



# The *Lion* of St. Mark's

MARCH 2005

## Inside this issue:

Council Update	2
Parish Register	2
Lent & Easter	3
Community, Youth & Family News	4
Christian Community News	5
Stephen Ministry	6
7th - 12th Graders	7
Special Dates	8
Special Concerns List	9
Opportunities Available	10
Christian Community News	11
Good News	12
Special Thanks	13
Study Report	14
Note from the Pastor	15, 16
Calendar	17

# WELCOME!

Every Sunday is a time for each member to be concerned with hospitality. The old saying is quite true: ***You only get one chance to make a good first impression!*** For people to hear the Good News of Jesus in the company of St. Mark's, they need to get through the door, feel welcomed, and become prepared to listen, and then take it to heart. Each of us can do some things to help that process happen.

1. If it is possible for you, **park farther away from the door**, so that nearby spaces are available to visitors and to those who really need to use them.

2. **Wear a nametag** whenever one is available to you. The ushers and greeters have reusable nametags now; use them each Sunday, whether or not you are serving, and return them to the proper basket for repeated use. We'll eventually be making nametags available for many other folks, as soon as we can discern how to manage them week to week.

3. **Move closer to the front** so that back pews are available to visitors and to others who arrive at the last minute. Visitors often like to watch what others do before plunging in.

4. Be alert so that you might **offer assistance to a visitor** who might appreciate a hand in following the bulletin and participating in worship. You might offer to sit with such a person.

5. **Greet someone you do not know** after the service. That person may be a first-time visitor, or a long-time member who usually attends the other service. Your greeting is important in either case.

6. **Make sure that visitors know what happens next:** direct them to hospitality area, point out the guest register, accompany them to Sunday School areas, identify special needs, etc.

7. **Introduce someone** whom you have met to three other people. A web of relationships is far more helpful than a single contact.

8. The most important thing of all about hospitality may not take place near the building. **Hospitality begins when you** look a friend, neighbor, relative, or other acquaintance in the eye and **say to him or her "Come with me** to see Jesus at St. Mark's." We're following the pattern in John 4:28-29: *Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! Can he be the Messiah?" They left the city and were on their way to him.*

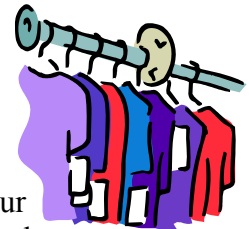
## COUNCIL UPDATE

*The Council met in regular session on Monday, February 21.*

1. Our guest was Mr. Keith Wood of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, who asked for an opportunity to explain some of the fraternal programs and benefits that are available to us as individuals and as a Lutheran congregation. Each Council member has a packet of information which they will be happy to share with interested persons.
2. The Pastor, officers, and committees presented written reports, with verbal additions and comments.
3. A Letter of Transfer was granted to Pastor and Shirley Brandau to the Lutheran Church of the Cross in Florida.
4. Voting members for the annual Synod Assembly in June were selected.
5. It was the consensus of the Council to begin a program of final contacts with long-inactive members of the parish after Easter.
6. The following persons were approved as candidates for Congregation Council, to be presented to the annual congregation assembly in May: Gary Weber, Eric Comini, and Brenda Bittner.
7. Small steps forward were reported in the Transformation projects.
8. At the conclusion of the meeting, the members moved to the Chapel for Prayer at the Close of the Day.



### Women of Saint Mark's Clothing Sale Saturday, April 16, 2005



With spring just around the corner we know the urge to clean out your closets is reaching a fever pitch. Okay so you've thought about it and hopefully will get to it. If it would help your motivation, the Women of Saint Mark's need your family's no-longer-wanted clothing for our spring clothing sale. We are accepting good, clean clothing in all sizes from infant to adult. We are also accepting shoes, suits, coats, and clothing accessories. Your donations may be placed in the Bazaar Room in the basement.

This event qualifies for matching funds from Thrivent. Additionally, any clothing not sold the day of the sale will be sorted and distributed to the Kids Clothes Closet, St. Anthony's Center, Lutheran World Relief, and the American Rescue Workers. Please take a few minutes and help us reach out to those in need locally and globally.

If you wish to assist with this event or have questions, please contact Becky Miller Pryor at 321-9523.

### FROM THE PARISH REGISTER



- ❖ Mary L. Smith's funeral service was celebrated on February 2.
- ❖ Emma Geschwent's funeral service was celebrated on February 10.
- ❖ Eugene Larson's funeral service was celebrated on February 17.
- ❖ Walter and Shirley Brandau were transferred to the Lutheran Church of the Cross in St. Petersburg, FL on Feb. 21.

## SINCE YOU ASKED....A NOTE FROM PASTOR ELKIN

***What in the world is "Pheresis" (the word comes from a Greek word meaning "to take away")?***

I've been involved with the Pheresis program now for 14 years, and have talked about it from time to time, but there are lots of folks who are still mystified when they see that word in the monthly calendar. It is not a theological term, nor is it a disease. Rather, it is the name of a process for extracting a portion of the blood called "platelets" for use in treating cancer patients, hemophiliacs, and others with special needs.

***Where is it done?*** I travel to the Red Cross Blood Center south of Wilkes-Barre where they have a dozen machines and specially trained nurses to administer the process. This is also the headquarters for all of the blood drives that take place in north-east and central PA and south-central NY state.

***Who is involved?*** People come from many miles in all directions to volunteer their time and platelets. There are a few donors from the Williamsport area. It is possible to donate for a relative who has a need, but most donations are made anonymously for whoever has the greatest need. For the recipients it is truly a matter of life and death. One member of our congregation needed to receive platelets for a time, and several members of that family traveled to donate in thanksgiving for the gift of life that person received. From time to time, the staff will let me know that my donation is going to someone in Sayre, or Hazleton, or back here in Williamsport. Occasionally, a recipient will write a letter "To whoever helped me" expressing their thanks.

***How did you get started?*** I saw a flyer at a whole blood bloodmobile that we were hosting at our church in Catawissa, and because of my curious questions, was directed to call the blood center. Since I was a regular successful whole blood donor, the center invited me to try to process, and I have been participating ever since. The most recent was my 164<sup>th</sup> donation.

***How does the process work?*** The process begins with the same paperwork that is used at bloodmobiles, and blood is tested to make sure that there are sufficient platelets present. A needle is inserted in the vein in one arm and the blood is drawn into a machine sitting beside the comfortable reclining chair. The centrifuge separates the blood into its component parts and draws off the platelets. The remaining blood and some additional fluid is returned to me by way of a needle in the other arm, so that I have as much volume at the end as at the beginning.

***Does it hurt?*** Only the best nurses with years of experience on the road are selected for the training in the pheresis program. They are very good at what they do, and almost always get the needle exactly right the first try. Once the needle is in place, the procedure continues with a minimum of discomfort.

***What do you do during the 100 minutes of the procedure?*** Since both arms are involved, I am forced to remain still in one place. (Hard to imagine, isn't it?) I can't sleep, since I need to squeeze now and again to keep things flowing properly. The center provides DVD machines and headphones so that I can be distracted by a movie. Regular donors come to know the staff on a first-name basis, and the nurses give careful attention to not more than two donors at a time. A single word brings immediate attention from the nurses to make donating a safe and comfortable experience. (Donna claims that the reason I go is to have so many attentive females fussing over me.) (PS. A male nurse has recently been added to the staff.) The unit was renovated in the past few months and they can accommodate up to 12 persons per shift in three shifts per day.

~ continued on next page ~

## SINCE YOU ASKED...A NOTE FROM PASTOR ELKIN

~ continued from previous page ~

***Is the need great?*** One person is kept busy all day just arranging appointments for donors and matching donors with the most pressing needs around the region. I was pleased several years ago to help spearhead an effort to purchase a computer software program to help the blood center match donors with recipients. This is much more complicated than merely "O-positive"; many other factors are taken into account. The closer the match, the safer it is for the recipient.

**Is there danger to the donor?** In a word, No. The nurses make sure that I can safely donate. A series of vials of blood are set aside at each donation for close analysis. Complete records of all donations are kept. Anything which touches me or my blood is single-use, even inside the centrifuge. The components come in a sealed container, are attached to the machine and used, and then those tubes, valves, needles, etc. are all discarded after my donation. There is no contact with anyone else's blood.

***What does the product look like?*** We think of blood exposed to oxygen as being red, but the separated platelets are a bright mustard yellow! The platelets in their solution are stored in a relatively small plastic bag. I seem to produce so many platelets that most days they are able to get a "split", or two bags of platelets from me.

***Why are pheresis donors so important?*** It is much more efficient to get it from me. The blood center would have to take the whole blood donations from 10 persons and put them through a centrifuge in order to get the equivalent amount of platelets that I give with a single bag of my donation. There is also less chance of a bad reaction from the recipient who receives a blood product from one person rather than from 10 mixed together.

***Who has been involved?*** I have recruited a number of other persons for the pheresis program over the years. At one point, four pastors were traveling together, and even though it is 12 years later and we are in different parishes, three of us are still making the trip to the Blood Center on a regular basis.

***What if I still have questions about whether I could be a donor?*** I would be happy to answer any general questions that are within my experience, and anyone can call the blood center at 1.800.432.8045 and ask for the pheresis director. Kay can answer specific medical questions that you might have. Thanks for asking!

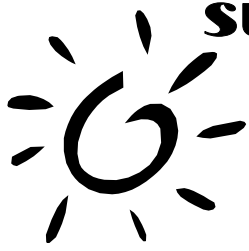
---

Somebody has well said there are only two kinds of people in the world.  
There are those who wake up in the morning and say,  
"Good morning, Lord!"  
and there are those who wake up in the morning and say,  
"Good Lord, it's morning!"

# PHONE & EMAIL CONTACT LIST

	<u>Home Phone</u>	<u>Church Phone</u>
Pastor ~ <b>The Rev. Kenneth R. Elkin</b> pastorsaintmarks@chilitech.net	323-7367	323-4619
Council President ~ <b>Pam Jensen</b>	321-7534	
Council Vice-President ~ <b>Bud Hershberger</b>	322-0410	
Council Secretary ~ <b>Nancy Larson</b>	322-1068	
Treasurer ~ <b>Barb Thomas</b>	322-6460	
Parish Musician ~ <b>Richard Lakey</b>		323-4619
Youth & Family Ministry Coordinators ~ <b>Sharon Comini</b>	337-3226	323-4619
<b>Alice Alt</b> youthandministry@chilitech.net		323-4619
Financial Secretary ~ <b>Susan Myers</b>		323-4619
Sexton ~ <b>Lou DeSeau</b>	323-9178	323-4619
Office Secretary ~ <b>Joan Blank</b> secretary@chilitech.net		323-4619
Stephen Ministry Coordinator ~ <b>Jane Larson</b>	323-2845	
Adult Catechumenate Coordinator ~ <b>Bob Schultz</b>	326-3929	

## OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE



### SUMMER DREAMS

#### Volunteers of America of Pennsylvania, a

faith-based human services agency, in partnership with **Adoption Resource Center, Inc.**, a

child placement agency, is seeking families for children ages 6—12, from Russia, for a five-week, dream-filled visit this summer.

**Summer Dreams** is a powerful, life-changing ministry of hope. The ideal family would be one that would consider adoption. For details on this program or other adoption options, call 1-888-350-4862.

Thanks so much for your help.



#### Habitat Families Wanted

### Need help fulfilling the dream of owning your own home?

Families who meet low-income guidelines and have a reasonable debt level, are willing to help build the home, and can provide a \$500 down payment before closing are eligible. To apply, come to one of the Family Selection Workshops at the Habitat Office, 441 Hepburn Street, across from the Sun-Gazette, Williamsport. They are held Wednesday evening, March 16 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM and Saturday morning, March 19 from 10:00 AM to noon. Families need to bring along their W2 forms, latest income tax form, monthly income verification (6 months of pay stubs), complete list of monthly expenses, and two months of bank statements.

### Scholarships Available

The Lutheran Community Foundation is pleased to announce the availability of scholarship awards from The St. Paul Lutheran Church Fund. This permanently-endowed fund was established at the Foundation upon the closing of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Williamsport and provides scholarship opportunities to eligible candidates.

Eligible candidates are:

- ❖ Graduating seniors of a high school, or high school equivalent, located in Lycoming County.
- ❖ Members of a Lutheran church, including individuals who were members of St. Paul Lutheran Church at the time of its closing.
- ❖ Individuals planning to attend in the 2005-2006 academic year, an institution of higher education (academic, technical or vocational).
- ❖ Individuals with a minimum grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.
- ❖ Individuals must submit two letters of recommendation along with their application; one letter must be written by a pastor, and one letter must be written by a lay leader, from the church where the candidate attends.

#### Application Process & Deadline

Students who wish to apply must complete an application and submit it with the letters of recommendation postmarked no later than April 15, 2005.

**For more information, specific requirements, and applications, please see the bulletin board in the church office hallway.**



## CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY NEWS

### ***“Lutheran Vespers” Becomes “Grace Matters”***

On Feb. 13, 2005, the radio ministry for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) introduced its audience to a new name, "Grace Matters," and welcome a new host, the Rev. Peter W. Marty.

Grace Matters replaces "Lutheran Vespers" -- the name for the ELCA's radio ministry since its inception in 1947. Marty succeeds the Rev. Walt Wangerin Jr., who had been the voice of Lutheran Vespers for a decade when he left the role earlier this year.

During the Lenten season listeners won't notice many changes in the program immediately, said Susan V. Greeley, Grace Matters producer and director, ELCA Department for Communication. Marty will offer theological reflections on the text for the first few weeks he is host. After Easter (March 27), Grace Matters will adopt a "magazine" format, which will include an interview in each program, she said.

The name "Grace Matters" was developed by a planning group working on the future of the ELCA's radio ministry and the transition to a new host, said the Rev. Eric C. Shafer, director, ELCA Department for Communication.

☺ *Locally, you can listen to “Grace Matters” on your radio at 1050 AM—WLYC at 8:00 AM every Sunday morning.*

***J. S. Bach Special March 20***



"Glory to God Alone: The Life of J.S. Bach" will be broadcast on Hallmark Channel on Palm Sunday, March 20, at 12:00 noon eastern and pacific times.

"Glory to God Alone: The Life of J.S. Bach" is an expansion of a 2002 Mosaic television production. The broadcast features scenes from Eisenach, Ohrdruf, Weimar, Kothen, Muhlhausen and, of course, Leipzig. This version includes a vocal ensemble and orchestra, recorded at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Luke in Chicago.

### ***Davey and Goliath on TV***

"Davey and Goliath Happy Easter" will be broadcast on Hallmark Channel on Easter Sunday, March 27, at 12:30 p.m. eastern time.

"Davey and Goliath Happy Easter" is the restored, classic Easter special from 1967. In this production Davey visits his adored paternal grandmother on the Wednesday before Easter. They play baseball, bake a cake, and plan that they will attend the Easter pageant together on Sunday. But Grandma dies on Thursday. Davey is overwhelmed with sadness until he watches a rehearsal of the Passion Play. Seeing the Passion Play story, Davey understands why Grandma said Easter was a happy time: because Jesus, after an earthly death, still lives, and God, who raised Jesus, made the same promise to us all.

# CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY NEWS

## NOTES FROM SOCIAL MINISTRY

◀ What better way to welcome a new baby into the world than with a baby shower? During March we continue to support the work of The Pregnancy Care Center in Williamsport. The PCC provides services free of charge to women experiencing an unplanned pregnancy. We are collecting items all newborns need plus hygiene items for their mothers. See the display in the Narthex to participate in our "baby shower."

◀ Thank you to the members of the congregation who donated hygiene items to the Shepherd of the Streets. Two boxes of various hygiene items were delivered to their office. Additionally \$212.50 was donated to the Shepherd of the Streets Emergency Fund. Dr. J. Morris Smith expressed his gratitude on behalf of the many clients served by this ministry.

◀ The United Churches/Center City Food Pantry provides a three-day supply of food to those in need. During January they provided assistance to 191 families. Gail Burkhart, Coordinator, states, "It's especially poignant to see the young ones when they come with their families to select food. Their eyes light up when they see the full bags of groceries."

◀ Although not as frequently in the news, tsunami relief efforts are ongoing. Monetary donations to support these relief efforts continue to be accepted.

◀ Recently a tub of donated groceries was combined with the soup and cash from Souper Bowl Sunday to assist the Food Pantry. We continue to accept food on behalf of the Food Pantry. Your donations may be placed in the bins in the coatroom to the left of the Narthex. Items needed:

Chunky Soups, Hamburger Helper, Tuna and Tuna Helper, Peanut Butter, Jelly, Cake Mixes, Coffee, Tea Bags, Canned Peas, Stuffing Mix, Elbow Macaroni, Canned Fruit, Oodles of Noodles, Egg Noodles, Saltine Crackers, Powdered Drink Mixes, and Sugar in one pound packages.

## HISTORY NOTES

Can you remember St. Mark's early history? A lot of information concerning births, marriages, confirmation, photos, etc. of St. Mark's members has been lost due to floods in the last two centuries. What a loss! In our cataloging process, we find items that make us wonder what they are. Here are a couple:

Two large sea shells in good condition...one has hand painted flowers and the another a painted country scene, with a blurred marking of KIV.

Can anyone tell us anything about these sea shells? If they are not related to Church history, we will have to discard them as our space for collections is limited. It would be sad to ignore the church's history and memorabilia.

Many members have happy memories of St. Mark's and as archivists and historians, we need your help in keeping those memories alive. We could use a few more people to volunteer a few hours (even 2 a week!) to help us continue the task of keeping St. Mark's alive for years to come. Please contact Dot Berndt (326-9459) and say, "**Yes! I can help!**"

## B.I.B.L.E.

**A father was approached by his small son who told him proudly,**

**"I know what the Bible means!"**

**His father smiled and replied,**

**"What do you mean, you know what the Bible means?"**

**The son replied, "I do know!"**

**"Okay, said his father. "So, son, what does the Bible mean?"**

**"That's easy, Daddy. It stands for 'Basic Information Before Leaving Earth.'"**



## 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, *Kid's 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!

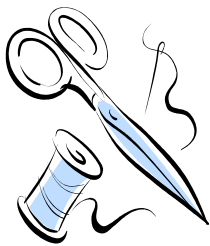


Children's Church will be held on Sunday March 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. in the Chapel.

**FOR CONFIRMANDS: The student, mentor, parent meeting will be on March 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m., in Fellowship Hall.**

### *Do You Knit?*

The Women of St. Mark's are looking for people to knit (or crochet) simple baby sweaters for the Pregnancy Care Center and Lutheran World Relief. If you are interested, see Louise Kneeder or Shirley Hill for easy patterns.



In addition, keep bringing in your old blankets and sheets in good condition for quilt making. Also, if you can spare any time on Wednesday mornings, join our quilters. It's a pleasant pastime for a worthy cause. No knowledge of sewing is necessary.

Are you looking to get **WILD** about God? Get our your safari gear ready and join us for an awesome trip through the Serengeti to catch a glimpse of the journey that God has in store for you! **St. Mark's Vacation Bible School will be the week of June 19<sup>th</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup>.** Anyone interested in helping or volunteering for VBS may call the church office at 323-4619 or sign up on the sheets located in the office hallway.

### **Bowling anyone?**



On Saturday March 12<sup>th</sup>, we will be having a Youth Bowling Party at ABC Bowling Lanes from 1 p.m. until 3 p.m. Watch your weekly bulletin for more details! And, anyone interested in the event, please call the church office at 323-4619.

### MILESTONES MARKED LAST MONTH

On Sunday, Feb. 20th, "All the Languages of the Good News" bags were given to Ezra Buckman, Morgan Comini and Kara Hershey, and on Sunday, Feb. 27th, Jarrett Eyer received this milestone. The items in these bags may be used as a tool for nurturing faith in the home:

- ❖ a personal-sized icon of the Good Shepherd encouraging a child,
- ❖ a small stand to hold the icon on a dresser or shelf,
- ❖ a CD of standard hymns of the faith, sung by a children's choir and a variety of accompaniments, and
- ❖ a series of four books, two which the child can soon be able to read alone, and two for parents to read aloud.

### MILESTONE COMING UP SOON

Our next milestone will take place with the baptism of Brittany Toy, a Lycoming College student who became familiar with our church through teaching our students during Sunday Church School. The baptism will take place at the Easter Vigil service on Saturday evening, March 26<sup>th</sup>.

## GOOD NEWS

*Bishop Main thought it would be good to share some GOOD NEWS with you all about Liberia. The following is from Gary Winters, a member of the work team currently in Liberia, and reports the conditions he found upon his return to Liberia yesterday. Read on:*

### “Back in the bush 2005 #1

Greetings to all from Bong County, Liberia. We are all well and pushing to move forward with our work.

Our group Ruth Koble, Joe Kanagy, Jim & Butch Foster and I arrived in Liberia late Wed. evening on the 12th. Even in the dark traveling from the airport to Monrovia, I could see a big difference from last March.

Lots of people moving around after dark, in Monrovia many businesses reopening, and much more traffic on the streets. All this being sighs of a recovering Liberia. A country tired of war and determined to rise from its ruin. We praise God for the UN troops in Liberia.

After a day of picking up supplies and talking to my building material suppliers we headed up country a 2 ½ hour ride into the bush to our base, Phebe Hospital.

I think I received my warmest welcome back to Liberia on the road going up

country. About 1 ½ hours into our trip I saw a young boy along the road staring intently at our Phebe bus. As we got close I recognized the boy as one of my little friends, Junior Stewart. Junior is one of the over 600 students the Tuition Sponsorship Program is helping. As we flew by Junior was waving and then put his finger to his eye telling me he wanted to see me. I told the driver to pull over and Junior came running over to me. We greeted each other and his heart felt words put a lump in my throat. ‘I be missing you’

Reaching our destination we pulled onto Phebe Hospital ground I could immediately see many positive signs. What 9 months ago was a fragile security situation is now busy with activity. People feeling safe moving about trying to put their lives back together.

We are all busy with our work but due to time I will write on that later. I would ask you to lift our team up in prayer, asking God for productivity and safety in our work.”

In His service  
Gary

### ***F.Y.I.***

**The American Red Cross bloodmobile** will be visiting the Fleming Parish Center in Williamsport on Thursday, March 17 from 11:45 to 5:45 PM. Please donate and, if possible, bring a friend or family member along! Remember that blood is the “gift of life” and your donation will make a difference. Please support this important community event! Thank you for your tremendous support of the county’s blood program.

## REPORTS ON THE SEXUALITY STUDY

*After spending several years and over a million dollars, the sexuality task force established by the ELCA's assembly has presented its report with three recommendations. The full text of the report is available online at [elca.org](http://elca.org) and members are invited to speak with Pastor Elkin and read the notebook of materials on this subject that has been collected over the months.*

*In trying to make some sort of middle ground on the issues, the report seems to please almost no one. There was a hearing held in each of the Synod's conferences in January. Each person who wished to speak had an opportunity, and there were impassioned speeches on all sides. After listening to the reactions, the Synod Council formulated its response which was sent to the ELCA Church Council for consideration in the near future. That body will craft whatever resolutions will be brought at the national Assembly this summer. The text of the Synod Council's action follows:*

February 18, 2005

The Rev. Dr. Lowell G. Almen, Secretary, ELCA

8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631-4101

Dear Secretary Almen,

The Upper Susquehanna Synod developed a plan for responding to the Report and Recommendations from the Task Force for Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Studies on Sexuality. This plan requested that each conference hold open meetings to receive comments from rostered individuals, voting members to synod assembly and any other interested persons. Synod Council members were requested to attend their respective conference meetings and to bring thoughts and comments to the next Synod Council meeting.

The Synod Council of the Upper Susquehanna Synod met on Saturday, February 12, 2005, to discuss the comments from the various conference meetings and to share each Synod Council member's comments. As a result, the Synod Council would like to share with the Church Council of the ELCA the following modifications to the Task Forces' recommendations:

**Recommendation #1:** Because the God-given mission and communion we share is of utmost importance and because faithful conscience-bound Lutherans find themselves so decisively at odds over the issues of sexuality, we, the Upper Susquehanna Synod Council, recommend that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements.

**Recommendation #2:** The Upper Susquehanna Synod Council would like to eliminate the second recommendation as presented by the Task Force. In its place, we recommend that the statement of the Conference of Bishops, October 5-8, 1993, become the action of the ELCA. Therefore, the wording would be

We, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, recognize that there is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship. We, therefore, do not approve such a ceremony as an official action of this church's ministry. Nevertheless, we express trust in and will continue dialogue with those pastors and congregations who are in ministry with gay and lesbian persons, and affirm their desire to explore the best ways to provide pastoral care for all to whom they minister.

**Recommendation #3:** We, the Upper Susquehanna Synod Council, recommend that, at this time, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America continue under the standards regarding sexual conduct for rostered leaders as set forth in Vision and Expectations and Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline.

All three actions of the Upper Susquehanna Synod Council were unanimous. It is the desire of the Synod Council that the Church Council give prayerful consideration to the recommendations.

Yours in Christ's Service, Ms. Margaret Biesecker, Secretary, Upper Susquehanna Synod

# LENT & EASTER

## Special Gifts at Eastertime

There are several ways that beloved family members can be remembered at Eastertime. A gift to the World Hunger Campaign is always fitting, and we know is always very much in need. Another way is to assist in the purchase of flowers for the decoration of the church at Easter. Please use the envelope attached to this newsletter. You may mail the order and your check to the Church office or place it in the Offering plate on Sunday. Prices for the flowers are listed below. The last day for orders is Monday,



Donation to World Hunger.....any amount
Madonna Lilies.....\$7.50
Asiatic Lilies.....\$10.00
Mums.....\$8.00
Tulips.....\$8.00
Azaleas.....\$15.00

Schedule of  
Worship  
for  
Holy Week

- March 23 - Seder Meal - 6:15 pm
- March 24 - Maundy Thursday
  - Holy Communion - 12:00 pm
  - Holy Communion - 7:30 pm
- March 25 - Good Friday
  - Ecumenical Service - 12:00 pm
  - Vigil at the Cross
  - Tenebrae Service - 7:30 pm
- March 26 - The Great Vigil of Easter
  - 7:30 pm
- March 27 - Easter Sunday
  - 8:00 am & 10:30 am

## Easter Egg Hunt



### Breakfast with the Pastor and St. Mark's Annual Easter Egg Hunt to take place Saturday March 26<sup>th</sup> beginning at 9:45 a.m. at church!

Please join us as we have some fun with our youth, ages ranging from walking toddlers up to grade 5, here at the church during the morning of Saturday March 26<sup>th</sup> beginning at 9:45 a.m.! We will begin with having breakfast with the Pastor and then we will have our Easter Egg Hunt. Please call the church office and let us know if you will be attending and how many will be in your party. Also, donations of bags of candy would be appreciated and accepted! We look forward to seeing you all there!



## THE STORY OF STEPHEN MINISTRY

Stephen Ministry- where did it all begin? It dates back to 1974 when Kenneth C. Haugk, a pastor and clinical

psychologist, was pastor of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church in St. Louis, Missouri. Fresh out of seminary, his strengths and heart were in care-giving ministry, and he was looking forward to making a positive impact on his congregation and community by providing pastoral care to all those experiencing divorce, grief, hospitalization, discouragement, and other life difficulties.

Very quickly, though, he found that the needs for care by far exceeded that which he alone could provide. He faced one of a pastor's greatest frustrations: seeing people slipping through the cracks because their urgent needs were going unmet. In November of 1974, he discussed the situation with two seminary friends over a cup of coffee. The conversation turned to Ephesians 4 and "equipping the saints for the work of ministry." Haugk realized that God didn't intend for pastors to monopolize ministry. Rather, God gave all his people gifts for ministry and one of his roles as pastor was to equip others to use their gifts in ministry.

Haugk returned to St. Stephen's with a plan. In the coming months he recruited nine lay people who had the gifts and heart to do caring ministry. He then used his combined backgrounds in theology and psychology to develop a training program in Christian care giving. By March 1975 the nine were commissioned as "Stephen Ministers." Their first care receivers included a widower, a blind person, a young woman with

cancer, a truck driver forced to retire early, and an inactive member struggling with faith issues.

The impact was immediate. People began receiving the focused Christian care they needed. Fewer people were slipping through the cracks, and Haugk found he had more time to perform his other pastoral duties. The Stephen Ministers were surprised by the spiritual growth they encountered as they saw God working through them to bring love and healing to others.

The story would have ended there, had not two of the Stephen Ministers cornered Haugk on a hot May morning after worship services. "This is good stuff," they said to him. "We're not going to let you go until you promise to bring this ministry to other churches!" Still wearing his vestments and perspiring from the heat, Haugk gave in and agreed to find a way to bring Stephen Ministry to other churches.

In November 1975 Haugk and his wife Joan founded the not-for-profit Stephen Ministries organization and began bringing Stephen Ministry to other congregations. It spread like wildfire. St. Mark's Lutheran Church is one of more than 7,000 congregations from more than 9-Christian denominations that now has Stephen Ministry. Over a quarter million people have been trained as Stephen Ministers, a number that grows by tens of thousands each year. More than a million people across the United States, Canada, and the world have been touched by God's love through a Stephen Minister. And that is the mark of God's doing, because finally the story of Stephen Ministry is a million stories and more of caring ministry.



## SPECIAL DATES

# Happy Birthday!

3/1	Ruth Pile	3/16	Hannah Lynn
3/3	Richard Hafer		Gary Stackhouse
3/4	Jessica Curry	3/17	Henrietta Tyson
	Susie Burd Hill		Alan Matthew Zimmerer
3/5	Trisha Harvey	3/18	Diana Davenport
	Collin McCoy	3/19	Walter Brandau
	Barbara Switzer		Dorothy Rivetti
3/6	Robert Shaible	3/21	Beatrice Doeblor
	Pamela Lehman		Randy Lukens
3/7	Kester Sobers	3/23	Christopher Hoagland
3/8	William Hibschman	3/24	Gary Weber
3/9	Rose Marie Hafer	3/25	Nancy Bohartz
	Robert Lynn		Sara Larson
	Patricia Thayer	3/26	Anne Davis
	Beulah Wrede	3/27	Jonathan Bower
3/10	Mason Peluso		Annabelle Smith
	Alaina Oberheim		Raymond Stiller
3/11	Michael Kinney	3/28	Sandra Edler
3/13	Aletha Swartz	3/29	Mark Bittenbender
3/15	Kimberly Caster		Tyler Bower
	Roxanna Larson		April Hartzel
3/16	Eileen Georg		Carl Hieber
	Dinah Labenberg	3/30	John Hollenback

## Anniversary

3/1	Ralph & Elda Zeigler
3/6	Gary & Donna Clark
3/18	Walter & Shirley Brandau
3/19	Kenneth & Lois Winters-Goldy

### Special congratulations to:

**Ralph & Elda Zeigler on their 63rd wedding anniversary &  
Walter & Shirley Brandau on their 54th wedding anniversary!**



## SPECIAL THANK YOU'S



Dear Folks,  
 Thanks so much for  
 the bread and soup.  
 They "hit the spot."  
 I love you all.  
*Liz Ruesskamp*

Dear Jane,

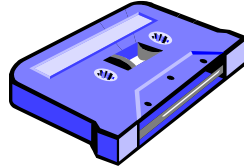
You were so thoughtful and kind to send me the Remembrance Service. I wish I could have been there but night driving—especially through the winter—is avoided. A sure sign of getting old!

I'm grateful too for the Burkholders' kindness in placing a candle in memory of Fred. And I'm glad too that you remember him when you worship in the renovated chapel. In about two weeks it will be two years since he died but I still miss him terribly.

Fondly, Susie

Just a word of thanks to all who have assisted with the tape ministry: the people who duplicate, erase the tapes, and deliver them.

If you know of a shut-in who would like one of the Sunday Service tapes, please call Shirley Vognet (323-0335) or the church office (323-4619), and we would be happy to see that they receive one.



Thank you,  
 Frank Vognet,  
 Recorder

## 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  
2150 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

Anna Harris  
2018 Wheatland Ave.  
Williamsport, PA 17701

Charles Homan  
2215 Warrensville Rd.  
Montoursville, PA 17754

Charlotte Hughes  
140 Blueberry Lane  
Williamsport, PA 17701

Lucille Markel  
Rose View Court  
1251 Rural Ave., Apt. 307  
Williamsport, PA 17701

Geraldine Martin  
1900 Ravine Rd. Rm. 109  
Williamsport, PA 17701

Anne Miller  
947 Hepburn St.  
Williamsport, PA 17701

Randy Miller  
2420 North Hills Dr.  
Williamsport, PA 17701

Frank Pile  
Manor Care S., Rm. 52  
Williamsport, PA 17701

Dorothy Rivetti  
450 Center Street  
Apt. 505  
Williamsport, PA 17701

Mary Helen Scinicarello  
Danville St. Hospital  
Ward #311  
Danville, PA 17821

James Sechler  
Manor Care N. Rm. 202  
Williamsport, PA 17701

Geraldine Shipman  
1900 Ravine Rd.  
Apt. #222A  
Williamsport, PA 17701

Fred Stover  
600 Bayard St. Ext. SW  
S. Williamsport, PA 17702

Kester & Eleanor Sobers  
425 W Highland Ave.  
S. Williamsport, P A 17702

Ralph Zeigler Sr.  
Rose View Court  
1251 Rural Ave., Apt. 209  
Williamsport, PA 17701



## HEALTH, HEALING AND WHOLENESS

Mary Jo Meadows defines compassion as “the quivering of the heart in responses to another’s suffering,” and notes that “compassionate beings ... cannot bear to see suffering and remain unengaged.” We are the body of Christ, and the life, which pulses through us, is the life of God. Probably no other quality more identifies a Christian than that of compassion. Read through the gospels and you will find that Jesus consistently lived this quality and encouraged it in his disciples. Over and over he insisted that offering compassion to another was the same as extending it to Christ himself.

I’m sure you are all familiar with the phrase, “*Give the Gift of Life*” in reference to the many blood drives sponsored by the Red Cross in Central Pennsylvania. I’d like to invite you to take that slogan one step further. For those of us who have blood that does not coagulate quickly enough, the gift of platelets literally can mean the difference between life and death. Platelets are found in the blood streams of everyone, and are necessary for our blood to clot, therefore controlling bleeding. Sometimes those who are going through chemotherapy, radiation, certain types of surgery, or who cannot produce their own, will be in need of an infusion of platelets.

Platelets are obtained, in much the same fashion as a normal blood donation. Whole blood is taken from a vein of one arm of the donor, and infused through special equipment, in a process called apheresis. A centrifuge then separates the platelets from other blood cells and the blood’s plasma. About a third of the donor’s platelets and a small quantity of plasma are collected into a special sterile bag, while the remaining plasma, platelets, red and white cells go back into your bloodstream through a second needle in the opposite arm. The entire process takes approximately 2 – 3 hours.

When healthy, our bodies normally replace platelets within 24 hours of donating, so conceivably, one could donate platelets two times a week (allowing 48 hours between donations). Who can donate? Nearly anyone who is capable of donating blood can also be a platelet donor:

- 17 years old or older
- weighing at least 110 pounds
- in good over-all health
- aspirin free for at least three days before donating.

How can you become a donor? Just call or stop by to see the folks in Donor Services at Geisinger Medical Center. The phone number is (570)271-8959, and they are located on the first floor of Geisinger Medical Center between Foss and Bush Clinics. The Center is open Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

St. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, implores us to, “Carry one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” (Gal 6:2). Take some time to consider apheresis, or platelet donation. It could be the gift of life to another. For those of you outside Central Pennsylvania, contact your local hospital or Red Cross chapter to learn where you may become a donor.

*Lenten blessings to all!*

*Debbie Best, Program Coordinator  
Congregational Health Ministries and Family Life Services  
Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries (formerly known as Tressler Lutheran Services)*

ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
142 MARKET ST.  
WILLIAMSPORT, PA



PHONE: 570-323-4619  
FAX: 570-323-2452

*Return Service Requested*

Email us at  
[saintmarks@chilitech.net](mailto:saintmarks@chilitech.net)

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
**Permit No. 257**  
Williamsport, PA 17701

