESSINGS PLANNED
DURING EPIPHANY**