



The Lion of St. Mark's

JANUARY 2010

Let's beginwith prayer.

It's a new calendar year and time for a fresh start. What better way could there be to begin the year than with prayer together! There is opportunity for us to meet each weekday in the Chapel at 9:00 A.M. for the office of Morning Prayer. Most often it is led by the Pastor, and, on those occasions when he must be elsewhere, another of the staff members is ready to lead. On Wednesdays, the quilting group usually joins us, and the Stephen Ministers pause in their Thursday morning meeting to join in as well. Everyone is welcome. It is a fine way to start the day when one is on the way to shop or to an appointment.

The sense of the event is that when we pray here, we are joining the circle of prayer that moves continuously around the world and through time as well. Together with prophets and apostles, saints and martyrs, great-grandmothers and favorite teachers, and the faithful of every generation, we bring our praise and thanksgiving as well as our worries and concerns, we name those in special need, we remember our beloved, and we bless God for his continuing love and gifts.



Morning Prayer has a regular format. We begin with Psalm 95 and another Psalm that changes each day. We sing a hymn related to the day or season. We listen to a portion of scripture; often we read through an entire book of the Bible, one portion at a time over a span of weeks. Next is a canticle from the New Testament, often Zechariah's song, the Benedictus. A brief Prayer of the Day is followed by our naming of persons and causes that are on our minds that day, including the persons listed in the Sunday bulletin. The Lord's Prayer and benediction conclude the office. We sing Morning Prayer in twenty minutes or less, and have been engaging in this activity almost every weekday for some years now. As we continue to sing and pray, we realize that we are being shaped and changed by scripture and prayer...and it is a very good thing that is happening. Everyone is invited to sample this event at any time. If your schedule permits, come on Monday, January 4 and begin the year with prayer.



Pastor Kenneth and Donna Zierdt Elkin wish to thank all those who remembered them with cards and gifts in this Christmas season.. May your homes be wrapped in the Savior's love, blessed with His peace, and warmed by his abiding presence all through the year.

Pastor Kenneth Elkin

COUNCIL UPDATE

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COUNCIL MEETING NOTES

Council did not meet in December.

ngallagher.com



When it came to New Year's Resolutions, Gerald was a realist.



Parish Register

- Pastor Elkin officiated at the graveside service for Patricia E. Bailey of South Williamsport in the Wildwood Cemetery on December 16, 2009.
- Pastor Elkin officiated at the funeral service for George Freeburger of Duboistown in the Maneval Home on December 23, 2009, with interment in Wildwood Cemetery.

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	
Bernadette Jones, Christian Education		bjones@stmarkswilliamsport.org	Gary Weber, President	322-7149
Michele Owen, Christian Education		mowen@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
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Christian Community Service Opportunities



Update on Family Promise

Family Promise®

It is an exciting time for Family Promise of Lycoming County. We have thirteen congregations willing to host children and their families who are experiencing a housing crisis. Several other congregations are designated as support congregations. The Day Center on Sherman Street is filling with furniture, filing cabinets and computers. Interviews for a Network Director continue. And most recently FPLC received three grants totaling \$17,500. Those funds are earmarked for a fifteen-passenger van. Family Promise has a tentative opening date of February or March 2010. Training for all volunteers will be scheduled in the near future.

All that is needed at St. Mark's is you. Do you have two hours to give during our hosting week to help children and their families be safe and secure as they find permanent affordable housing? Where do you see yourself volunteering? There will be opportunities to set up the guest rooms, visit with the guests, prepare meals, stay overnight, or assist with clean up at the end of our hosting week. Jane Zimmerer and Becky Miller Pryor will be in the narthex with clip boards in hand and asking for your help. Please say yes.

POSITION AVAILABLE

Family Promise, a national faith-based non-profit organization providing shelter and assistance to homeless families, is seeking a Network Director to develop and operate its operations in Lycoming County. Successful candidate will coordinate with local churches, schools, and social service agencies to help clients meet immediate and longer-term needs and maintain their family unit. B.A. degree required, M.S.W. preferred. Send resume to Family Promise, c/o CCPC, 807 W 4th St., Williamsport, PA 17701 *More information is available at St. Mark's staff hallway.*

At Home, with the Pastor

Since so many members of St. Mark's are living in the apartments or in other rooms at the Williamsport Home, Pastor Elkin has declared a visit with all of the residents at one time and place might be a good and enjoyable event. He will meet with all who wish to gather in the Dining Room or Lounge in Building C (a sign will be posted when we know which space is available) on Thursday, January 7, 2010 at 3:00 P.M. We will have an Epiphany service of Holy Communion, and then enjoy a festive bread or cake that will have been made the day before in the bread-baking session at St. Mark's. Lots of conversation is sure to follow.

[If subjects are identified that need private conversations, we'll schedule other appointments.] It will be a wonderful way to bind together the member-residents in the Gospel. Shirley Miller and Dorothy Berndt are assisting in organizing the event.



Christian Community Service Opportunities

United Campus Ministry

It has been a very busy semester for all of the students at Penn College. We've had some great talks from the pastors this semester at our Monday night Faith Talks. Pastor Elkin had led the faith talk twice this semester, and had spoken about Martin Luther. St. Mark's was able to fill almost 50 study bags for the students from the items that were collected. Thanks to everyone that had provided them.

...United Campus Ministry is an important part of the students' life while they are at Penn College. They look forward to the Faith Talks and Wednesday evening worship. It helps keep them connected to their faith. Mission Trips are a big part of our ministry and something the students look forward to each year....In Spring, 2010, we will be traveling to West Virginia to work with the West Virginia Presbytery in their Advocacy and Work Camps Ministry and helping to rebuild homes. We hope to serve and bring hope to families that have experienced severe flooding damage in recent years. We are in the process of planning for our trip and raising awareness and support of it. Please consider supporting us through your prayers and, if you are able, with a financial gift as well. If you would like to make a donation to help fund our trip, Please send it to United Churches of Lycoming County, 202 E. Third Street, Wmspt. (please put UCM mission trip in the memo.)

St. Mark's will be providing dinner on Wednesday, January 13, for our weekly dinner and worship. If anyone is interested in preparing something or helping with dinner, please contact Sharon Comini at 419-5376.

Our annual lasagna dinner will be held on Wed., Feb. 10 at St. Paul Calvary United Methodist Church. All proceeds from this dinner will benefit our mission trip as well. Hope to see you there.

From all of the students at United Campus Ministry, we hope you had a very Merry Christ-filled Christmas and wish you many blessings in the New Year.

Sharon Comini, Coordinator, Contact at: 419-5376 or ucm@ucl.org

DANIEL'S CLOSET UPDATE!

Daniel's Closet, the free clothing program at **Redeemer Lutheran Church, Williamsport**, has been welcoming about 200 friends through the door each Saturday they are open. This ministry, which began with one child's vision and enthusiasm, has surely grown since the doors opened in March, 2008, when 40 people first visited the Closet.

Daniel's Closet is open one Saturday each month, offering free clothing for children, women and men in the community. The Evangelism Committee and members of the congregation and community collect seasonal clothing, coats and bedding each month. Minimal storage space is available at the church, so specific needs are posted each month.

If you would like to help or donate items to Daniel's Closet, please contact Megan Eppleman, Clint Eppleman, Becky Pryor or Barb Horn (326-2076) or Redeemer's Church Office (322-2333).

We are open 9-11 a.m. on the following dates:

January 23rd, and February 27th...All are welcome!

(and continues on the fourth Saturday of each month)

This ministry involves many in the community, not just churches, but individuals and businesses who contribute to this need in the community with donations of clothing or help. Bless you! **COME AND SEE!**

Women of St. Mark's

Congratulations, St. Mark's!



The Synod report on material aid to Lutheran World Relief is in. St. Mark's had an excellent rating! Your generosity supplied 101 quilts, 75 School Kits, 24 Health Kits, 3 Sewing Kits, 11 Layettes, 21 pounds of soap, and \$339.00 in cash to purchase blankets, all from St. Mark's. On behalf of all the needy people who received this aid we thank you for your compassion. They will know the love of God through your love and concern.

Peace From "The Piecemakers"

Our quilters get great satisfaction out of creating useful and beautiful quilts from left-over materials. They also enjoy the fellowship of working together and invite you to join them any Wednesday morning. Just bring scissors and help to lay out, baste, or tie the quilts. If you prefer to sew at home, people are needed to make quilt tops, bind completed quilts, or make fabric bags for school kits. See Grace Arner or Shirley Hill for materials.

In addition, the support provided by the entire congregation, with donations of sheets in good condition and old blankets for quilt fillers and backings, is very much appreciated.

The total of 2710 quilts sent to Lutheran World Relief last year from our Synod alone. It is impressive to see how the many Lutheran women's groups working together can make a difference.

RECYCLE - RECYCLE - RECYCLE - RECYCLE - RECY

Recycling not only improves our environment, it can generate funds to aid some worthy institutions. The Women of St. Mark's request that you bring in the following items:

OLD CELL PHONES - to benefit the "Good Deed Foundation" and to reduce greenhouse emissions



USED EYEGLASSES - to provide clear vision to those in need

SODA CAN TABS - to benefit the Ronald McDonald House in Danville



OLD BLANKETS & FLANNEL SHEETS for quilt fillers
SHEETS in good condition for quilt backings

P. S. We **no longer collect** cancelled postage stamps or Campbell soup labels.

LUNCH N' FELLOWSHIP



Wednesday,
January 20th,
Noon

Pork, Potatoes & Sauerkraut

Bring a dish to share,
a dessert & a friend!

News from the Pews

November 11 marked the celebration of Veterans' Day – one of our members was a part of the commemoration of that event. Ray Huff spoke to fourth grade students at Lyter Elementary School and shared his experiences as a veteran of the United States Air Force. The most impressive thing is that Ray is still able to wear his uniform!

We have a veteran of another kind in our midst – Bobbie Yetsko was cited for fifty years of membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution and presented a certificate by Regent Jean L. Reasner.



As always our elementary and middle school students make us proud – Riley Weber and Theoron Hershey were both named to the honor roll at Curtin and Lycoming Valley. Ashton Ott was named student of the month this fall at Sheridan Elementary School and Hannah Haussmann, second grader at Sheridan, was pictured in the local newspaper working on her feature creature book.

Ashley Miller, daughter of Kay and George Poliska, received her master's degree in psychology from Shippensburg University this month.

Good news for Declan Jones – he has been accepted at the University of Pittsburgh and will begin in the fall.

A blessed holiday season for all at St. Mark's and remember to make a New Year's resolution to keep me informed about all the wonderful things in your life so that I can share them with everyone.

- Joyce Hershberger

Please submit news items to Joyce Hershberger via her email deermountain2@comcast.net

Where's the Pastor?

**Right here waiting for your invitation to visit
with you in your home, at church,
or another suitable meeting place!**

**Please call the office at 323-4619 or email:
pastor@stmarkswilliamsport.org
to schedule a time.**



United Churches of Lycoming County

WEDNESDAY ECUMENICAL LUNCHES

Join us from 12 to 1 p.m. and you are 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. (Call Gwen at 419-1464 to check for snow cancellation.)

JANUARY:

6 - **Mrs. Chris Smith, CPS**, Highway Traffic Specialist, *"Sharing the Road Bingo"*

13 - **Rev. Ted Corcelius**, Pastor, Christ U.M. Church, Hughesville, *"Making Health Care Choices—Sharing the Gifts of Love and Peace"*

20 - **Rev. Maurice Frontz**, Pastor, Messiah Lutheran Church and President, United Churches, *"Singing Our Faith Together: A Message for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity"*

27 - **Mrs. Rita Spangler**, Vice President of Facility Development, Susquehanna Health System, *"Project 2012 Update"*

Food Pantry Needs

These are the items that are currently needed:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| spaghetti sauce, | canned vegetables |
| chunky soups, | cakes mixes & icing |
| oodles-of-noodles, | Jell-o and pudding mixes |
| canned fruits | saltine crackers |
| hot chocolate | spaghetti pasta & sauce |
| hamburger & tuna helper | egg noodles |
| peanut butter | powdered drink mix |
| instant flavored oatmeal packets | coffee |
| Granola bars | microwave popcorn |
| stuffing mix | regular tea bags |
| Powdered milk | 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

March For Life

Please join the March for Life in Washington, D.C. on January 22, 2010. The Susquehanna Valley Chapter of PA for Human Life has reserved buses again for this grassroots event. To reserve your seat, or for more information, contact Carol Ann Stein at 570-584-2947 or Donna Thomas at 570-321-747b6. Buses will be leaving from Beiter's in Williamsport and Big Lots in Muncy. The cost is \$15 per person. We hope you will join us!



A 24 hour Devotion Line

is a way for everyone in our community to have "A Closer Walk With God". Devotions are three minutes or less and change daily and at least once on the weekend. Devotionalists change weekly. The phone number is **570-322-5762**.



HIGHWAY SAFETY

The holidays can be a busy time, and it's easy to lose yourself in thoughts while you're traveling in the car. Taking a few safety precautions will help to ensure a safe, ticket-free holiday season.

- Obey posted speed limits and traffic laws.
- Adapt your driving to weather conditions.
- Keep an eye out for aggressive drivers in high-traffic areas and resist the temptation to drive aggressively yourself.
- Keep your eyes on the road and off your phone.
- Never drink and drive.
- Always wear your seat belt. Click It or Ticket.

Happy Holidays from the Community Traffic Safety Project and Drive Safe PA. For more traffic safety information, please visit us at www.DriveSafePA.org.

SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY is one way to help our United Churches food pantry, or other Ministries who help people in these difficult times. The date this year is February 7, 2010. To join this effort to help the least of these by bringing in non-perishable food or funds contact them at 1-800-358-7687 or www.souperbowl.org.

ELCA, Synod & West Branch News

LUTHERAN CHURCH HISTORY CONTEST FOR YOUTH

The Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic (LHSMA) invites middle school and high school youth to participate in a MULTIMEDIA PROJECT contest. You are asked to prepare a 15-20 minute DVD or Power Point presentation with an accompanying script titled "My Congregation's Story" or "My Congregation's Youth Ministry Story." Three winners will be awarded in both the Middle School (6-8th grade) category and the High School (9-12th) category. The first place winner receives \$125 for the winner in each category plus the opportunity to present projects at the LHSMA Spring Program on April 20, 2010, at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. The second place winner receives \$75 and the third place winner receives \$50. Submissions are due by March 15, 2010. Please mail completed work along with an application form (available at <http://www.lhsmidatlantic.org>) to: LHSMA, 61 Seminary Ridge, Gettysburg, PA, 17325. Questions can be directed to the Reverend Stephen Herr, LHSMA president, at pas-tor@christgettysburg.org or 717-334-5212.



LEAVE A LEGACY FOR MINISTRY AND MISSION

Have you ever considered making a lasting gift for ministry, a gift that will keep on giving long after you joined the church triumphant. By establishing a Memorial Endowment Fund, you can support your favorite ministries well beyond your lifetime. The endowment fund can support the ministries of your congregation, your synod, and/or the ministries of the whole church like World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, or ELCA Vision for Mission. The endowment fund can be funded now or as part of your estate planning. For more information on how to establish a Memorial Endowment Fund, please call Pr. Greg Kramer at the Lutheran Planned Giving Office at 570-374-2044 or call the ELCA Foundation, 800/638-3522, ext. 2970 or visit our website at www.elca.org/fo.

FLOOD S.U. (A YOUTH MINISTRY EVENT): JANUARY 10, 2010

Calling all youth in 6th through 12th grades for the annual FLOOD S.U. at the Field House at Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove, from 3:45 – 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 10, 2010. This year's event will feature a musical performance by Praise Band Junior from First Lutheran in Mifflinburg, and a "Project Linus" blanket making relay race service project, as well as all the fun of swimming, basketball, volleyball, racquetball, RockBand and Guitar Hero, socializing, and all the snacks you can eat—all in the middle of winter! Cost is \$5 per youth if registered by January 4th, or \$10 at the door. Adult chaperones are admitted free.

Social Ministry

Calling Frosty's Friends at St. Mark's



Due to widespread illness at the Selinsgrove Center, our elves were unable to host our annual Christmas party for the sixteen ladies and their caregivers in CM-6. But we were encouraged to reschedule our party including bringing our gifts for this January.

Our winter party will be Wednesday, January 20, 2010. We will once again meet at 6:00 PM in St. Mark's parking lot and carpool to Selinsgrove to offer story telling, some singing, fellowship and gifting of the residents and caregivers. Please consider joining us that evening.

Presently we have gifts of body wash and pudding for the ladies. We can always use more pudding if any is donated, but it is not necessary. For the caregivers, a "spa" basket of items is being created. Items needed for this basket include hand or body lotions, little fancy soaps, body wash, body puffs, lip-gloss or balm. Donated items may be placed in the tub in the Narthex.

Christmas Joy from St. Mark's

The Social Ministry Committee wishes to thank the congregation for their support of the Danville State Hospital and its residents. A total of fifty individuals received a requested gift from you. Many of these folks would not have a gift if it were not for your generosity. Please know that the staff at the hospital is extremely grateful for our efforts. A special thank you is given to Larue Dieter who, while recovering from hip surgery, addressed fifty cards to the men and women at Danville AND the sixteen ladies at Selinsgrove. Her efforts behind the scene are what keep our outreach going during this very busy time of year.



Go Green for Gifting

The Social Ministry Committee is collecting holiday gift bags to use for our annual holiday party at the Selinsgrove Center. Yes, we have the bags for our rescheduled event on January 20, 2010. But we are also looking far ahead to the party we give annually in December. Recycled gift bags can be placed in the tub in the narthex.



Christmas Baskets

Each year the American Rescue Workers fill several hundred Christmas food baskets for needy families in our community. This year we supported their efforts by donating half a barrel full of canned yams. Thank you for answering the call to serve those in need in our community.

Children's Church

Children's Church will be January 11, 2009. The children's special offering will be boxes of packets of instant cocoa mix to be given to the United Churches Food Bank. Anyone who wants can supplement the children's gifts with donations of their own.

Christian Community

**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 weekend 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 31 and February 7 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.



Epiphany Bread Baking!

Wednesday,
January 6



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

Call ahead to reserve a place for you at the counter and

CREATION CORNER

Resources for Understanding More About Natural Gas Well Drilling in the Marcellus Shale

Here in northern Appalachia we are beset by environmental concerns, from the global climate changes, to national fossil fuel dependence; from multi-state efforts to clean up the Chesapeake Bay to Pennsylvania efforts to enact regulations covering outdoor wood furnaces and set renewable energy standards for electricity generation. Regionally some waterways are threatened and municipalities continue to allow backyard burner barrel burning.

Drilling for natural gas, a fossil fuel, in the Marcellus Shale is a topic here that has brought forth many considerations. The column this month points to Internet web resources that hopefully will help readers to come to a thoughtful understanding of all the issues involved. Resources include those from various sectors: academic; industrial and corporate; governmental; environmental advocacy; grass-roots groups; media; etc.

The point-of-view from the religious/ecumenical/interfaith sector is as yet undeveloped (specific to Marcellus shale gas well drilling), so Christians must make the best use of secular sources to help clarify, in their own minds, what is happening in our region, as they apply their ethical earth stewardship principles to the concern of fossil fuel exploitation. Only the effort of Damascus Citizens (see below under grass-roots groups) makes any reference to Biblical inspiration.

Academic Resources

The Penn State University Cooperative Extension provides gas well leasing information for landowners. <http://naturalgas.extension.psu.edu>; Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania's on-line journal, "The Hemlock", devoted space to Marcellus shale drilling. www.lhup.edu/rmyers3/Hemlock/HemlockPastIssues.htm

Industrial and Corporate Resources

www.newnaturalgas.org National gas industry advertising campaign; Marcellus Shale Committee (Coalition) www.pamarcellus.com ; Independent Oil and Gas Association of PA (IOGA) www.iogapa.org; Independent Gas Association of NY www.marcellusfacts.com/blog

Governmental

PA Department of Environmental Protection is the obvious site to search first. www.dep.state.pa.us keyword oil and gas wells. It contains a list of the largest oil and gas well operators in the state with 100 or more active wells (211 names=98,884 sites). Or <http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/deputate/mines/oilgas>

Environmental Advocates

PA Land Trust Association, composed of 90 organizations. Home page says "drilling has consequences" and it urges taxes on natural gas to protect our resources. Notes impacts of drilling on air and land; includes site photos in state forests. Many, many links. www.landandwater.org .

Grass-roots Groups

Damascus Citizens for Sustainability derives its name from Acts 22:10. "I asked, 'What am I to do, Lord?' The Lord said to me, 'Get up and go to Damascus; there you will be told everything that has been assigned to you to do.'" A 501c-3 not-for-profit corporation devoted to protecting our watersheds. Includes recent press releases, documents. It is aided by environmental lawyers and public health experts. www.damascuscitizens.org

NOTE: The above monthly column, "Creation Corner", was compiled by Michael Ochs for the December 2009 issue of the print newsletter of the ecumenical United Churches of Lycoming County, PA. See www.uclc.org where it will eventually appear, perhaps in edited form. More resource sites are available there or from Michael.

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY



Our **Snack, Pack 'n' Wrap** went so well this year that we're making it a tradition! So, this is just a reminder to scout around the sales this January and during the rest of the year (back-to-school?). If you find a good deal, pick up a dozen or so of one item! Bring it in to the office here (there's a box in the hallway—you'll see it). We'll store it. We've already received over 3 dozen toothbrushes. Other items needed are toothpaste, pencils, small boxes of crayons, bars of soap, washcloths, brushes, combs, hair ties, small toys, etc.

We'll meet again in the beginning of November to snack, pack and wrap 'til we drop!!! It's great fun!!! How about planning on joining us this year? So! What do you say?? See you at the mall!!!



THANK YOU to everyone who contributed on the **trees in Fellowship Hall!!** As of this writing, The Kids' Clothes Closet will receive at least 3 scarves, over 29 hats, and 33 pairs of gloves. This clothing will help to keep needy children within the community warm this season. More than 47 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!



Many bears were purchased and stored early in the year. If someone was cleaning and moved them to another location, would you please call the office to tell us where they can be found? Thank you!

A WARM AND HEARTFELT THANK YOU IS EXTENDED TO ALL THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE:

Sean Jensen, Grace Elliott, Laura Zeigler, Anna Zeigler, Ian Elliott, Annika Waffenschmidt, Elizabeth Haussmann, Makensi Doebler, Taylor Wentzel, Sadie Wentzel, Madison Walz, Hannah Haussmann, Stefan Weber, Ben Haussmann, Owen Elliott, Gillian Buckman, Declan Jones, Sara Jones, Katelyn Lauer, Riley Weber, Chris Lauer, Vicki Haussmann, Pam Jensen, Tracie Elliott, Michele Fredericks, Ruth Burkholder, Shelby Weber, Deb Buckman, Bud Doebler, Gary Weber, Mike Elliott, Diana Zeigler, Mindy Wentzel, Lois Smith, Sally Bjornstad, Sarah Buono, Ruth Rees, Jane Kline, Lou DeSeau, & Nick Buckman

MILESTONE MINISTRY



Passing on Faith:

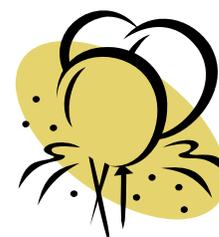
REMEMBRANCE of BAPTISM

This event will be marked by a luncheon on January 10, the celebration of the Baptism of our Lord. One baby, one child and two adults will receive their Faith Chests and Baptismal Medallions on this day.

Friday
Fun Night

January 22nd

6:30
p.m.



Join us for a
good time!

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

Kids' Morning Out



What a great time! Seventeen children and five helpers attended this event on Saturday, December 8. They made and decorated cookies for our shut-ins, made bird-feeders and presents for their families, and heard two 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, Sara, Devin and Michele 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 this event every year!

Cookie Baking

Another huge "THANK YOU" goes out to Michele Fredericks, Donna, and Sara for their able assistance later on that Saturday with the cookie baking. A bonus was the arrival of Michele's mother, aunt, sister, sister-in-law and two nieces to help!!! We produced lots of cookies to share and for the carolers to deliver that Sunday. Jackie was unable to attend, but brought in her chocolate chip cookies for the plates!! Thank you all!!!



A wonderful assortment of goodies was assembled during this afternoon: pizelles, ricotta cookies, twisted canes and wreaths, chocolate chip, chocolate ribbons, and oatmeal cookies; along with the mystery cookies and decorated sugar cookies made by the children and still more cookies baked by Shirley K. and Jackie... We hope more folks can join us next year. THANK YOU!!!

ST MARK'S LIONS

Two youngest teams played excellent first games on December 13. The children were great sports and played well. We couldn't be more proud of them.

Our practices will resume every Tuesday, beginning January 5, 2010, at Cochran. The Beginner Pee Wee team practices from 6 p.m. until 7 p.m. and the Pee Wees and Juniors from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Juniors also practice at 7:00 on Fridays at Rommelt Middle School, S. Wmspt.



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

To all members of the congregation, please take just half of an hour out of your day to cheer on some our young ambassadors.

Your support could make the difference!

Caroling

The weather was a little slippery this year! But we still sent out two groups, totaling eight adults, two teens and four children, who visited as many of our home-bound as they could on the afternoon of December 13th.



Some were not at home for our visit but others made up for it by providing an audience of neighbors! Cookies were left for those the carolers were unable to visit.

- **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.**

Please try to imagine how you would feel if you knew the

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY



Catechetical Retreat 2009

Catechetical Retreat 2009 is scheduled for January 9, 2010, at Messiah Lutheran. Topics of discovery include:

"God, Motherhood, and Apple Pie" ~ *Led by Pastor Zetto, Bethany* ~ A look at (mostly dysfunctional) families in Holy Scripture and the Biblical description and empowerment of a well-functioning family.

God's Story by Food ~ *Led by Pastor Elkin, St. Mark's* ~ The bread and wine of Holy Communion are the most important foods that we use to tell God's story. The first 6 youth who sign up will explore some additional possibilities in the kitchen. Some will have Bible connections and others will involve traditions from around the world. Phone St. Mark's at 323-4619 to verify a spot in the class before handing your registration to your pastor.

Parents, Teens and Money ~ *Led by Mr. Keith Wood, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans* ~ How do advertising, peer pressure, and other influences affect your attitude toward money? Can faith and values offer guidance? It is important to balance what teens share, save, and spend as they gear up for financial independence in the future.

Muggles, God, and Harry Potter ~ *Led by Pastor Frontz, Messiah* ~ What are the theological topics that are present in the popular Harry Potter books? Should they be avoided because of their "magical" content? What can we learn (if anything) from Harry and his friends as we walk our Christian life? Join us, whether or not you have read the books (but there will be spoilers).

Serving God – Serving the World ~ *Led by Pastor Huckfeldt, St. Michael* ~ By our baptism we are called to serve. We will explore how youth can respond to God's call and follow Christ in word and deed?

What's Love Got To Do With It: Healthy Relationships in the Bible and Today ~ *Led by Pastor Deibler, St. Luke & Tracy Mariano, Wise Options for Women* ~ What constitutes appropriate boundaries in a relationship? What happens when boundaries are violated? Your leaders will explore this topic and provide you with some of the tools and resources you need to make sure that your relationships stay healthy .

Children's Church will be held on January 10, 2010



The children's special offering will be boxes/packets of instant

Special Thank You's

Dear St. Mark's Staff,
 May the gentle spirit of Christmas fill your homes with love and your hearts with happiness! We appreciate your support and love.

Merry Christmas, from the Little Lambs Staff

*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 2009 and beyond!***

*Yours in Christ,
 Bernadette Jones & Michele Owen
 Youth and Family Ministry*

Pastor,
 Please relay my thanks in the Lion or Bulletin for all of the cards and prayers that I have received from my St. Marks friends. This whole process continues to be very trying. I hope to be home for Christmas. Also I thank those who have visited me.
 Thanks, James W. Buckman

Thank you for including me in your caroling. It was a wonderful surprise. The singing was so fun!
 Love , Mrs. Chrisman

Dear Pr. Elkin and our church family,
 Bill and I want to thank you all so very much for your loving care, kindness, and especially for you healing prayers throughout Bill's illnesses. We are so appreciative and grateful for all you do.
 In Christian love, Bill and Carol Confer

I need to thank so many members at St. Mark's who sent me such lovely and meaningful cards, brought flowers (even a new couple to St. Mark's who volunteered to deliver flowers) and visited me in the hospital and nursing home. St. Mark's people are so thoughtful and I do miss interacting with them at church service sand functions.

Tonight, the great group of carolers came by and sang for me and some of my friends here in the apartments. These ladies really enjoyed that as they mentioned that not many groups do that anymore—so we were really appreciative of the St. mark's group. And thanks for their cookies!

Thanks, Bernadette, and a wonderful, thankful, blessed Christmas to all the staff at St. Mark's.
 Larue Dieter

Dear Ken,
 Thank you for being a speaker for United Churches Ecumenical Lunch Program this fall! It was a joy—both to be able to see pictures of the dig and hear of your experiences in September—and then to be updated on Family Promise this November. At this time of Thanksgiving, you are one of the blessings we thank God for. May your life abound with blessings now and always.
 Gwen Bernstine

Happy Birthday!

Shelby Weber	01/01	David Butters	01/16	Elizabeth Ruesskamp	01/22
Cecil Calvert	01/02	Lee Doane	01/16	Christina MacGill	01/23
Ashley Ciesielski	01/02	Donna Boston	01/17	Tara Thorne	01/23
Jeremy Hinds	01/02	Nathan Kimble	01/17	Walter Doebler	01/25
Katherine Crane	01/03	Ruth Lamade	01/17	Bonnie Eyer	01/26
Charlotte Hughes	01/03			David Heaps	01/26
Gregory Calvert	01/04			Marc Kinney	01/26
Elizabeth Chrisman	01/04			Robert Smith	01/26
James Newcomer Sr.	01/04			Ruth Burkholder	01/27
Mary Lou Doebler	01/06			Dustin Kimble	01/27
Shirley Dieffenbach	01/08			Phyllis Ulman	01/27
Susan Baker	01/10			Cassandra Wellen	01/27
Andrew Zeigler	01/10			Sean Buckman	01/28
Peter Zeigler	01/10			Kristopher Caster	01/28
Toby Zimmerman	01/10	Barbara McCullough	01/17	Theoron Hershey	01/29
Suzanne Hutchins	01/11	Beth Miller	01/17	Zachary Jarrett	01/29
Owen Elliott	01/12	Ruth Rees	01/17	Linda DeSeau	01/30
Grace Elliott	01/12	Brenda Bittner	01/19	Makaylee Goertz	01/30
Kathy Kolb	01/12	Morgan Comini	01/19	Devin Owen	01/30
Jackie Kinney	01/13	Courtney Jarrett	01/20	Travis Thorne	01/30
Riley Weber	01/14	Herbert Poff	01/21	Kathleen Caster	01/31



Happy Anniversary!

Arthur & June Decker 01/20



Chuck & Ruth Homan 01/23

From Albright LIFE

Giving Back To The Community...The Sweetest Gift Of All

What does a decadent three layer double chocolate cake dressed with over 200 pieces of chocolate candy, perfectly crimped pies, hand decorated mini cheesecakes and a flawlessly layered chocolate trifle all have in common? They were just a few of the many sweet treats available at Albright LIFE Lycoming-Clinton's first annual Dessert Tasting to benefit the Lycoming County United Way.

According to Tracy Haas, Marketing Coordinator, "Even though we aren't an organization with a large number of employees, we wanted to do our part to support the United Way for the huge impact they make on our program." Many employees prepared their signature dessert and guests donated \$5 to sample 10 of the offerings. The Center's participants also joined in the fun and prepared a diabetic friendly pumpkin bread pudding.

Perry Landon, Executive Director adds, "I am incredibly pleased at the way our employees and participants came together to make the event a success. It really does prove that giving back to our community is the sweetest gift of all."

HEALTH, HEALING & WHOLENESS

During the past few weeks, I've found myself wondering how Mary must have felt in the days following the birth of her son, Jesus. In artwork, she is often depicted with a demure smile, radiating with happiness and joy. What must it have been like to give birth to your first child, away from family, in less than hospitable conditions? In Matthew's account, soon after the birth, Joseph and Mary are uprooted and on an unexpected trek to Egypt. What was going through her mind? In Luke's account, in response to the shepherds' stories, "*Mary treasured all these words, and pondered them in her heart.*" (Luke. 2:19, NRSV), so we assume she had a smooth transition to motherhood. In a sense she appears to be the picture of the perfect mother.

But how do we console the woman who experiences a more difficult period of adjustment? One that is perhaps better expressed by Psalm 13:2, "*How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long?*" I am referring to the woman who suffers post-partum depression.

Within 48 hours of delivery, hormones rapidly drop and researchers appear to link this to the onset of depression in some women. But unlike the "baby blues", postpartum depression does not lessen within a week to ten days. Instead, it can occur any time within the first year after the birth. Any combination of the following symptoms that last longer than two weeks may be signs of depression: feeling restless and irritable; feeling sad, hopeless and overwhelmed; crying a lot; having no energy or motivation; sleeping too little or too much; trouble focusing, remembering, or making decisions; feeling worthless and guilty; withdrawing from friends and family; overwhelming anxiety; even being afraid of hurting the baby or oneself. Often a woman suffers in silence because she feels too ashamed to admit that she does not feel overjoyed by this new addition to her life.

Factors which compound postpartum depression include: doubting ones ability to be a good mother by setting up expectations of perfection; being physically exhausted due to the disruption of sleep; feeling a sense of loss in the changing of one's identity; having less free time; lack of a good support system; having suffered from depression prior to pregnancy; and for working mom's, adjusting to a new routine and relying on someone else for child care.

Women suffering from depression following childbirth need to be taken seriously, not shamed. Untreated, postpartum depression can interfere with the mother's ability to form a strong emotional bond with her child. Usually a combination of psychotherapy, sometimes medication, and establishing social support (all factors in treating 'regular' depression) will work to alleviate the problem. If medication is ordered, and the mother is nursing, she should be sure to report this to the prescribing physician – many medications can be passed on to the infant.

Other things that can be helpful include: finding someone to talk to – another mother, a friend, your spouse – someone who can be trusted to share real feelings; consciously carve out at least 15 minutes each day to do something for herself – soak in the tub, read, take a walk; stop trying to be the "perfect" mother; avoid spending a lot of time alone – get out of the house; talk with other mothers – do a mom's Bible study. In addition, try not to make any drastic life-altering changes immediately after giving birth, but if these changes are unavoidable (like relocating to Egypt), set up some support to help get through it.

If you are a new mom, and you begin to recognize yourself in the information above, don't suffer in silence! Speak to your parish nurse, your pastor, your doctor or midwife. There is no reason to feel ashamed. Post-partum depression is much more complex than not getting the right vitamins or a good night's sleep! Get the help you need to get his new relationship off to a good start.

Epiphany blessings!

Debbie Best, Program Coordinator, Diakon Family Life Services

Acolyte Training and Refresher Workshop!

Sunday, January 24



For all veteran and novice (sixth grade) acolytes: learn & brush up on vocab & procedures right after the 10:30 service.

SPECIAL CONCERNS LIST

Patricia Alexander
505 Center St., Apt. #61
Williamsport, PA 17701

Edith Anderson
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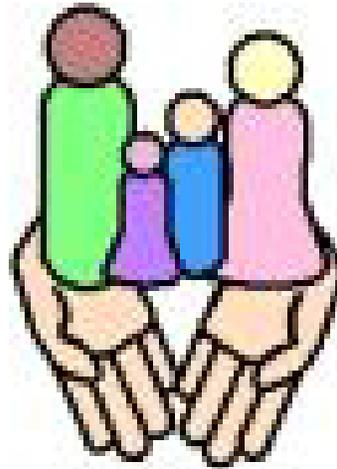
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1251 Rural Ave., Apt. 209
Williamsport, P A 17701



St. Mark's Calendar of Events

1 Friday*New Years Day Office Closed***3 Sunday**

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

4 Monday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer

5 Tuesday

8:00 AM City Pastors
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer

6 Wednesday**Epiphany of our Lord**

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 9:20 AM Staff Meeting & Quilting
 11:00 AM Bread Baking
 6:30 PM Worship & Music

7 Thursday

6:31 AM Men's Ministry
 8:00 AM Stephen Ministry I
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 3:00 PM Epiphany @ Wmspt. Home
 7:30 PM Senior Choir

8 Friday*Council Agenda deadline*

9:00 AM Morning Prayer

9 Saturday

9:00 AM Catechetical Retreat

10 Sunday**Baptism of Our Lord**

REMEMBRANCE OF BAPTISM

8:00 AM Holy Communion
 9:15 AM Sunday School
 10:30 AM Children's Church
 12:15 PM Milestone Luncheon

10 Sunday

10:30 AM Holy Communion
 12:15 PM The Way
 5:00 PM Family Handbells

11 Monday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 6:30 PM Adult Handbells

7:00 PM Civic Chorus

6:30 PM Property Committee

12 Tuesday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 6:00 PM Brownies

13 Wednesday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 9:20 AM Staff Meeting & Quilting
 10:00 AM Little Lambs Liaison
 12:00 PM Bible Study
 4:00 PM Executive Committee
 6:00 PM Meal w/ UCM @ Trinity

14 Thursday

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

15 Friday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer

16 Saturday

9:00 AM Cat. Retreat (snow date)

17 Sunday

8:00 AM Holy Communion
 9:15 AM Sunday School
 10:30 AM Holy Communion
 12:15 PM The Way Gathering
 5:00 PM Family Handbells
 6:00 PM Catechetical Gathering

18 Monday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 6:00 PM Civic Chorus Board
 6:30 PM Council Meeting
 7:00 PM Civic Chorus
 7:00 PM Dog Club

19 Tuesday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 6:30 PM Mutual Ministry

20 Wednesday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 9:20 AM Staff Meeting & Quilting
 12:00 PM Lunch 'N' Fellowship
 6:00 PM Selinsgrove Center Trip

21 Thursday

6:31 AM Men's Ministry

9:00 AM Morning Prayer

5:30 PM Stephen Ministry II

7:30 PM Senior Choir

22 Friday*Newsletter Deadline*

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 6:30 PM Friday Fun Night

23 Saturday

9:00 AM Daniel's Closet/Redeemer

24 Sunday

8:00 AM Holy Communion
 9:15 AM Sunday School
 10:30 AM Holy Communion
 12:00 PM Acolyte Training/Refresher
 5:00 PM Family Handbells
 6:30 PM Teen Movie Night

25 Monday

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

26 Tuesday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 6:00 PM Brownies
 7:00 PM Family Promise

27 Wednesday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 9:20 AM Staff Meeting & Quilting
 12:00 PM Bible Study

28 Thursday

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

29 Friday

9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 9:15 AM Lion Crew

31 Sunday

8:00 AM Holy Communion
 9:15 AM Sunday School
 10:30 AM All the Languages ...
 10:30 AM Holy Communion
 12:15 PM The Way Gathering
 5:00 PM Family Handbells

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