



The Lion of St. Mark's

JANUARY 2008

The Story of the Three Martins

It happens with great regularity that folks of various ages get Martin Luther and Martin Luther King confused. There are similarities between them. They were both pastors, and they both spoke the truth boldly in contentious situations. They were both named after and shared some of the determination and qualities of the earlier saint of the church, **Martin, Bishop of Tours**, who left a life in the Roman army in 334 AD, and established the first monastery in France, served with distinction as bishop, traveled widely as a missionary in his area, spoke with courage and gentleness, was beloved by his people, and had as his motto *Non recuso laborem*, "I do not turn back from work."

Martin Luther was baptized at one day of age on St. Martin's Day, November 11, 1483 in a little town of Eisleben in Germany. His father wanted him to be a lawyer, and he attained a master's degree by age 22. He gave up this career path and enter the austere Augustinian monastery in Erfurt in 1505, where his abilities were quickly recognized. He was ordained a priest in 1507, and was directed to continue his studies toward a doctorate in Theology in 1512 and eventually to teach at the new university in Wittenberg. His study of scripture led him to question the practice of selling papers that promised forgiveness for sins. He posted 95 ideas for debate on the subject on the public notice board which was the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517. The ideas spread rapidly around Germany, leading to debates and much furor. In 1520 he received an ultimatum from the pope to give up his ideas, which he refused. In 1521 he was ordered by the Emperor Charles V to appear at the meeting of the empire in Worms, Germany, where he insisted that his opponents had to prove him wrong by the scrip-

tures. His prince took him into hiding, and during this time he began to translate the Bible into German. When he returned to Wittenberg, he began to reorganize church life there. The Small Catechism and other writings have influenced people all around the world. People came from all over Europe to study and debate Luther's insights. A portion of his writings fill 55 volumes in English translation. He married Katherine von Bora, a former nun, and they had a busy and happy marriage. He returned to his birthplace to help settle a dispute in 1546 and died there a few blocks from his birthplace on February 18, the calendar day on which we remember him.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was born on January 15, 1929 in Atlanta. He began college at age 15 and received a doctorate from Boston University at age 26. He turned from early interests in law and medicine to theology and became pastor in Montgomery Alabama. When Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a segregated bus on December 1, 1955, King helped to organize support for her. His home was dynamited and his family threatened. His non-violent response to these crises was important to the eventual success of the campaigns. In 1963, 200,000 people gathered in peaceful assembly at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington and heard there his *I have a dream* speech. Federal civil rights laws were passed later that year. With his eloquent preaching, he called the US to a new commitment to the ideal of justice, while at the same time consistently resisting the temptation to violence, even when provoked. He was shot and killed by a sniper on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. The civil calendar recalls him on the Monday closest to his birthday, rather than his death-day, the usual church practice.

~ Pastor Elkin

COUNCIL UPDATE

Inside This Issue:

The Story of the Three Martins.....	1
Council Update.....	2
Website & E-mail Addresses.....	2
Parish Register.....	2
Upcoming Milestone Calendar.....	3
Lunch N' Fellowship.....	3
Youth & Family Ministry Thank You.....	3
Pastor Thanks Assisting Ministers.....	3
Directory Address Changes.....	4
Women of St. Mark's calendar.....	4
New Year Resolutions.....	4
Dr. Alexander Nesbitt	5
Nurses Notes.....	5
Selinsgrove Center Christmas Party.....	6
Recycle Your Christmas Gift Bags.....	6
ARW Christmas Baskets Collection.....	6
Blankets for Shepherd of the Streets....	6
Volunteers needed for Habitat Lunch...	6
Shipping Container #22 to Liberia.....	7
Bishop's Days for Confirmands.....	7
Bishop's Days for New Members.....	7
Women of the ELCA Day of Learning.....	7
Pregnancy Care Center News.....	8
Bread Baking with Katy!.....	9
St. Mark's Lions.....	9
Souper Bowl of Caring.....	9
New Worship Opportunities.....	9
Operation Christmas Child.....	10
Teddy Bear & Mitten Trees.....	10
Catechetical Retreat 2008.....	10
Friday Fun Night.....	10
3rd Grade Milestone.....	11
Blessing of the Keys.....	11
Bishop's Visit & Advent Luncheon.....	11
Kids Morning Out.....	11
FLOOD Winter Events.....	12
Cookie Baking & Caroling Update.....	12
<i>"a night for dancing"</i>	13
Children's Church.....	13
Inspiration for the New Year.....	14
Special Thank You Notes.....	15
Health, Healing & Wholeness.....	16
Birthdays & Anniversaries.....	17
"Seven Wonders of the World".....	17
Special Concerns List.....	18
January Calendar.....	19
A Year of Time.....	cover

COUNCIL MEETING

The Congregation Council did not have a regular session during December. Instead, President Harold Hershberger and his wife Joyce invited the members and their spouses to a dinner held at the Womens Club on the evening of December 5. Members enjoyed each other's company, and were thanked by the President and Pastor for their continuing service to the Lord Jesus through St. Mark's. The Council will gather for its next regular session on January 21, 6:30pm in the Crossways room.

From the Parish Register

- Pastor Elkin officiated at the funeral service for Leona Bogert (mother of Catherine Lundy) on November 29, 2007 at the Spitler Funeral Home.
- A Celebration of Life Service was held for Robert Darrow Curry on December 27, 2007 in the Nave.
- A Celebration of Life service was held for Calvin E. Bennett on December 28, 2007 at Spitler's Funeral Home.
- Pastor Elkin presided at the wedding of Joseph G. Reiter and Rachel L. Clausen on December 29, 2007 in the Nave.

Website & E- Mail Addresses

<http://www.stmarkswilliamsport.org>

Pastor Elkin	pastor@stmarkswilliamsport.org
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Gary Weber	gweber@stmarkswilliamsport.org
Susan M-Smith	smsmith@stmarkswilliamsport.org
Bernadette Jones	bjones@stmarkswilliamsport.org
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Sharon Comini	scomini@stmarkswilliamsport.org
Richard Wagner	rwagner@stmarkswilliamsport.org

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY NEWS



Upcoming Milestone Calendar

January 13

Remembrance of Baptism,
Giving of the Faith Chests

February 3

All the Languages of Good News

March 2

Prayer Pillows

February 24, March 2 and 9

Blessing of Affirmers

March 22

Affirmation of Baptism

May 4

Wedding Anniversary

May 11

Sending our members of *The Way*
with prayers for their Christian Vocation

Another kind of thank you....

It takes the thought and work of so many different persons to organize our praise of God week after week. Each year Pastor Elkin hosts a dinner for one of the groups of persons who assist in the leadership of worship as a way of saying thank you for their continuing service.

This year the group will be a part of the corps of Assisting Ministers. The date for the event is January 13, 6:00 P.M. in Fellowship Hall. The menu is a closely guarded secret. [In other words, the pastor hasn't figured it out yet.] Written invitations will be in the mail shortly.

Lunch N' Fellowship

**Wednesday, January 16th
Noon**

Pork & Sauerkraut

**Bring a dish!
Bring a friend!**



We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have helped and supported us in the past year.

Your capable and willing assistance and kind words mean more than we can say.

We hope we have met our church families' needs and provided channels for involvement and growth in their faith.

God bless you all in 2008 and beyond!

*Yours in Christ,
Sharon Comini*

&

***Bernadette Jones,
Youth and Family Ministry***

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY NEWS

Directory Address Changes

Jennifer Mainwaring	1702 Sherwood Ct., Apt. F	Allentown, PA	19109-3399
Heather Snyder	22 S. Broad Street	Hughesville, PA	17737-1303
Julie Patrick	193 Crown Pointe Drive	York, PA	17402-7808

Women of St. Mark's NO DOLDRUMS IN JANUARY!

Fun, Food, and Fellowship each Wednesday

As usual, we will meet each Wednesday morning to make quilts. In addition, the following events are planned for noon on Wednesdays:

January 2 - Bread Baking with Katy Elkin (11:00 a.m.)

January 9 - Women's annual meeting at Hoss's to plan our fund giving to charities

January 16 - Lunch 'N Fellowship with Dick Lakey

January 23 - Snow/Rain date for Women's meeting



A Different Set of Resolutions for the New Year

- I will stop paying attention to the hysteria promoted by the television forecasters, look out the door, and make my own decision about whether the weather is safe enough for me to travel today.
- I will think carefully about what ways I will share the Gospel in the coming year. If my physical or financial situation has changed, I know that doesn't mean that I don't have responsibility; rather that I need to develop different ways of serving.
- On those times when I am not able to be with the congregation in worship on Sunday, I will read the lessons, etc. printed in the previous Sunday's bulletin.
- When I have overnight company, I will invite the folks to join me in worship on Sunday morning.
- I will look for those times when I am able to join in Morning Prayer at 9:00 on weekday mornings.
- When I can't be at Morning Prayer, I will use the lesson, Psalm, and/or Hymn from the list in the Bulletin; or else make use of another devotional book.
- I will carefully consider in which of the many possible projects announced in the congregation I will participate, reaching beyond the things that I have always done to try something new also.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY NEWS

Stephen Ministers Invite the Congregation to hear

Dr. Alexander Nesbitt
January 3rd 9:30 a.m.
Crossways Room



Dr. Nesbitt will speak to the Stephen Ministers about Hospice, Palliative Care, The Gatehouse, and advanced care Planning including Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST.) The POLST form facilitates the process of translating end-of-life discussions with patients into actual treatment decisions, and provides security for the individual and physician that the expressed wishes will be carried out. Please consider joining the Stephen Ministers for this informative presentation!

Nurse's Notes

January 2008

January 6

If you are having oral surgery that involves the use of self-dissolving stitches, you may want to avoid using toothpastes that contain peroxide (usually 'whitening' & baking soda formulas) or with baking soda until your incision is completely healed. Doctors at the University of Texas discovered that sutures exposed to peroxide dissolved after only a few days – not enough time for total healing. (January 2008, *Prevention*)

January 13

Use care when searching for reliable health information on the internet – particularly when the website ends with '.com' for commercial sites – these typically are designed to promote or sell products. Sites ending in ".edu", ".org" or ".gov" are typically less biased and more reliable when it comes to accurate information. In addition, pay attention to the dates on information. Health information that is greater than 5 years old is considered outdated. Remember the 3 Ds: Dates, Documentation, and Double-check!

January 20

If it sounds too good to be true ... it probably is. The FDA and the National Council Against Health Fraud recommend avoiding products or practices that make the following 'claims'.

1. Ads using the words "breakthrough", "magical", or "new discovery".
2. Promotional material/ads that use what sounds like medical terms – "detoxify", "purify", "energize" as these claims are difficult to define or measure.
3. Claims that the product can treat a wide range of symptoms, cure, or prevent a number of diseases.
4. The product says it is backed by scientific studies, but no references are provided, are very limited, or are out of date (more than 5 years).
5. The product ads mention only benefits with no mention of side-effects.
6. The manufacturer claims the government or medical profession is suppressing important information about the product's benefits.

January 27

Did you know ... it is illegal for anyone to come to your home uninvited to sell Medicare insurance? Don't believe anyone who just 'shows up' on your doorstep claiming to be from Medicare!

Social Ministry News

Recycle Unwanted Christmas Bags

"The Social Ministry Committee is collecting gently used, small Christmas bags to use at next year's Selinsgrove Center party. If purchased new they would cost \$.50 each or two for \$1.00. Donations can be placed in the large Christmas bag in the Narthex. Thank you for thinking green." Thanks for your help, Becky

Christmas Baskets



Each year the American Rescue Workers fill several hundred Christmas food baskets for needy families in our community. This year our congregation supported their efforts by donating a barrel of canned green beans. The Social Ministry Committee thanks you for answering this call to reach out to those in need in our community.

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Blankets for the Shepherd of the Streets

Recently Pastor Elkin spent an afternoon serving in the Shepherd's office. During that short time, all available blankets were given to clients in need of bedding. To help meet this need, particularly during the cold winter months, the Social Ministry Committee is collecting new and gently used blankets in all sizes for use by the Shepherd of the Streets.

Please check your closets for a blanket you no longer need or purchase a new blanket at the After-Christmas sales.

Your assistance with this project will be greatly appreciated by those less fortunate than us. Blankets can be placed in the tubs in the Narthex.



Selinsgrove Party Update

St Mark's Elves made their annual visit December 4, 2007 to the Selinsgrove Center to entertain and visit with a group of women in the CM-6 Living Area. The elves included Pastor and Donna Elkin, Lou DeSeau, Shirley and Jackie Kinney, Gladys Knauss, Bernadette Jones, Elsie Sechler, Lois Smith, and Becky Miller Pryor. The residents and their caregivers enjoyed songs, the story of St. Nicholas, gifts and fellowship. Heartfelt thanks and appreciation is extended to the members of the congregation who donated pudding cups, body wash, or money to offset the cost of hosting this event.

A special thank you goes to the St. Mark's bakers and candy makers (Shirley and Jackie Kinney, Mary Schultz, Todd Smith and Cheryl Williams) for helping to create three large cookie trays for the caregivers of CM-6. Special thanks also goes to Larue Dieter for wrapping all our gifts. Everything was so cheery and bright.

Habitat Luncheon Update

On December 1, 2007 Donna Elkin, Gladys Knauss, Elsie Sechler, and Becky Miller Pryor served lunch to 12 very hungry volunteers at Habitat for Humanity's future warehouse, building supply store and office site on Edwin Street. Our meal was made heartier with the large pot of vegetable soup donated by Bob Miller. Bob, please accept our thanks for finding time to assist us.



The luncheon proved to be a fine time of fellowship with the group. One man stated he had been baptized as an infant and attended St. Mark's as a child growing up in the Basin Street area. The Social Ministry Committee wishes to thank the congregation for their donations of food and money for this luncheon.

Another opportunity to support Habitat for Humanity's work, by providing lunch to a work crew, will be Saturday, February 2, 2008. Please contact Becky Miller Pryor if you can provide food or serve that day. Monetary donations to offset the cost of food are also being accepted.

USS ARK, SYNOD & WEST BRANCH NEWS

U.S.S. Sends Shipping Container #22 to Liberia

Approximately 45 volunteers turned out on Saturday, November 17th in approximately 45 degree weather to load our synod's 22nd cargo container since 1991 for the Lutheran Church in Liberia [LCL]. This particular shipment was made up of 218 boxes of theology books for a new library being built on the grounds of an LCL training center for pastors and lay leaders; 107 boxes (3020 pounds of LBWs for various congregations where English is the primary language; medical supplies of all kinds for Phebe and Curran hospitals; parish supplies of all sorts (choir gowns, altar paraments, stoles and robes for pastors); school supplies of all sorts; school desks from Susquehanna; 222 large paper bags of tee shirts to fill up the spaces between the legs of the non-stackable desks; 430 pounds of Bibles; 6 sewing machines, 19 computers donated by Susquehanna U.; textbooks from Shikellamy School District; used clothing; food and tools for 14 synod-sponsored work-crew members who will fly to Liberia in January; 9 bicycles; one generator; and one 8-foot long altar given by Emmanuel/Middleburg. The entire consignment weighed just under 28,000 pounds. The shipping cost, Selinsgrove to Monrovia, totaled \$7500, with marine insurance and various other fees driving the cost to \$7901. The Union County Thrivent chapter contributed \$1600, representing funds that congregations in that county never spent in 2007. The container was loaded from the old Groce's silk mill on Sassafras St, now turned into a storage facility by S.U. It took the volunteer loaders, including two youth groups from Sunbury, 3 hrs. 20 minutes to load the container. Anthony Graham, the truck driver, left fully loaded at 2:00 p.m. to return to the Port Elizabeth, New Jersey docks. From there it sailed on a container ship on December 2, with the expectation that it would reach Liberia in approximately 4 weeks-just about the time our volunteer work-team members arrive in Liberia (by air!) to begin their reconstruction work.

From Dr. Bob Bradford,
U.S.S. Global Mission Committee

Bishop's Days for Confirmands, New Members

A first-annual **Bishop's Day for New Members to the U.S.S.** has been postponed (due to weather) to **Sunday, April 13 at 3:00 pm** at **Trinity Lutheran Church, Milton**. All those who received invitations to the originally-scheduled event will receive a second invitation to the postponed event. If congregations receive additional new members prior to the April date, they may send their contact information to the synod office (before March 26, 2008) so that they, too, may be invited to this special occasion.

The first-annual **Bishop's Day for Senior Confirmands and their Families** will be held on **Sunday, February 24 at 2:30 pm** (note earlier start time than previously announced) at **St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Shamokin Dam**. Congregations are asked to send the contact information for their "senior" confirmands (those in their final year of confirmation) to the synod office no later than Feb. 1 so that personal invitations may be sent to each from the Bishop.

Women of the ELCA in the U.S.S. Day of Learning

The U.S.S. Women of the ELCA's Day of Learning takes place this April 26, 2008 at Faith Lutheran Church, Lewisburg.

The theme is: "Praying Boldly".
Registration Cost: \$10.
Registration is from 9:30-10 a.m.

Two workshops will be offered: one presented by Fred and Roberta Anderson, the Eastern regional coordinators for the World Mission Prayer League. The second workshop will be presented by Rev. Ted Cockley, Chaplain of Buffalo Valley who will present a themed workshop on Hospice and Prayer. The Bible Study Leader is Rev. Frank Showers, Pastor of Church of the Savior and St. Matthew's Williamsport. For your listening pleasure, Pastor Showers and Pastor Cockley will be serenading us during lunch.

PREGNANCY CARE CENTER NEWS

...That They May Have Life!

Are you aware that the number one reason a young woman terminates her pregnancy is because of economic circumstances? She also fears that having a baby will interfere with her schooling, her career, or her ability to care for other children. In other words, women do not "choose abortion", they seek abortion when they feel like they have no other choice.

For three decades, pregnancy centers such as The Pregnancy Care Center of the Susquehanna Valley have been providing hope to women and men facing unplanned pregnancies. Each week over 10,000 women come to centers such as our local one seeking answers.

We can make a life-changing difference in the lives of women, men, and families in our community by partnering with the local pregnancy center.

- 1 They are always looking for volunteers. In fact, training sessions for new volunteers will be held in Sunbury in mid-February 2008. Call Pam Burkholder at 321-8254, in her office at 854 West Third Street, for more information.
- 2 Several times each year we advertise the sorts of things that are needed for the care center. When shopping, always be on the lookout for bargains in this area.
- 3 Pray regularly for the local center, its needs and its work. Ask the Lord to open the eyes of mothers and fathers to see that they are not alone and that there is hope.

What difference can all of this make?

A local woman writes:

"I've been a resident at the Providence House operated by the Pregnancy Care Center of the Susquehanna Valley for five months now, and I've had positive experiences here. The staff have made me feel comfortable, wanted, and loved at all times. Everyone always seems to be there for you no matter what. I have been able to learn so much about myself and the love of others and God. I've never felt so fulfilled before. The program has not only helped me with becoming a good parent for my child on the way, but it has also helped me to become the right parent for the children I already have. The experiences I have had here have been the best things that could happen in my life right now. I feel better about myself and the person I've grown into since I've been here, and the relationship I have formed with God. My only regret is not knowing of this place earlier in my life.... I continue to pray that God keeps blessing those of the house and all affiliated with it so that other women can experience the joys and blessings that I have."

"For it was You who formed my inward parts; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are Your works; that I know very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. In Your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed." ~ Psalms 139:13-16

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

ST. MARK'S LIONS



All of our kids played excellent first games on December 15. The Midgets' game, unfortunately, resulted in a loss. The Beginner Pee-Wees played very well their first time out and lost in overtime.

The children were great sports and played well. We couldn't be more proud of them.

Our practices will resume every Tuesday, beginning January 8, 2008, at Trinity Episcopal Church. The Beginner Pee Wee team practices from 6 p.m. until 7 p.m. and the Midgets from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Please watch the bulletins for game times as that information was not available when we went to print.

Players, please arrive a half-hour early for your games!!

To all members of the congregation, please take just 30 minutes out of your day to cheer on some our young ambassadors. Your support could make the difference!

We are on a mission to fight hunger and poverty. You can help.

"Lord, as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those without a bowl of soup to eat"



More than 15 years ago on a Super Bowl Sunday, a single youth group was inspired by a simple prayer. They started the Souper Bowl of Caring, a youth-led movement that is now an international event. Since 1990, the Souper Bowl of Caring has raised more than \$33 million for individual charities across the country. It is also turning our nation's biggest week-end of football into its largest weekend of giving. Each year, tens of thousands of our nation's youth put God's love into action through the Souper Bowl of Caring. You can help them feel the significance of caring for others. Drop a dollar in the soup pots that will be in the narthex on January 27 and February 3 as you leave worship. Your donation will go directly to a charity right here in our community. With your help, more dollars will be raised, more lives will be changed, and more young people will experience the joy of serving Christ by serving others.

It's
BREAD
BAKING
with
Katy
2008!



What a great way to begin the year!
Wednesday January 2 11:00 am
Katy will be back!

Come in flour-proof clothes and ready for fun!

New Worship Opportunities

On the 1st Sunday of each month we meet in the chapel at 7:00 PM. This 1/2 hour service of Word and Prayer is a quiet, reflective time using the Taize community style of music.

On the 3rd Sunday of each month we meet in the chapel at 8:00 PM. This 1/2 hour service of Word and Praise uses livelier music, such as we explored on Wednesday's last Spring.

We hope you will join us as we explore new ways to praise and worship our Lord.

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Yes, we know it's over for this year!!! But, it's not too early to start on next year!!! YES!!! NEXT year!!! We picked up an idea from another congregation in which they made the packing of these boxes an intergenerational event AND took advantage of the after-Christmas sales!! Christmas coloring books for 25¢ each? WOW!!



The way it works is like this: scout around the sales this January and during the rest of the year (back-to-school?). Don't try to get a lot of different things to fill one or two boxes. If you find a good deal, pick up a dozen or so of one item! Bring it in to the office here. We'll store it.

In the beginning of November, we'll have soup and sandwiches after a 10:30 service and have a group pack-and-wrap!!! Sounds like fun to us!!! How about you? This doesn't preclude anyone packing their own boxes if they enjoy it. This is merely another reason to get folks together for a good time and to help others. So! What do you say?? See you at the mall!!!

TEDDY BEARS & MITTENS

THANK YOU to everyone who contributed on the trees in Fellowship Hall!!! The Kids' Clothes Closet will receive 4 scarves, 33 hats, and 22 pairs of gloves.



This clothing will help to keep needy children within the community warm this season. 143 Teddy bears will be distributed to the Pregnancy Care Center, The Wise Options for Women shelter, and the Williamsport Police Department for the comfort of children during traumatic times. A very special thank you to all!

CATECHETICAL RETREAT 2008

Catechetical Retreat 2008 is scheduled for January 12, 2008, at Messiah Lutheran. Topics of discovery include: **Muggles, God and, Harry Potter**, by Pastor Frontz (Messiah); **Rods, Reels, and Religion: Catchy Christian Commitment**, by Pastor Zetto (Bethany); **Image is Everything**, by Pastor Deibler (St. Luke) & Pastor Showers (Church of the Savior); **It's a Jungle out There—Living in a Global Village**, by Pr. Huckfeldt (St. Michael's); **Parents, Teens and Money**, by Mr. Keith Woods (Thrivent); and **Shards and Shrapnel: Violence and Hope**, by Pastor Elkin (yeah—he's ours!).



Friday Fun Night

January 25th

6 p.m.



You should come! You don't know what you're missing!

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

Passing the Faith: 3rd Grade Milestone



Ezra Buckman, Morgan Comini and Kara Hershey received their Bibles at the 10:30 service on December 2. Their families highlighted favorite passages and included messages and prayers for the children. They got to meet Bishop Driesen at the luncheon afterward, when he and Pastor Elkin spoke with them and signed their Bibles.

Passing the Faith: Blessing of the Keys

A serious omission occurred in the past two newsletters: On October 28, 2007, Derek Gilbert, son of Matt and Wanda Fortin, passed the milestone we call Blessing of the Young Driver and Car Keys. At the 10:30 service, a keychain that bears Luther's seal was given to Derek as a reminder that the gifts God continues to grant us day after day in every place we travel must be exercised with responsibility to God and all of the people around us. He received the blessing of the congregation.

Derek brought with him something from his childhood, an object that he passed on to another. He surrendered a book, one that he enjoyed as a child, but no longer reads. For him it is a sign of time gone by, of a time that will not come again.



Please let the church know if you or your child has recently received a junior or senior license as soon as possible. A date for celebration will be set once we know who these special teens are.

PLEASE CALL US!!

Bishop's Visit, Milestone and Advent Wreaths



About sixty people attended the meal marking the beginning of Advent. We all sat down to a marvelous lasagna dinner after the 10:30 service.

As that was wrapping up, Bishop Driesen and Pastor Elkin took our third graders aside to look at and talk about the Bibles they received and the special messages written by relatives and friends.

The making of the wreaths followed. 16 wreaths were put together by folks ranging from small children to children-at-heart. Creativity abounded in the use of holly, pine, spruce and hemlock; ribbon and berry sprigs; small ornaments and, of course, candles.

While all that was going on, the council met with the bishop for conversation.

Kids' Morning Out

What a great time! Over eight children and six helpers attended this event on Saturday, December 8. They made and decorated cookies for our



shut-ins, made birdfeeders and presents for their families, played games and listened to some stories. The parents were appreciative of the time to run errands and relax! A good time was had by all!

A big "THANK YOU" goes out to Hannah, Christina, Riley, Stephen, Sara and Savannah (a friend of Hannah's) for their invaluable assistance with the younger children. Thank you, too, for allowing us to enjoy your children for a few hours. We look forward to having even more children join us for this special morning next year!

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

F.L.O.O.D.

(Friends Living Out Our Discipleship)

WINTER EVENTS

Susquehanna University

SUNDAY, JANUARY 6

2 P.M. TO 5 P.M.

S.U. Field House

GRADES 6-12

(and adult sponsors)

Swimming or basketball

Register by January 4

(ADULTS FREE!)

**(one adult needed for every
six youth)**

6th-8th GRADE RETREAT

February 1 & 2, at CML

CSI:

Christus Salvare Inaquae

(Christ saves with water – rough translation)

**Worship, games, service
projects, movie, bonfire,
fellowship**

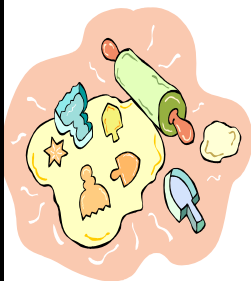
Friday, 5:30-6 p.m., registration

**Saturday, 5 p.m., return home
(\$30 fee for adults)**

Registration due by January 11

COOKIE BAKING

Another huge "THANK YOU" goes out to Jackie, Donna, Bob and Mary for their able assistance later on that Saturday with the cookie baking. We produced lots of cookies to share and for the carolers to deliver that Sunday. A wonderful assortment of goodies was assembled during this afternoon: pizelles, chocolate chip cookies, boiled oatmeal (no-bake) cookies, oatmeal cookies and date-filled cookies; along with the mystery cookies and decorated sugar cookies made by the children and some cookies donated by Dorothy, who dropped by with two plates of treats... We hope more folks can join us next year. THANK YOU!!!



CAROLING

Drat the weather, anyway!!! In spite of the inclement weather and nasty roads, the intrepid duo of Pastor Elkin and Beth Shafranko traveled in opposite directions bearing good wishes and cookies to as many of St. Mark's shut-ins as they could reach. As one of your New Year resolutions, could you plan on being involved in this sharing of the message of Christmas next year? It would be a great thing if we could visit everyone on the list this coming year.

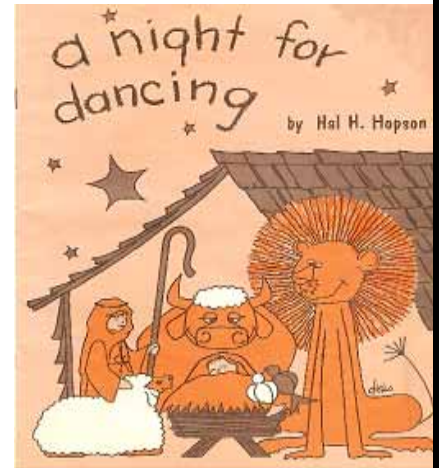


YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

a night for dancing

This lovely Christmas Cantata by Hal H. Hopson was presented during the Sunday School hour on December 23 and again on Christmas Eve, at the 7:00 pm service.

Many thanks go out to our wonderful cast, ranging in age from 3 years to...well, we won't reveal that. Our youthful actors included: **Stephen Boone, Ezra Buckman, Gillian Buckman, Makensi Doeblor, Madalyn Fortin, Ben Haussmann, Elizabeth Haussmann, Hannah Haussmann, Sean Jensen, Emily Newcomer, Dawson Owen, Devin Owen, Annika Waffenschmidt, Riley Weber, Stefan Weber, Sadie Wentzel, Taylor Wentzel, Anna Zeigler, and Laura Zeigler.** The children did, indeed, dance on this special night and we are very proud of them.



Leading the children was **Declan Jones**, as Matthew, the shepherd. **Nick Buckman and Stephanie Fortin** portrayed Joseph and Mary. All three did a fine job and we thank them for their hard work. Providing the backbone of the choral parts was our adult chorus: **Karen Boone, Deb Buckman, Ruth Burkholder, Walter Doeblor, Vicki Haussmann, Joyce Hershberger, Pam Jensen, L. Jane Kline, Kirk Owen, Michele Owen, Beth Shafranko, Lois Smith, Gary Weber, Shelby Weber, Melinda Wentzel, Melvin Wentzel, and Diana Zeigler.** **Sara Jones** accompanied the chorus with her flute.

Special assistance with refreshments, props, costumes and cast management was received from **Becky Miller-Pryor, Shirley Kinney, Jackie Kinney, Bob Jones, Jane Kline, Lou DeSeau** and **Pastor Elkin.**

*Thank you to all those who stopped to hear our story—
may it live in your hearts through-out the New Year.*



CHILDREN'S CHURCH

will be held on Sunday, January 13, 2008, at 10:30 a.m. in the Chapel. We look forward to seeing you and your family there! Please keep an eye on the bulletin for a heads-up regarding our special offering.

INSPIRATION FOR A NEW YEAR

A New Year's Day Poem

by Charles Moir

O Thou whose glory fills the heavens,
Whose bounty clothes the earth,
To Thee a poem of thanks we raise
For blessings from our birth.

For that untiring love Thou dost,
From day to day renew,
O may it on our hearts descend
Like heaven-distilled dew.

For mercy great, unending still,
Which gave up to the grave
Thine only Son, the Sinless One,
Our sinful souls to save.

While entering on another year
Our cares on Thee we cast,
Beseeching aid in days to come
Which cheered us through the past.

That still the freedom may be ours
To kneel down in Thy sight,
And worship Thee at shut of day,
And in the morning light.

That from temptation's fatal paths
Thou turn our steps away;
And keep us from unholy thoughts
That lead the mind astray.

No more may lust of worldly wealth
Command thoughts that are thine;
Nor may we envy other's lot,
Or at our own repine.

Than all the riches earth can boast
Or gems beneath the sea,
We know the pious, humble heart,
More precious is to Thee.

How needful, then, to train our thoughts,
And fan the heavenly flame
Of faith, in the believing heart,
Triumphing o'er sin and shame

And holding by the Word, thou hast
For grace and guidance given,
Pass through this world in holy fear,
True candidates for heaven.

A New Year's Plea

By Edgar Guest

Lord, let me stand in the thick of the fight,
Let me bear what I must without whining;
Grant me the wisdom to do what is right,
Though a thousand false beacons are shining.

Let me be true as the steel of a blade,
Make me bigger than skillful or clever;
Teach me to cling to my best, unafraid,
And harken to false gospels, never.

Let me be brave when the burden is great,
Faithful when wounded by sorrow;
Teach me, when troubled, with patience to wait
The better and brighter to-morrow.

Spare me from hatred and envy and shame,
Open my eyes to life's beauty;
Let not the glitter of fortune or fame
Blind me to what is my duty.

Let me be true to myself to the end,
Let me stand to my task without whining;
Let me be right as a man, as a friend,
Though a thousand false beacons are shining.

A Prayer for the New Year

Come, Holy Spirit,
Spirit of God, Spirit of the Risen Christ,
Be with us today and always.
Be our Light, our Guide, and our Comforter.
Be our Strength, our Courage,
And our Sanctifier.

May this new year be a time
Of deep spiritual growth for us,
A time for welcoming Your graces and gifts,
A time for forgiving freely and unconditionally,
A time for growing in virtue and goodness.

Come, Holy Spirit,
Be with us today and always.

Amen.

Special Thank You's

Dear Becky, Elsie, Gladys & Tom.

Thank you so much for providing lunch for our volunteers on Saturday, December 1st., Volunteering is hungry work! I know the food was appreciated! Thanks again!

Jocelyn Person
Volunteer Coordinator

Dear Donna Zierdt Elkin & everyone at
St. Mark's Lutheran Church:

I am writing to thank you for your recent donation to the animals here at the Lycoming County SPCA. You donated \$114 worth of food, which was 200 lbs of dog food and 40 lbs of kitten food (we were totally out of kitten food).

I cannot tell you how important your help is. Through your generosity, we are able to continue our mission in the care of domestic animals in Lycoming County. Last year we cared for 4, 156 animals at our shelter, as well as offering many other services. Thank you again for your generosity and support.

With grateful appreciation,
Jennifer M. MvConnell
Director of Development

Thank you for the wonderful winter clothes provided for the twins. They warmed not only their little bodies but our hearts as well.

The Poliska Family

Received your check and thank you very much. It will be a huge help to the aid for Liberia.

Sincerely, Bette Linie
(Bette McCrandall's mom)

She returned to Liberia today. (12-12-2007)

Thanks to St. Mark's family for your prayers and sympathy for Harriet.

May you have a blessed Christmas.
~ Henry Fornwalt

Dear Pastor Elkin,

Greetings from the Lycoming College Choir! We wanted to thank you for hosting us on Sunday, November 18th. We truly enjoyed singing our praises during the service, especially in such a beautiful sanctuary as yours. The congregation and you were wonderfully receptive and warm to our choir members and made it a very pleasant experience to make music! Thank you again for this opportunity. We look forward to coming to St. Mark's again in the near future. God bless!

Sincerely,
Caitlin Oakley,
Choral Assistant

We received a very nice Christmas card signed by all the students at United Campus Ministry at Penn College thanking us for our support of that ministry. It is a blessing to work with the young people at United Campus Ministry.

Thanks from the Pastor

There are so many reasons to say Thank You, and we should all remember the encouragement from Colossians: *And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.* [Colossians 3:17] Here are a few things from my list. What might you add from your list?

--Thanks be to God for so many persons who have given the warm greetings Donna and I received in person, by card, and by gifts during this Christmas season.

--Thanks be to God for all those who serve in many capacities in the leadership of worship at St. Mark's. We are all blessed and strengthened by each person's contribution.

--Thanks be to God for the six persons who serve on our paid staff and for the dozens of persons who are unpaid leaders in so many different ways in the parish, all those who understand that it is truly our work together that is most blessed by God.

HEALTH, HEALING & WHOLENESS

**(W)holy, (W)holy, (W)holy:
January 2008**

The fourth chapter of 2 Kings 4:8-37 contains a very interesting and unusual story of the resurrection of a child by the prophet Elisha. In an account that echoes that of Sarah, the child is conceived and born to an aging man and his wife, a blessing bestowed upon them for their repeated hospitality to the one they recognized as a holy man. The boy's illness seems to have been sudden, the lad wanders into his father's field complaining, "Oh, my head, my head!" By noon he has died, but that is not the end of the story – the boy's mother, remembering Elisha, summons the prophet. After ministering to the boy's lifeless form, praying and pacing, Elisha arises; the boy sneezes seven times, and opens eyes! The woman was correct – this truly was a man of God – able to heal the sick and raise the dead!

What I found striking about this story were the child's symptoms. They reminded me of my own daughter and her many struggles with sinusitis. There were times, I am sure, when her pain must have seemed nearly unbearable! The vaporizer and a little tent constructed from a blanket, became her nest many-a-night; and with liquids, lots of love, the help of a caring allergist, and eventually the growth process, we were able to restore her to health again.

This is the time of year when many of us in the northern regions of the country, may find ourselves dealing with similar symptoms. You've had a cold – your head is stuffed up – you feel tired and achy, and after about two weeks, you still can't seem to shake the fullness and pounding in your head. After a thorough health history, examining your nose, listening to your chest and perhaps an x-ray, your doctor tells you that you have sinusitis – an infection in the lining of one or more of the sinus cavities that surround your eyes and nose. There are primarily two types of sinusitis – acute and chronic. The acute kind often starts and ends with the common cold. The sinuses become inflamed, swell, and cause the stuffy feeling and pain, and symptoms gradually ease after 7 – 10 days.

Health experts, however, believe that chronic sinusitis is due to a thickening of the lining of the nasal passages and sinuses due to constant inflammation. The underlying cause is not always known. They do know that the presence of growths, also known as polyps further inhibit air exchange and proper drainage. They also know that it often occurs in people with asthma - many of whom also have allergies, and that it is possibly the constant irritation from house dust mites, pets, molds and other inhaled particles that fuel the inflammation. For some, structural problems such as a deviated septum or constricted drainage passages may be at fault. Treatment by your doctor may include decongestants, antibiotics and/or steroids (orally or by spray and usually after other treatments have failed). For some, surgery is the final option.

Though there are no proven methods for preventing acute or chronic sinusitis, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in the National Institute of Health lists a few measures that may be of some benefit (www.niaid.nih.gov):

- ★ keep the nose moist with frequent use of saline (salt) sprays (available in your pharmacy)
- ★ keep your home humidified during heating season – however, be aware that too much moisture may contribute to the allergies (mentioned above)
- ★ avoid exposure to irritants – smoke, strong odors, chemicals, flowers (churches at Easter!)
- ★ avoid exposure known allergens
- ★ avoid long periods of time in the swimming pool – chlorine is an irritant
- ★ avoid water diving (which forces water into the sinuses from nasal passages)
- ★ consult your physician before flying for tips on relieving sinus and ear pressure
- ★ do not use nasal decongestant sprays without consulting your physician – they may have a rebound effect, worsening symptoms over a period of time!

Finally, never ignore a severe headache. Get medical attention immediately if a headache strikes suddenly and intensely; accompanies fever, stiff neck, mental confusion, seizures, double vision, weakness or numbness; begins or worsens after a head injury, fall or bump.

Debbie Best, Program Coordinator – Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries

BIRTHDAYS

Suzanne Hutchins	01/01	Jackie Kinney	01/13	Tara Thorne	01/23
Shelby Weber	01/01	Riley Weber	01/14	Walter Doebler	01/25
Cecil Calvert	01/02	Donna Boston	01/17	Bonnie Eyer	01/26
Ashley Ciesielski	01/02	Nathan Kimble	01/17	David Heaps	01/26
Jeremy Hinds	01/02	Ruth Lamade	01/17	Marc Kinney	01/26
Katherine Crane	01/03	Barbara McCullough	01/17	Robert Smith	01/26
Charlotte Hughes	01/03			Ruth Burkholder	01/27
Gregory Calvert	01/04			Dustin Kimble	01/27
Elizabeth Chrisman	01/04			Phyllis Ulman	01/27
James Newcomer	01/04			Sean Buckman	01/28
Mary Lou Doebler	01/06			Kristopher Caster	01/28
Shirley Dieffenbach	01/08			Theoron Hershey	01/29
Susan Baker	01/10	Ruth Rees	01/17	Zachary Jarrett	01/29
Andrew Zeigler	01/10	Brenda Bittner	01/19	Linda DeSeau	01/30
Peter Zeigler	01/10	Morgan Comini	01/19	Makaylee Goertz	01/30
Toby Zimmerman	01/10	Courtney Jarrett	01/20	Devin Owen	01/30
Kathy Kolb	01/12	Elizabeth Ruesskamp	01/22	Travis Thorne	01/30
Mary Armstrong	01/13	Christina MacGill	01/23	Kathleen Caster	01/31



ANNIVERSARIES

	Arthur & June Decker	01/20
	Charles & Ruth Homan	01/23

SEVEN WONDERS OF THE WORLD

Sometimes in life there are more wonders than you thought...

A group of students were asked to list what they thought were the present Seven Wonders of the World. Though there were some disagreements, the following got the most votes: Egypt's Great Pyramids, Taj Mahal, Grand Canyon, Panama Canal, Empire State Building, St. Peter's Basilica and China's Great Wall

While gathering the votes, the teacher noted that one quiet student hadn't turned in her paper yet. So she asked the girl if she was having trouble with her list.

The girl replied, "Yes, a little. I couldn't quite make up my mind because there were so many."

The teacher said, "Well, tell us what you have, and maybe we can help."

The girl hesitated, then read, "I think the Seven Wonders of the World are:

to touch, to taste, to see, to hear

(She hesitated a little, and then added:)

to feel, to laugh, and to love."

The room was so full of silence you could have heard a pin drop.

Those things we overlook as simple and "ordinary" are truly wondrous.

A gentle reminder -- that the most precious things in life cannot be bought.

I hope your life is filled with the world's Seven Wonders. ~ Author Unknown

SPECIAL CONCERNS LIST

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Williamsport, PA 17701

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Charles Ditchfield
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Williamsport, PA 17701

Earl Foulkrod
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Montoursville, PA 17754

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SAINT MARK'S CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 2008 St. Mark's Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>6 <i>Epiphany of Our Lord</i> 8:00 AM & 10:30 AM HC 9:15 AM Sunday School 11:40 AM Kantorei 2:00 PM F.L.O.O.D. at Susq. Univ. 4:00 PM The Way 5:00 PM Fam. Handbell 7:00 PM Word & Prayer Service</p>	<p>7 9:00 AM Morning Prayer 6:45 PM Adult Handbells 7:00 PM Civic Chorus</p>	<p>1 **Office Closed**</p>	<p>2 9:00 AM Morning Prayer 9:15 AM Staff Mtg. & Sewing 11:00 AM Bread Baking with Katy</p>	<p>3 6:31 AM Men's Ministry 8:00 AM Stephen Ministry I 9:00 AM Morning Prayer 9:30 AM Stephen Ministry I & II - Hospice & Palliative Care 7:00 PM Conf. Cabinet @ Messiah 7:30 PM Senior Choir</p>	<p>4 9:00 AM Morning Prayer</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>13 <i>Baptism of Our Lord</i> 8:00 AM & 10:30 AM HC 9:15 AM Sunday School 11:40 AM Cont. Choir 4:00 PM The Way 5:00 PM Fam. Handbell 6:00 PM Dinner for Asst. Min.</p>	<p>14 9:00 AM Morning Prayer 6:45 PM Adult Handbells 7:00 PM Civic Chorus</p>	<p>8 9:00 AM Morning Prayer 10:00 AM Conf. Pastors @ St. Mt. 7:00 PM Worship & Music Comm. Mtg.</p>	<p>9 9:00 AM Morning Prayer 12:00 PM Women of St. Mark's Winter Luncheon (at Hoss's) 7:00 PM Mutual Ministry</p>	<p>10 6:31 AM Men's Ministry 9:00 AM Morning Prayer 7:30 PM Senior Choir</p>	<p>11 Council Agenda Deadline 9:00 AM Morning Prayer 7:00 PM Am. Guild of Organists Mtg. in Nave</p>	<p>12 9:00 AM Catechetical Retreat @ Messiah 3:00 PM Recorders</p>
<p>20 <i>Epiphany II</i> 8:00 AM & 10:30 AM HC 9:15 AM Sunday School 11:40 AM Kantorei 3:00 PM Youth Leadership Lab. 4:00 PM The Way 5:00 PM Fam. Handbell 6:00 PM Catechetes 7:00 PM Word & Praise Service</p>	<p>21 9:00 AM Morning Prayer 6:00 PM Civ. Ch. Bd. Mtg. 6:30 PM Council Mtg. 6:45 PM Adult Handbells 7:00 PM Civic Chorus</p>	<p>15 9:00 AM Morning Prayer 7:00 PM Finance Comm. (at the church)</p>	<p>16 9:00 AM Morning Prayer 12:00 PM Lunch 'N' Fellowship</p>	<p>17 6:31 AM Men's Ministry 9:00 AM Morning Prayer 5:00 PM Stephen Ministry II 7:30 PM Senior Choir</p>	<p>18 **Newsletter Deadline** 9:00 AM Morning Prayer</p>	<p>19</p>
<p>27 <i>Epiphany III</i> 8:00 AM & 10:30 AM HC 9:15 AM Sunday School 11:40 AM Cont. Choir 5:00 PM Fam. Handbell</p>	<p>28 9:00 AM Morning Prayer 6:30 PM VBS Preview @ COS 6:45 PM Adult Handbells 7:00 PM Civic Chorus</p>	<p>29 9:00 AM Morning Prayer</p>	<p>30 9:00 AM Morning Prayer 9:15 AM Staff Mtg. & Sewing 12:00 PM Bible Study</p>	<p>31 6:31 AM Men's Ministry 9:00 AM Morning Prayer 5:00 PM Stephen Ministry II 7:30 PM Senior Choir</p>	<p>25 9:00 AM Morning Prayer 9:15 AM Lion Crew</p>	<p>26 Pastor at Hughesville Trinity Lutheran Retreat</p>

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"A Year of Time"

Steven B. Cloud

... Though even thinking on the subject of time may prove discomfoting, it is not a bad idea—especially at the beginning of a new year.

As we look into 2008 we look at a block of time. We see 12 months, 52 weeks, 365 days, 8,760 hours, 525,600 minutes, 31,536,000 seconds. And all is a gift from God. We have done nothing to deserve it, earn it, or purchased it. Like the air we breathe, time comes to us as a part of life.

The gift of time is not ours alone. It is given equally to each person. Rich and poor, educated and ignorant, strong and weak—every man, woman and child has the same twenty-four hours every day.

Another important thing about time is that you cannot stop it. There is no way to slow it down, turn it off, or adjust it. Time marches on.

And you cannot bring back time. Once it is gone, it is gone. Yesterday is lost forever. If yesterday is lost, tomorrow is uncertain. We may look ahead at a full year's block of time, but we really have no guarantee that we will experience any of it.

Obviously, time is one of our most precious possessions. We can waste it. We can worry over it. We can spend it on ourselves. Or, as good stewards, we can invest it in the kingdom of God.

The new year is full of time. As the seconds tick away, will you be tossing time out the window, or will you make every minute count?