



The Lion of St. Mark's

DECEMBER 2009



From the Pastor: Sermons

Have you wondered how the sermon comes to us each week? What authority does it have? What difference does it make? Dr. William Willimon has some thoughtful comments:

When a sermon is preached, it is based on external authorization. The integrity of the preacher, the preacher's rhetorical gifts, and the setting of the sermon may all be possible sources of homiletical authority. Yet none of these sources of authority are as significant as scripture. Christian preaching has always been Biblical preaching. Our earliest sermons in the book of Acts and bits of sermons in the letters of Paul all show that gospel speakers do not begin with the present, in the speaker's experience, or in an astute assessment of the current

situation. They begin with the bible, with citation of and remembrance of scripture. Jesus spoke of that wise scribe who brings forth from the treasure of the tradition what is old and what is new. (Mt.13:52)

We begin with the assumption that the Bible is a gift of God that uniquely illuminates human life in the present, and that uniquely, indispensably speaks the promises of God and the truth that is God in Christ Jesus.....We realize that we are entering a difficult and demanding world, not because the Bible is ancient and Jewish, but because it is a world that is based upon convictions and assumptions (i.e. Jesus is Lord) that are quite different from our own.

....So many times for us a text has been a vessel that carries us from one place to another, a door that opened to us, leading us into a new existence.

....The Biblical preacher proclaims as the text proclaims, confident that the text is still quite capable of evoking a good hearing, despite either the limits of either the preacher or the listener. As Acts says it, the word of God is so lively, interesting and explosive that, even through our pitiful efforts, by the grace of God, "The word of the Lord grew and prevailed mightily." (Acts 19:20) "The word of God increased and the number of disciples multiplied greatly." (Acts 6:7)

*....The preacher is the one who is ordained by the church to engage in listening to the text on behalf of the church. ["The Authority of the Word," an article from *Homiletical Resources.*, Winter 2009-10]*

Pastor Elkin's sermons are available most weeks in print in the narthex before the service and have been made available online for the past three years as well on our congregational website, stmarkswilliamsport.org. When a question is "what was said?", look it up on the site; when the question is "what does that mean?" please call Pr. Elkin for a conversation.

Official Notice:

By call of the Congregation Council, a Special Assembly of the St. Mark's congregation will be held following the 8:00 & 10:30 services of worship on December 13, 2009 for the sole purpose of acting on the budget for 2007. A summary of the budget is included in this Lion on page 17 and complete details may be obtained from the Treasurer, Jackie Smith Kinney at 323-5938.

COUNCIL UPDATE

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COUNCIL MEETING NOTES

The Congregation Council met in regular session on November 16 in the Crossways room. The Council:

- received the regular reports of the pastor, officers, and committees.
- discussed the establishment of the audit committee.
- received the report of Bill Hill who attended the United Churches annual banquet.
- reviewed the work of the Finance Committee in budget preparation.
- adopted the budget for 2010 for submission to the congregation.
- called a special Congregation Assembly for December 13, as a "continued" meeting that begins following the 8:00 service, continues after the 10:30 service and also after the 8:00 service the following week, if needed.

Parish Register

- **Kyseem Smith**, son of Amanda Weaver and Kareem Smith, received the Sacrament of Holy Baptism on November 22.
- **Bethany Mathie** joined in marriage with **David Hellar** on Saturday, November 28, 2009

Statement schedule

The Financial Secretary will be sending financial statements out in early December for members to compare against their own records. If there are questions or problems, please bring them to the attention of the Financial Secretary before the end of the year when final statements will be mailed. The sooner we catch a mistake or handle a problem, the easier they are to correct!

Staff & Officers Contact Information

Church Office	323-4619	stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org	Church fax number	323-2452
The Reverend Kenneth Elkin, Pastor		pastor@stmarkswilliamsport.org	Pastor's Home Phone	323-7367
Dick Lakey, Director of Music		rlakey@stmarkswilliamsport.org	Website: stmarkswilliamsport.org	
Michele Owen, Christian Education		mowen@stmarkswilliamsport.org	Gary Weber, President	322-7149
Bernadette Jones, Christian Education		bjones@stmarkswilliamsport.org	Todd Smith, Vice-President	220-1350
Susan M-Smith, Parish Secretary		smsmith@stmarkswilliamsport.org	Jane Zimmerer, Secretary	433-3324
Richard Wagner, Financial Secretary		rwagner@stmarkswilliamsport.org	Jackie Kinney, Treasurer	323-5980
Lou DeSeau, Environmental Services		ldeseau@stmarkswilliamsport.org	Jane Larson, Stephen Ministry	433-3380

Social Ministry News

Calling Saint Mark's Elves

Please join the Social Welfare Committee on Tuesday, December 8, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in hosting a Christmas party for eighteen women at the Selinsgrove Center.

Saint Mark's has been visiting the Selinsgrove Center for many years but only began entertaining this group two years ago. These ladies, many in wheelchairs, require constant care from the staff. It is evident their caregivers are dedicated to the ladies and their care.

The committee needs your assistance with this event. Please consider doing one or more of the following.

- Join us that evening. There will be singing, storytelling and gifting. We will meet at the church parking lot at 5:30 p.m. and carpool to Selinsgrove.
- Donate Dove Body Wash or its generic equivalent. Their skin needs the moisturizing qualities in this type of body wash.
- Donate individual servings of pudding (no refrigeration needed) in all flavors. It is their favorite treat. They only receive vanilla, so other flavors are an extra-special treat.
- Donate colored tissue paper to package the body wash and pudding.
- We want to take holiday cookie trays, apples and snack-size boxes of raisins to their dedicated staff. Donate cookies and raisins to be given to their caregivers on three shifts.
- Donate money to offset the cost of gifting and purchasing fruit. Checks may be made payable to Saint Mark's.

Requested items for gifting can be left in the box in the Narthex. Please speak with Becky Miller Pryor to assist with this heartwarming event.



Calling St. Mark's Elves.....Again!

Be an angel and provide a Christmas gift to a resident of Danville State Hospital. Requests are generally modest and can easily be purchased at K-mart or Wal-Mart. Gift requests are available on the ornaments in the Narthex (four remain as this goes to print). Take an ornament. Sign the log sheet. Purchase the gift. Return it unwrapped with the ornament attached by December 6, 2009.



If no ornaments remain, please consider making a general gift. General gifts can be given to any resident not being individually gifted. Gifting options include phone cards, stationary, inexpensive watches and portable radios with headphones and extra batteries for the radios.

Please speak with Becky Miller Pryor for additional information.

Christian Community Service Opportunities



Christmas Baskets for American Rescue Workers

This year St. Mark's is collecting **CANS OF YAMS** for the American Rescue Workers to assist in filling more than 400 Christmas baskets they prepare for needy people in our community. The American Rescue Workers provide a Christmas basket filled with enough food to stretch leftovers for three or more days. As you are doing your holiday shopping, please pick up an extra can or two of **YAMS** to add to the barrel in the Narthex. The Rescue Workers will be picking up the barrel on December 18. So, donations will be accepted through Sunday, December 13, 2009 (you may also drop them off that week during office hours).

annual quilt raffle to benefit Wise Options



76" x 76" crazy quilt, featuring plants and animals with hues of blue and green. The 25 squares were hand-stitched by the artists of the Quilting Buzz; the machine quilting is by Gingham Goose Quilts of Wellsboro.

TICKETS:
1 for \$5
3 for \$10

available at the YWCA
(drawing held February 15, 2010)

All proceeds benefit the YWCA of Northcentral PA's Wise Options, a safe haven and a source of support for many, and gives help and hope to women, men and children survivors of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and other violent crimes. Wise Options offers free and confidential services 24-hours a day, seven days a week. Trained staff and volunteers provide immediate support and information to help clients deal with crises and offer follow-up assistance to deal with ongoing related issues.

**PINE ST.U.M. PRESENTS A LIVING NATIVITY
FRIDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 4 AT 6:30 & 7:30
ANYONE INTERESTED IN CAROLING FOR THIS EVENT,
PLEASE CONTACT PASTOR ELKIN.**



Dear Friend of Family Promise:

We are excited to team up with Hoss's Steak and Sea House to raise money for a very worthy cause. Please visit Hoss's on 12/12/2009 to help raise money to benefit Family Promise of Lycoming County, Inc.

Cut out and present this coupon on 12/12/2009 at Hoss's in Williamsport. Hoss's will then donate 20% of your total check to Family Promise

Group #6201

Please present this email when ordering. Voucher distribution is prohibited on Hoss's property. Thank you for your cooperation.

Opportunities for Fellowship

WEDNESDAY ECUMENICAL LUNCH

Join us from 12 to 1 p.m. for the Wednesday Noon Ecumenical Lunch Program. You're always assured of a tasty \$4 lunch, warm, ecumenical fellowship and a thoughtful program designed to enrich your life mentally, physically, spiritually and socially. The parking is free in the Pine Street lot north of the church from 11 to 1:30 p.m.

No reservations are necessary.

December Dates to remember:

- 2 Mr Charles E. Smith**, Lycoming County Coordinator, *"Toys for Tots"*
- 9 Colonel Sam Astin**, Officer in Charge, American Rescue Workers, *"Those Christmas Chimneys"*
- 16 Revs. R. Kenneth Weiss & Gwen Bernstine**, pastor, First Church of Christ Disciples & Dir. United Churches, *"Zachariah and Elizabeth Remember"*
- 30 Happy New Year**—no lunch scheduled

Food Pantry Needs

These are the items that are currently needed:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> spaghetti sauce, chunky soups, oodles-of-noodles, canned fruits hot chocolate hamburger & tuna helper peanut butter instant flavored oatmeal packets Granola bars stuffing mix Powdered milk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> canned vegetables cakes mixes & icing Jell-o and pudding mixes saltine crackers spaghetti pasta & sauce egg noodles powdered drink mix coffee microwave popcorn regular tea bags clean plastic bags |
|--|---|

Your donations are best brought Monday mornings from 9:30 - Noon. Persons needing food should call and leave their name and number on the answering machine. Appointments may be made to receive food on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 am-3 pm and when necessary at other times as well.

Gail Burkhart is the UCLC Food Pantry Coordinator and may be reached at 322-1657

Friday Fun Night December 18

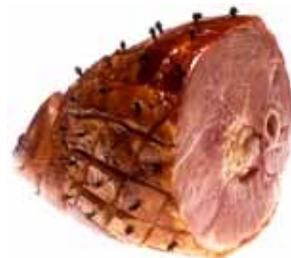
6:30 pm



Come join us
for
Reindeer
games!

Lunch N' Fellowship December 16 Noon

Join us for delicious
Christmas Ham



Nurse's Notes

Nurse's Notes, December 2009

December 6 There has been some confusion regarding how long one should stay out of work or school after flu-like illnesses. According to the CDC, individuals “with influenza-like illness [should] remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100 degrees F), or signs of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications”. (<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/exclusion.htm>)

December 13 Pull-cords on drapes continue to pose a threat of strangulation for infants and toddlers. The Consumer Product Safety Commission [CPSC] offers the following safety tips to prevent deaths and injuries associated with window covering cords:

- * Examine all shades and blinds in the home. CPSC recommends the use of cordless window coverings in all homes where children live or visit. Make sure there are no accessible cords on the front, side, or back of the product.
- * Do not place cribs, beds and furniture close to the windows because children can climb on them and gain access to the cords.
- * Make loose cords inaccessible.
- * If the window shade has looped bead chains, install tension devices to keep the cord taut.

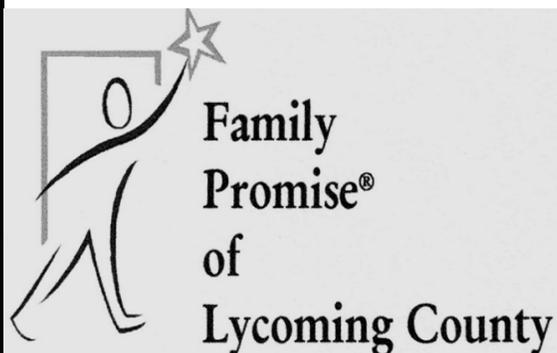
Note: Most window blinds sold prior to November 2000 have inner cords (for raising the slats of the blinds) that can be pulled by a child and form a loop in which the child's neck can entangle. Consumers should immediately repair these types of blinds. For a free repair kit, call the Window Covering Safety Council at 800-506-4636 or visit www.windowcoverings.org In addition, ask your child-care provider to check their blinds and window coverings as well.

December 20 Liquid potpourri can harm your pet. “Filling your house with the smell of pine or peppermint may seem inviting, but if you're partial to heating your scented oil in a simmer pot, know that it can cause serious harm to your cat. These oils are toxic to cats, and even a few licks can result in severe chemical burns in the mouth, fever, difficulty breathing, and tremors (shakes). Dogs aren't quite as sensitive, but it's still wise to scent your home with a non-toxic candle kept safely out of your pet's reach.” (*Prevention Magazine*, December 2009, pg. 126)

December 27 Did you know that only 2 tablespoons of sunflower seeds can supply nearly 40% of the recommended daily allowance of Vitamin E – an antioxidant that helps prevent sun damage? For a healthy crunch, sprinkle them onto your salad instead of croutons. (*Prevention Magazine*, December 2009, pg. 36)

Service of Remembrance
December 27th 4:00 p.m.

Family Promise



Jane Zimmerer and Becky Miller Pryor wish to thank the congregation for the many, many donations of towels, sheets, hygiene items, lamps, comforters, blankets, baby accessories, two beautiful wooden stands and money to get last minute needed items to host children and their families experiencing a housing crisis. Surely our guests will feel comforted in their temporary surroundings.

In the near future, we will be speaking with folks asking for volunteers to assist with setting up, preparing meals, visiting with our guests and cleaning up at the conclusion of our hosting week. Please be thinking and praying as to where you wish to serve. You can make a difference in a family's life by donating just two hours a week to Family Promise right here at St. Mark's!

Notes from the Pews

Hope everyone got a glimpse of our own **Dick Lakey** featured in a one half page add in the Sun Gazette recently. Dick was honored for twenty years of concerts given to benefit dialysis patients. It was a handsome picture, a fine tribute and a well-deserved honor. **Nancy Ackerman** joined Dick in the concert which also featured *Stained Glass Window* with another of our own, **Ken Shafranko** as part of the group.

Those **Campbell** twins keep on making news – **Brett** was one of four freshmen at New York University to be part of *Forbidden NYU* which was presented at the university and also for Parents' Weekend. **Lauren**, a student at American University, is going to tutor inner city students in math.

Our young people who are students at Sheridan are also standouts. **Sean Jensen** and **Ben** and **Hannah Haussmann** were students of the month for September and **Grace** and **Owen Elliott** received that honor for October. **Elizabeth Haussmann** was named student of the year at Hope Enterprise Preschool. Great job!

Shelby Weber was pictured in the newspaper making paper chains at the Brown Library as part of the Junior League of Williamsport's Family Night.

Gillian Buckman is following in the footsteps of her uncle and grandparents. She will portray Scamper Mouse and other parts in *The Nutcracker* presented at the Community Arts Center on December 5. **Nick, Jim** and **Deb** were part of the Williamsport Civic Chorus concert on November 15 which featured the Faure *Requiem*.

Don't forget to e mail me with your exciting news and maybe even your not so exciting news!

~ Joyce Hershberger

Christian Community

Consecration Sunday Report

The Treasurer is pleased to report that the Consecration Sunday totals exceeded last year in significant ways. 99 cards were returned this year, compared with 103 last year. There were 32 increases in estimates compared with 31 last year. The dollar figures for estimates of giving total \$212,959 this year and \$217,015 last year. The more cards returned, the better, so that the Treasurer does not need to do as much guesswork concerning those who do not fill out the estimate cards. It is never too late to give an estimate card, and if the figure needs to be adjusted during the year, a phone call to the Financial Secretary can make the needed change.

The Pastor welcomes invitations to visit members of the parish in their homes, at church, or other suitable meeting places. Please call the office at 323-4619 or email: pastor@stmarkswilliamsport.org to schedule a time.

Epiphany Bread Baking!

Wednesday, January 6



We will explore the customary and traditional breads baked during Epiphany.

Christian Community

ADVENT WREATH MAKING

Twenty-four folks gathered for fun, food and fellowship on the First Sunday of Advent: conversation was enjoyed, food was munched, wreaths were created and a tree was festooned. The only thing wrong with the day was that more weren't there to enjoy it.



Reminder to those who made wreaths: please don't forget to return the reusable materials to the office hallway. Thanks



Children's Church is on Sunday, December 13, at 10:30. We look forward to seeing everyone there—bring a friend!!! The children's special collection that day is Cans of Yams to send to the American Rescue Workers. They will pack these in baskets of food which go out to families in need. See you in the chapel December 13!!!

If anyone has any **old Christmas cards** they don't want, Please bring them in **before Saturday, December 12** (We need them for a children's project).

Teen movie night

Sunday, December 27,
6:30 pm

Double feature!!

(1)

*Pirates of
the Caribbean 3:
At World's End*

(2)

White Christmas
(adults welcome at the second feature)

Caroling, caroling



Call- ing all those who can spend an hour or two on December 13 greeting some of our special needs folks at home and singing a Christmas carol with them. We'd really like to get to everyone on the list, but that is possible only if we have more singings to divide up the task into several groups. We will leave from the church promptly at 2:00 P.M. Song sheets will be provided; you need to bring a smile and willingness to greet your fellow members.

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING US FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!



KIDS' MORNING OUT

SATURDAY

DECEMBER 12

9:00 A.M. – 12 NOON

Look for sign-up list

In the staff hallway

Soon!!



ADULT COOKIE BAKE

SATURDAY

DECEMBER 12

12:30- ???

Look for sign-up list

In the staff hallway

Soon!!



CHRISTMAS CAROLING TO OUR SHUT-INS, DECEMBER 13TH



What are all the events about, you ask?

They are about spreading the good news of Christ's birth through fellowship and service to others.

KIDS' MORNING OUT is a morning of fun activities for your children. They help bake cookies for our shut-ins—and sample a few as well; create a craft project as a gift for a special someone (Mom, Dad, grandparents?); listen to a story and play a game or two! Meanwhile, Mom and Dad—you can relax with a cup of coffee or be Santa's helper without interruption.

ADULT COOKIE BAKE begins where the kids leave off. Gather with fellow bakers to make your favorite recipe and assist with theirs. We use a couple from each recipe to supplement the children's offering for our shut-ins, share with each other, and take what's left from your recipe home with you (triple batches are not unheard of). We will have flour, sugar, eggs, butter and margarine here. If you want to contribute any of these supplies, please call Bernadette.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING is held the following day. We always hope to have four groups to send out to the compass points caroling, delivering cookies and visiting with those unable to join in the festivities here. Please consider joining in one or all of these events! Don't miss out on this action-packed weekend!!

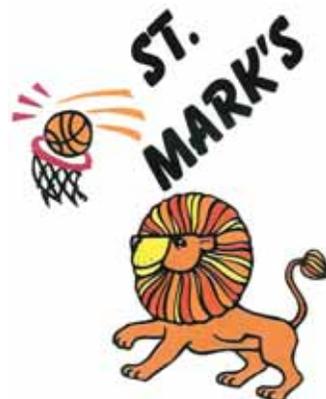
(sign-up sheets in narthex and any hallway or call 323-4619)

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

The John Bower Basketball League season has begun!! We have eight children on the Beginner Pee-Wee team, a Pee-Wee team with lucky thirteen players, and are again playing a Junior team of eight players!!!!

We practice at the Cochran this year on Tuesday nights and, for Juniors only, at Rommelt Middle School in South Williamsport on Fridays. When you see our coaches or players, please be sure to give them your encouragement—or, better yet, try to attend a game or two and cheer them on!!!

Games will begin the first or second weekend in December!
Look for dates and times in the bulletins!



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

On Tuesday, November 17, 43 gift boxes were delivered to Pine Street United Methodist church. 30 were the results of our group Snack, Pack 'n' Wrap on Sunday, November 8. A huge thank you goes out to all those who assisted wrapping and packing, those who contributed items and boxes and those who sponsored the shipping costs, as well as those who assembled their own boxes to be sent.

We were overwhelmed with monetary gifts to cover the shipping for the boxes! God is so faithful to provide for His children! Thank you for opening your hearts and your wallets for this worthy ministry to children.

Deck the trees with hats and mittens...fa-la-la-la-la

It's that time again!

Time to decorate our trees for the needy children in the area.

One tree will be for hats, gloves, scarves & mittens.

The other tree will be for teddy bears and other stuffed toys.



The Teddy Bears and the mittens, gloves, and hats will be given to local children in need of comfort and warmth.



Please stop in Fellowship Hall to add your gift to the trees.

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

MILESTONE MINISTRY

I Passing on Faith: Holy Baptism

L Kyseem Smith received the sacrament of Holy Baptism on Sunday, November 22. He was very excited and a little nervous to be receiving this first of the church's sacraments. We welcome him as a child of God.



S Passing on Faith: First Communion



T Kyseem Smith, Ian Elliott, Dylan Ott, Lynna Robertson and Annika Waffenschmidt began instruction for this very important milestone on Sunday, November 1. The children continued their instruction on November 8 and 15. They received the sacrament on Sunday of Christ the King, November 22.

N Passing on Faith: Third Grade Milestone

E Kyseem Smith, Ian Elliott, Dustin & Brandon Pelleschi, Lynna Robertson, Annika Waffenschmidt, Madison Walz, and Sadie & Taylor Wentzel received Bibles at the 10:30 service on November 22. They and their families were invited to join in the luncheon immediately following the service. At that time, Pastor Elkin sat down with the children to explore their Bibles and see what messages relatives and friends had written or favorite passages they had highlighted in the Bibles.



The Susquehanna Valley Chorale is pleased to present **Handel's Messiah**. Let us brighten up your holiday spirit by presenting this masterpiece - complete with soloists and Orchestra - in our 40th anniversary year. Come and enjoy a glorious performance of this most-loved choral work. Concerts are Saturday, December 12th at 7:30 pm and Sunday December 13th at 3:00 pm at Zion Lutheran Church in Sunbury. Ticket price: \$15 adults, \$5 students. For groups of 10 or more, call 523-1041 for a special ticket price of \$10 per person.

Order forms for Christmas Flowers will be in the bulletins on December 6 and December 13.

Deadline for ordering is December 13.

As in previous years, poinsettias (\$9.50), kalanchoes (\$5) and cyclamen (\$12.00) are available to be ordered.

Donations toward relieving local hunger are also accepted.



This and That and Everything In Between

St. Mark's Family Recipes

We're making a cookbook!!!

The children of St. Mark's are each gathering two recipes from home which will be put into book form . These recipe book will be available to the congregation after the new year.

ATTN: KIDS!

Turn your recipes in NOW!

Any recipes submitted after

December 6

will not be included in the book.



We'd still love to have you, if you want to join us!

Rehearsals are:

Saturday, December 5 @ 9:30

Sunday, December 13
(youth & children only)

Saturday, December 19 @ 9:30
(two run-throughs = longer rehearsal)

Please invite friends and family to take photographs and enjoy the 2nd run-through on the 19th.

We will be starting that dress rehearsal at approximately 10:15 AM.

Daniel's Closet

Free Clothing

for

Children,

Men & Women



Saturday, December 19

Please join us in decorating the Nave on Sunday, December 20th, following the 10:30 service.

Many hands make light work.

Many friends make much laughter

(and by the way, when you laugh, you pray twice).

Special Thank Yous

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7

Dear Congregation of St. Mark's Lutheran Church,

Thank you so much for such a generous donation of food items to help us fill our pantry shelves,

It is very encouraging to so many who just can't seem to make ends meet in these hard times. Your reaching out and sharing some of your abundance is so appreciated.

May God bless you for your faithfulness and may you continue to share with others your love in Christ.
 Blessings, Gail Burkhart, Food Pantry Coordinator

*A "Belated" Thank You to Pastor & St. Mark's family,
 It's through people like you that God's blessings are known. Thank you for your prayers, visits & calls following my operation.*

And a special thank you to Jane Larson , also to Shirley Kinney and Ruth Rees for the delicious soup & bread and taking time to sit and visit with me.

Lois Smith

Dear St. Mark's,

Thank you for remembering us during our recent illness. The flowers delivered by Mary Schultz and also Kay Poliska were a breath of fresh air. The soup and bread brought to us by Ernestine Doane was appreciated. Greetings from Stephen Ministry were a pleasant surprise. Thanks be to God for our recovery.

Eugene & Reba Jacobs

Thank you from United Campus Ministry,

Thank you so much for partnering with United Campus Ministry this semester. Your words were inspiring and your dinners were delicious. Please know that our ministry would not happen without your support.

Thanks again, and may the Lord continue to bless your ministry,

Sharon Comini, Michael, Michelle, Kasey, CJ, Kelly,
 Joseph, Jamillia, Kevin, Eugene & Monica

I wish to thank the two angels that brought me soup, bread and cookies when my eyes were so bad. Thanks to the church for kindness.

*Bless everyone,
 Lillian Skeeby*

Dear Ken & the Congregation at St. Mark's,

Thank you so much for hosting our United Churches Annual Assembly this year. Your wonderful hospitality helped to make it a perfect evening.

Many blessings, Gwen Bernstine

God bless you in a very special way this Thanksgiving!

We appreciate your kindness, your generosity, and your loving support. Many blessings! Our prayers are always with you.

Gratefully, Sister Henry

Dear Bob,

Our evening at St. Mark's was wonderful! The dinner was absolutely delicious—the service perfect and the space was arranged just right! Thank you so much for all you did to make our United Churches Assembly so nice. Please share my appreciation with all who helped.

Many blessings, Gwen

Dear St. Mark's, Thank you for the 'gift.' the coffee mug will be used daily. It will have warm memories attached to it.

I've lived out of state for 25 years and always enjoy visiting my family in Williamsport.

Since I brought Mrs. Chrisman to the service, I saw how loving the congregation is. GOD IS VERY PROUD OF YOUR CHURCH.

Fondly, Diane Shaheen

Happy Birthday!

Maria Elkin	12/01	Lyndsi Stugart	12/15	William Waldeisen	12/18
Sara Jones	12/01	Betty Kaufman	12/16	Kurtis Caster	12/19
David McMorris	12/03	Lucille Weaver	12/16	Martha Hopley	12/19
Edgar Miller Jr.	12/03			Gladys Knauss	12/19
Robert Miller	12/03			Fred Thayer	12/19
David Elkin	12/04			Zachery Zimmerman	12/19
Madalyn Fortin	12/06			Clint Eppleman	12/20
David Gilbert	12/06			Edith Anderson	12/23
Brittany Lynch	12/07			Judith Fortin	12/23
Catherine Goertz	12/08			Patti Drake	12/24
Emma Elkin	12/09			Holly Thorne	12/24
Scott Bittner	12/11			William Hill	12/26
Orion Snyder	12/11	Derek Gilbert	12/17	Hannah Ramsauer	12/26
Ernest Larson	12/12	Marlene Vollmer	12/17	Helen Schramm	12/28
Megan Catino	12/13	Ryan Clokey	12/18	Amalie Robertson	12/30
Richard Hafer	12/15	Michael Jensen	12/18	Cynthia Huff	12/31



Happy Anniversary!

Matthew & Cassandra Wellen	12/08		Joseph & Rachel Reiter	12/29
Robert & Aletha Swartz	12/20		Cecil & Kathryn Calvert	12/31
Thomas & Becky Miller Pryor	12/21			



MORE Special Thank You's

Dear Rev. Elkin,

I just wanted to tell you that it was such a pleasure to be able to attend my grandson's confirmation service. My son, Gary Weber, came all the way to my home the day before so that I could be there.

Since I stayed over right at his home, I was there in the morning to hear the boys say how excited they were to go to church and Sunday School. You must be doing something outstanding to affect children that way. I belong to St. John's Lutheran Church here in Sinking Spring. Very often I see parents in church without their children. We have a very active church, but I see a big difference in your relationship with the youth.

I also want to thank your members for the very nice lunch they provided after the church service for the family of each child that was confirmed. It was very special.

I can see that Riley is in good hands at St. Mark's.

Sincerely, Ruth A. Weber

Dear friends at St. Mark's Lutheran ,

Thank you for your generosity. We were very much in need of the large donation of assorted personal hygiene products that you donated. Thank you very much for assisting the Shepherd of the Streets ministry. May the Lord's peace and blessings be upon all of you.

Karen Nelson, Volunteer

Dear Friends at St. Mark's Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your generous donation to help Prisoner Visitation and Support find additional volunteer visitors and to support them with the proper training to do their visiting. One of our visitors says in the PVS video "Prisoners and prisons are not very popular." Yet, we are challenged by our faiths to visit the prisoners. You, by your contribution, make this possible. Again, thank you!

Sincerely yours, Betty Woodman, PVS Visitor

HEALTH, HEALING & WHOLENESS

(W)holy, (W)holy, (W)holy
 Health, Healing and Wholeness Article
 December 2009

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good...All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.” (1Corinthians 12:4-7, 11)

Here we are, once again, in the season of gift-giving. For some, Christmas may be a little different this year, because economics have shaped the way we celebrate. Many have found it necessary to limit the amount of money spent on gifts to loved ones; some may have eliminated gift giving altogether. Some may be finding themselves celebrating at home vs. traveling by car or plane to loved ones in other states. This is not a bad thing! Perhaps it is time that we give more deliberate time and thought toward celebrating the season more simply, for when we don't make the connection between Christ and our gift-giving, Santa becomes the spirit of Christmas.

Throughout the past month, I've been gathering a few non-traditional ideas for gift-giving this Christmas, and I would like to share them with you.

- * Instead of putting them away or tossing them, keep cards and well-wishes in a small basket where they can be savored throughout the year. Meditate on the words announcing the coming of the greatest gift that has ever been given.
- * Instead of buying gifts, make donations to your local United Way or charity/charities that are significant in the lives of your loved ones. Mother Teresa once said, *“It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you ... Yes it is Christmas every time you smile at your brother and offer your hand.”* These gifts keep on giving long after the garland and tinsel are put away!
- * Give handmade gifts this year.
- * Give your children a Shepherd's pouch – a simple drawstring bag – in which to collect loose change throughout the month – use the money to purchase a gift for someone in need. Worship together before setting out to do so.
- * Instead of a tree this year, arrange gifts under a crèche [manger].
- * During a meal together, ask one another, *“If Jesus were sitting next to you, what would you give him this Christmas? Why?”*
- * Buy baby items, wrap and place them with the other gifts – donate them to a social service agency that deals with infants.
- * Host a baby Jesus Christmas/birthday party for your family and neighborhood kids. Have each family bring a gift to be donated to a service agency, or shelter that houses children.
- * Give your children an age-appropriate crèche to play with. Tell them the Christmas story and have them act it out with the figures. Remember though, the Wise Men came *after* the birth of the baby Jesus!
- * Throughout the coming year, have Jesus “grow up” What qualities did he possess? Pick Bible verses to read and discuss as a family.

Finally, one of the greatest gifts we can give is to be patient and merciful to others. For *“to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good”*. Be the light of Christ to others not only on December 25, but throughout the coming year. Let others come to know him through your words and deeds.

Christmas blessings!
 Debbie Best, Program Coordinator
 Diakon Family Life Services Training & Consultation

2010 Proposed Budget

ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH BUDGET SUMMARY 2009/2010

The Congregation Council at its regular November meeting called a Special Assembly of the St. Mark's congregation, to be held on Sunday, December 14.

Note carefully the change in procedure: the meeting will be opened following the 8:00 service, and all voting members present will have opportunity to comment, amend and vote on the proposed budget.

This meeting will be **continued** until after the 10:30 service, when all voting members present will have a like opportunity to comment, amend, and vote on the proposed budget. If there have been no amendments made at the 10:30 meeting, the business of the day is closed. If, however, there have been any amendments made at the meeting following the 10:30 service, the meeting will be **continued** until the following Sunday, December 20, when those attending the 8:00 service will have an opportunity to vote on the amendments.

	ESTIMATED YTD 12/31/09	BUDGET 2010
INCOME:		
ENVELOPES & PLEDGES	\$ 247,500	\$ 244,165
PLATE OFFERINGS	\$ 3,100	\$ 3,500
VARIOUS OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES	\$ 10,200	\$ 11,250
BEQUESTS & HONORARIUMS	\$ 19,978	\$ -
PARKING LOT RENTALS	\$ 7,968	\$ 8,400
ROOM RENTALS	\$ 10,700	\$ 11,660
WELKER CAPITAL & BENEVOLENCE	\$ 18,300	\$ 18,900
TOTAL	\$ 317,746	\$ 297,875
INVESTMENT INCOME TRANSFERS	\$ 10,373	\$ 23,000
INVESTMENT PRINCIPAL TRANSFERS		\$ 23,075
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 328,119	\$ 343,950
EXPENSE:		
STAFF EXPENSES	\$ 225,086	\$ 227,575
GENERAL & ADMINISTRATIVE	\$ 15,018	\$ 16,050
WORSHIP & MUSIC	\$ 4,750	\$ 5,550
CHRISTIAN ED. & YOUTH and FAMILY	\$ 7,050	\$ 6,650
PROPERTY:		
REPAIRS & MAINT.	\$ 9,730	\$ 6,500
ELECTRIC	\$ 9,100	\$ 12,000
GAS	\$ 21,295	\$ 20,000
INSURANCE & REAL ESTATE TAXES	\$ 11,292	\$ 10,500
VARIOUS OTHER	\$ 13,095	\$ 12,550
TOTAL PROPERTY	\$ 64,512	\$ 61,550
BENEVOLENCE & CHARITY:		
SYNOD BENEVOLENCE	\$ 16,979	\$ 15,000
VARIOUS OTHER	\$ 6,500	\$ 11,575
TOTAL BENE. & CHARITY	\$ 23,479	\$ 26,575
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$ 339,895	\$ 343,950
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	\$ (11,776)	\$ -

**TRANSFER OF INVESTMENT PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT HAS BEEN ADDED
TO BALANCE THE BUDGET**

If you have any questions, please call Jackie Kinney at (570) 323-5938.

SPECIAL CONCERNS LIST

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Ralph Zeigler, Sr.
Rose View Court
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St. Mark's Calendar of Events

1 Tuesday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
2:00 Pastor returns from retreat
6:00 PM Brownies
6:00 PM JBBL practice beginners
7:00 PM JBBL practice older

2 Wednesday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
9:20 AM Staff Meeting & Quilting
12:00 PM Bible Study
7:00 PM Evening Prayer
7:30 PM Divine Drama

3 Thursday

6:31 AM Men's Ministry
8:00 AM Stephen Ministry I
9:00 AM Morning Prayer
7:30 PM Senior Choir

4 Friday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
7:00 PM JBBL practice Juniors
6:30 & 7:30 PM Living Nativity @ Pine St.

5 Saturday

9:30 AM Play Rehearsal

6 Sunday Advent II

8:00 AM Holy Communion
9:15 AM Sunday School
10:30 AM Holy Communion
10:30 AM The Way: Liturgy of Welcome
12:15 PM The Way

7 Monday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
6:30 PM Adult Handbells
7:00 PM Civic Chorus

8 Tuesday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
6:00 PM JBBL practice beginners
6:00 PM Selinsgrove Christmas Party
7:00 PM JBBL practice older

9 Wednesday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
9:20 AM Staff Meeting & Quilting
12:00 PM Bible Study
7:00 PM Evening Prayer
7:30 PM Divine Drama

10 Thursday

6:31 AM Men's Ministry
9:00 AM Morning Prayer
7:30 PM Senior Choir

11 Friday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
7:00 PM JBBL practice Juniors

12 Saturday

Family Promise bene. at Hoss's all day
9:00 AM Kids' Morning Out
12:30 PM Adult Cookie Bake

13 Sunday Advent III

Congregational Assembly
8:00 AM Holy Communion
9:15 AM Sunday School
10:30 AM Children's Church
10:30 AM Holy Communion
12:15 PM The Way
2:00 PM Caroling
5:00 PM Family HB/ring'n'eat

14 Monday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
6:00 PM Council @ Webers'
6:30 PM Adult Handbells

15 Tuesday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
6:00 PM Brownies
6:00 PM JBBL practice beginners
7:00 PM JBBL practice older

16 Wednesday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
9:20 AM Staff Meeting & Quilting
12:00 PM Lunch 'N' Fellowship
7:00 PM Evening Prayer
7:30 PM Divine Drama

17 Thursday

6:31 AM Men's Ministry
9:00 AM Morning Prayer
5:30 PM Stephen Ministry II
7:30 PM Senior Choir

18 Friday

Newsletter Deadline
9:00 AM Morning Prayer
6:30 PM Friday Fun Night
7:00 PM JBBL practice Juniors

19 Saturday

9:30 AM Play Rehearsal
9:00 AM Daniel's Closet @ Redeemer

20 Sunday Advent IV

8:00 AM Holy Communion
9:15 AM Sunday School
10:30 AM Holy Communion

11:40 AM Decorate Nave
6:00 PM Catechetical Gathering

21 Monday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
6:30 PM Adult Handbells
7:00 PM Dog Club

22 Tuesday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
12:00 PM Staff Lunch
6:00 PM JBBL practice beginners
7:00 PM Family Promise
7:00 PM JBBL practice older

23 Wednesday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
9:20 AM Staff Meeting

24 Thursday

Christmas Eve Office Closed
6:00 PM Play members arrive
7:00 PM Holy Communion
10:00 PM Holy Communion

25 Friday

Christmas Day Office Closed

26 Saturday

27 Sunday

8:00 AM Holy Communion
9:15 AM Sunday School
10:30 AM Holy Communion
4:00 PM Service of Remembrance
6:30 PM Teen Movie Night

28 Monday

9:15 AM Poinsettia delivery to shut-ins

29 Tuesday

9:15 AM Lion Crew
6:00 PM Brownies

30 Wednesday

31 Thursday

New Years Eve Office Closed



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December-at-a-Glance

Special Events of the Advent and Christmas Season

December 5	9:30 am	Christmas Pageant rehearsal
December 8	6:00 pm	Selinsgrove Christmas party
December 12	9:00 am	Kids' Morning Out
	12:30pm	Adult Cookie Bake
December 13	2:00 pm	Caroling
December 18	6:00 pm	Fun Night
December 19	9:30 am	Christmas Pageant rehearsal
	10:15 am	Pageant dress rehearsal
December 20	11:45 am	Decorate the Nave
December 24	6:00 pm	Pageant participants arrive
	7:00 pm	Holy Communion Family Service
	10:00pm	Holy Communion