



# The *Lion* of St. Mark's

JANUARY 2006

## In Appreciation

### From the Pastor

**I** was reminded this week of the power of two little words: *Thank you*. Two of our young members each wrote me a Christmas card in which they added their own messages: *Thank you for sharing the light of Christ with me.* and *Thank you for teaching me about Jesus and God.* It is encouraging to me that our brief time together each week in worship and education is having a positive effect on their faith and life.

So now it is my turn to extend thanks: to all those who have sent greetings, presented gifts, expressed good wishes, assisted in the work of the Gospel at St. Mark's in myriad ways, *Thank you!* It makes our common life all the more rich and expressive.

**And it is your turn.** As we are now in the great Twelve Days of Christmas, and reflecting with gratitude that our Lord Jesus is come among us in the flesh, now we each might ask ourselves how that message has come to us through the words and actions of so many other persons. **What appropriate ways can we find to say *thank you* to them?**

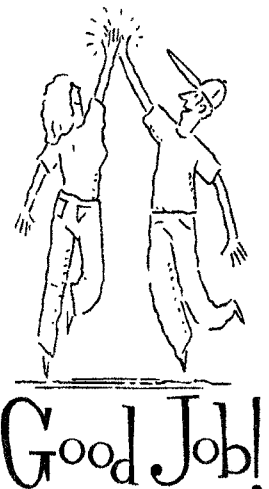
~ *Pastor Elkin*

Directory Update, etc	2	Yokefellow Training	9
Milestone Ministry	3	Christian Comm. Notes	10, 11
Youth & Family Ministry	4	Special Dates	12
Basketball Schedule	5	Thank Yous	13, 14
Christian Com. News	6	Health & Healing	15
Social Ministry News, etc	7	West Branch Conf. news	16
House Blessing, etc.	8	Special Concerns	17
		Camp Mount Luther	18

**E**ach winter, Pastor Elkin has hosted a dinner in honor of one of the groups in St. Mark's as a thank-you for continuing to serve our life together. This year the Pastor has selected the **Acolytes** as the ones to be honored. Sunday after Sunday throughout the year, three or more persons take care of practical tasks such as lighting candles, leading processions, receiving the offering, and gathering communion glasses. They also stand ready to assist the pastor by fetching something that was forgotten or solving a small problem during the service. Thanks are indeed appropriate for our diligent corps of acolytes!

The acolytes are invited to gather on Sunday, January 29 at 5:00 P.M. in Fellowship Hall for a formal dinner. Other family members may also be in attendance, and they may be asked to assist in serving the meal.

As we enjoy each other's company after the meal, there also will be conversation about our work together. We have persons who are preparing for their first service as an acolyte, and those who have served for many years; and we appreciate them all!



## COUNCIL UPDATE

The Council did not meet in regular session during December, but did meet in special session on Sunday, December 11 following the Congregation Assembly. At that time the Council heard a presentation from the Pastor on his handling of a sensitive pastoral matter, and after review and conversation, agreed unanimously that the Pastor has dealt with the matter in a proper way.

## CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATES

Please update your directory with the following information:

### Change:

Stephanie Confer — 1216 Tule Street, Montoursville, PA 17754

April Hartzel — 1735 East 3rd Street, Apt. 2A, Williamsport, PA 17701; phone 570-916-7178

Robert Shaible — 549 Bullit Run Road, Howard, PA 16841

### Add:

James Buckman — work phone number 326-2094 ext 131; email: j\_buckman@yahoo.com

Emma Elkin — daughter born to Sean and Maria Elkin

Gabriella Anna Marguerite Gregory — daughter born to Andrea and Tracey Gregory

Gabriel Nichols — son born to April Hartzel

Abbigail Robertson — daughter born to Rick and Jennifer Robertson

Robert & Marguerite Smith — address in FL: 4120 Cockroach Bay L.864 , Ruskin, FL 33570

Brittany Toy — 523 Arch Street, 3rd Floor, Williamsport, PA 17701; phone 570-772-5695

### **To: All Congregation Members**

**From:** the Financial Secretary and the Money Counting Crew:

In order to insure *accuracy* in the recording the amount of money to the various funds under the St. Mark's umbrella, it is *absolutely necessary* for you to clearly mark on your envelopes your specific requests.

### Please:

- ✦ Mark in the proper area of your envelope the TOTAL amount of money within the envelope.
- ✦ Mark on the envelope the amount of money you want to go to different areas.
- ✦ Make sure your number is on the outside of the envelope.
- ✦ Do not use abbreviations which we may not recognize.

The more of the above requests that you honor, the fewer errors will be made, and your money will go where it *should* go. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

## FROM THE PARISH REGISTER



❖ The funeral service for Randall Miller was celebrated on December 10.

## MILESTONE MINISTRY

### *RECENT MILESTONES* *with St. Mark's members*

#### *Birth*

**Emma Rylie Elkin**, daughter of Sean and Maria Strzempek Elkin, December 9, 2005

#### *Blanket of Care*

**Emma Elkin**, December 18, 2005

#### *Primary Student Bibles*

**Theoron Hershey**, son of Jeff and Trish Hershey  
**Max Hospes**, son of Richard and Vicki Hospes  
**Bryce Young**, son of Christina Ciesielski  
**Sara Jones**, daughter of Bob and Bernadette Jones  
 December 11, 2005

The families highlighted favorite passages and included messages and prayers for their children.

#### *To the Church Triumphant*

**Randall Miller**, spouse of Lillian Miller, December 7, 2005 with placement of ashes in St. Mark's Columbarium, December 10.

### *UPCOMING MILESTONES*

#### *Sacrament of Holy Baptism*

**Emma Rylie Elkin**, January 1, 2006  
**Gabriella Anna Marguerite Gregory**, Jan. 8, 2006  
**Baby Haussmann**, January 22, 2006

#### *Remembrance of Baptism – Giving of the Faith Treasure Chest*

**Emma Rylie Elkin**, January 1, 2006  
**Abbigail Robertson**, January 8, 2006  
**Gabriel Nichols**, January 8, 2006  
**Gabriella Anna Marguerite Gregory**, Jan. 8, 2006

#### *Young Drivers' Milestone*

Blessing of young drivers will take place at the 10:30 service on January 22, 2006. Both new drivers and those receiving their senior license will be recognized. Please let the church know if you have recently received your junior or senior license as soon as possible.

#### *Milestone Luncheon*

Also on January 22, a two-milestone luncheon will be held. We'll be celebrating with primary students who received bibles in December as well as with those attaining Young Drivers' Milestones. All these students and their families are asked to inform the office how many will be attending.

#### *All the Languages of Good News*

February 5, 2006

#### *Enrollment of Candidate for Baptism*

March 5, 2006

#### *Prayer Pillows*

March 5, 2006

#### *Blessing of Candidates and Affirmers*

March 19, 26, April 2, 2006

#### *Sacrament of Holy Baptism*

April 15, 2006

#### *58 – 59<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary*

May 7, 2006

#### *Affirmation of Baptism – Confirmation*

June 4, 2006

#### *Sending out the members of The Way with prayers for their Christian vocation*

June 4, 2006

## YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

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



### CHILDREN'S CHURCH

will be held on Sunday, January 8, 2006, at 10:30 a.m. in the Chapel.

**THANK YOU** to everyone who contributed on the trees in Fellowship Hall!! The Kids' Clothes Closet will receive scarves, hats, gloves and socks. This clothing will help to keep needy children within the community warm this season. The Williamsport Police Department will receive a large number of Teddy bears to distribute for the comfort of children during traumatic times. A very special thank you to all!

### Ornaments for Sunday School

John and Ruth Burkholder donated hand-made ornaments for a "Sunday School" tree in Fellowship Hall. Children attending the Advent wreath-making hung them on the tree. They are beautiful and will become part of our Christmas traditions for our children here at St. Mark's.

### Advent Wreaths

Twenty-six people (eight families) attended this Advent celebration. The children decorated the mitten and teddy bear trees before we all sat down to a light lunch. The making of the wreaths followed. During clean-up, the children decorated a third tree with hand-made wooden ornaments.

### Kids' Morning Out

The revival of this event was a success! Over a dozen children attended. They made and decorated cookies for our shut-ins, made

birdfeeders and presents for their families, played some games and listened to a story. The parents were appreciative of the time to run errands and greeted each other as their paths crossed at the mall! A good time was had by all!

A big **"THANK YOU"** goes out to Deb, Sara, Christina, Emily and Riley for their invaluable assistance. We plan to repeat this event next year and look forward to having even more children join us for this special morning!

### Cookie Baking

Another big **"THANK YOU"** goes out to Deb, Jackie, Nancy, Dot, Donna and Lois for their creative cooking on Saturday, December 10. They produced hundreds (yes, hundreds) of cookies to share and for the carolers to deliver on Sunday. A wonderful assortment of goodies was assembled during this afternoon: pizelles, chocolate ribbons, chocolate chip cookies, molasses cookies, oatmeal bars, peanut butter cookies... The conversation and camaraderie made the time fly and many hands made light work. **THANK YOU ALL!!!**

### Caroling

Bearing trays of the treats made during the two preceding events, 14 members of the congregation, aged 6 to over-60, split into two teams of seven to visit some of our shut-ins on Sunday, December 11. We were warmly welcomed by all who were home as we arrived at their homes "making a joyful noise!" We returned to the church for a time of fellowship and to share memories and messages from those we visited.

**\*\*\*\*\*As one of your New Year resolutions, could you plan on being involved in this sharing of the message of Christmas next year? Even though there were enough for two groups of carolers instead of one this year, we could not visit all of our shut-ins and barely made it to half of them.**

# JOHN BOWER SUNDAY SCHOOL BASKETBALL LEAGUE 2006 SCHEDULE

## BEGINNER PEE-WEES

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>COMPETITORS</u>
Jan. 7	2:00 pm	Arena Center	St. Ann's - C vs. <u>St. Mark's</u>
Jan. 14	11:30am	upstairs South	<u>St. Mark's</u> vs. St. Boniface - A
Jan. 21	1:00 pm	upstairs South	<u>St. Mark's</u> vs. Annunciation - B
Jan. 28	3:00 pm	Arena Center	First U.M. - B vs. <u>St. Mark's</u>
Feb. 4	12:30 pm	Arena Center	Mtsvl. Presbyterian vs. <u>St. Mark's</u>
Feb. 11	3:30 pm	Arena Center	Our Lady of Lourdes vs. <u>St. Mark's</u>
Feb. 18	11:00 am	upstairs South	St. Lawrence - A vs. <u>St. Mark's</u>

## PEE-WEES

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>COMPETITORS</u>
Jan. 7	12:30 pm	upstairs South	Christ Worship Center - B vs. <u>St. Mark's</u>
Jan. 14	noon	upstairs South	<u>St. Mark's</u> vs. First U.M. - B
Jan. 21	1:30 pm	upstairs North	Covenant Central Presby. - A vs. <u>St. Mark's</u>
Jan. 28	2:00 pm	upstairs South	St. Ann's - B vs. <u>St. Mark's</u>
Feb. 4	1:00 pm	upstairs North	Annunciation vs. <u>St. Mark's</u>
Feb. 11	BYE		<u>St. Mark's</u>
Feb. 18	3:30 pm	Arena West	<u>St. Mark's</u> vs. Antioch Baptist

## TEAM MEMBERS

### BEGINNER PEE-WEE

BUCKMAN, EZRA  
 COMINI, MORGAN  
 HERSHEY, KARA  
 HERSHEY, THEORON  
 LEHMAN, ALEXANDER  
 OWEN, DAWSON  
 PELLESCI, DUSTIN  
 SHIMP, CODY  
 YOUNG, BRYCE

### COACHES

Kirk Owen, assisted by Jeff Hershey

### PEE-WEE

BOONE, STEPHEN  
 COMINI, CHRISTINA  
 EYER, JARRETT  
 FORTIN, BRANDON  
 FORTIN, PAIGE  
 JONES, SARA  
 OWEN, DEVIN  
 RAMSAUER, HANNAH

### COACHES

Rick Robertson, assisted by Kirk Owen

# CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY NOTES

## Catechetical Retreat

Catechetical Retreat 2006 is scheduled for January 7, 2006, at Messiah Lutheran. Snow date will be January 21.

Topics will include:

- ✦ **The Sky is Falling** offered by Pastor Driesen
- ✦ **God, Grades and Glory: What's Achievement Good For?** by Pastor Frontz
- ✦ **Battlestar (Galactica) and the Bethlehem Star: Issues in Science (Fiction) and Religion** by Pastor Zetto
- ✦ **Jesus Goes to the Movies**, by Pastor Deibler & Pastor Showers
- ✦ **Parents, Teens and Money**, by Mr. Keith Woods.

## TEENS! *Learn how to talk to your peers about the BIG questions!*

- *Whaddya do when one of your peeps starts talking bout the scary stuff—like suicide, drug use and sex?*
- *Whaddya say to them when they are struggling?*
- *When they are searching?*
- *When they want to give up?*

## PEER MINISTRY FOR YOUTH TRAINING

On Saturday, January 14, and Monday, January 16, 2006, from 9 am to 3 pm, Rev. Kerry Auker, a certified Peer Minister Trainer, will lead sessions enabling 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders to learn how to overcome barriers that separate people of diverse populations from living, working and ministering together.

## St. Mark's Lions



Both teams played excellent first games the weekend before Christmas, with scores going up and down and tying several times during play—resulting,

unfortunately, in losses for each: Pee-Wees—16-18 and beginner Pee-Wees—12-14. The children were great sports and played well. We couldn't be more proud of them.

Our practices will resume every Tuesday, beginning January 3, 2006, at Trinity Episcopal Church. The Beginner Pee Wee team will practice from 6 p.m. until 7 p.m. and the Pee Wee team will practice from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

A schedule of games is included in this newsletter. Players, please arrive a half-hour early for your games!!

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



## DID YOU KNOW?

St. Mark's Church has a Web site! With the help of Kathy Kolb and Gary Weber, you can read history of the church, see old and new photos and lots of other things,

including the calendar and old & current issues of the *Lion* newsletter. New items will be added regularly. Tell your friends and family to check out the following site:

**[www.kolbweb.com/stmarks](http://www.kolbweb.com/stmarks)**

## SOCIAL MINISTRY NEWS

- 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 **more than a barrel full** of boxed stuffing mix. Thank you for answering the call to serve those in need in our community.
- St Mark's Elves made their annual visit December 6, 2005 to the Selinsgrove Center to entertain and visit with a group of men in the Terrace Living area. The elves included Pastor and Donna Elkin, Gladys Knauss, Lou Kolb, Elsie Sechler, and Becky Miller Pryor. The residents enjoyed songs, stories, gifts, fellowship, and refreshments. Heartfelt thanks and appreciation is extended to the members of the congregation who donated cookies, candy, or money to offset the cost of hosting this event. This was a special evening that brought joy to all.
- January signals the arrival of the Super Bowl. To assist the needy in our community, we will collect cans of **soup or money** to purchase soup on **Souper Bowl Sunday**. Look for the soup pots in the Narthex for your donations.

- Winter can be harsh, especially for people suffering from unemployment, underemployment, homelessness, or illness without insurance. On a daily basis, The Shepherd of the Streets sees the distress many citizens of our community are experiencing. As Christians we can easily answer the call to serve these individuals. (Dollar Stores offer wonderful bargains on hygiene items.)

During January the Social Ministry Committee will collect hygiene items for use by the Shepherd's clients. All hygiene items should be of regular size. Please fill the tubs in the Narthex with:

- † Shampoo
- † Conditioner
- † hand lotion
- † Soap
- † Toothpaste
- † Toothbrushes
- † Shaving supplies
- † Feminine hygiene products
- † baby lotion
- † baby powder
- † Kleenex
- † toilet tissue
- † towels, washcloths
- † calendars, and inexpensive day planners.

## ST. MARK'S WOMEN CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Winter Luncheon Meeting - January 25, 2006

Plan to meet at Hoss's at 12:00 noon to help decide the distribution of our funds.

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has matched the funds we raised at our rummage sales last year.

### Clothing Rummage Sale - April 29, 2006

Bring in clothing and accessories anytime. They can be stored in our Bazaar Room in the basement.

## EVENTS AT SUSQUEHANNA UNIVERSITY

**On February 1**, Susquehanna University's Institute for Lifelong Learning presents Assistant Professor of Mathematics Carol Harrison and Professor Emeritus of Biology Randolph Harrison. The Harrisons spent much of the year 2005 living and teaching at the University of Tumaini in the East African nation of Tanzania and will talk about their experiences while in Africa.

The Institute for Lifelong Learning programs begin at 11 a.m. in Degenstein Center Theater, Degenstein Campus Center with lunch at noon. Optional post-luncheon video session: 1:15 to 2:15 p.m. For lunch reservations, call the Office of Continuing Education at 570-372-4354.

### YOUTH DATES:

**FLOOD SU:** January 8, 2006, at the Field House. Meet there at 2pm, event concludes at 5pm (the Pool will be open from 2:30 - 4:30).

**Junior High Youth Retreat** (grades 6-9) the date has to be changed, but watch for information about this soon!

**Lutheran Youth Day at SU:** April 8, 10am-5:30pm. Cost is \$10, includes a concert with *Lost and Found*.

**Senior High Adventure Day** (grades 9-12) Saturday, April 22, 2006. This event will be at the Quest climbing and challenge facilities at Bloomsburg University. Registration information is coming. Watch for it!

**Elementary School Event** (grades 1-6 and their parents) May 6 at Camp Mount Luther. A fun day for all who take part!

**Camp Mount Luther Overnight and Clean-Up Day!** May 19-20. Cost \$5.00 for those who stay overnight for an evening of games and activities, then join with others as we ready the camp for another summer season.

**Thursday through Saturday, Jan. 19-21, 8 p.m.**

Chancel Drama 2006 will present their production of the musical *Children's Letters to God*. Taken directly from the letters of young people writing to God, this musical is a whimsical and charming family-oriented production about the innocent joys of growing up. Weber Chapel Auditorium, Susquehanna University. For information, call 570-374-4192.

### HOUSE-BLESSINGS PLANNED DURING EPIPHANY

It is an old custom that is fun to renew. Pastor Elkin will be accepting invitations to the homes of members during the Epiphany season, January 6 through February for a house-blessing. It is appropriate for all sizes of families and types of house or apartments. It is a way to remember that the travelers, the "wise men" of Matthew's nativity narrative, were outsiders who were welcomed into the Good News, just as we are welcomed by the Lord Jesus. Last year the pastor visited more than 20 homes and is looking to increase that number this year. Use the slip, or call the office (323-4619) to make your request. The Pastor will call and set up the day and time with you.

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_



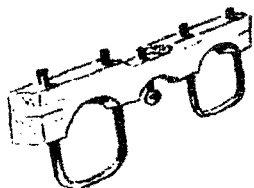
## YOKEFELLOW PRISON MINISTRY ANNOUNCES UPCOMING NEW VOLUNTEER TRAINING CLASSES

Upper Susquehanna Valley Yokefellow Prison Ministry will hold a new volunteer training session on Tuesday, January 24, 2006 at 7:00. The training session will be held at the Yokefellow Center at 1200 Almond Street (rear), Williamsport, PA.

This introductory session will give new potential volunteers an overview of the Yokefellow movement and give details on available volunteer duties.

5 weekly additional sessions will follow the introductory session. Training topics will include many tips on visiting prisons and specific training on how to participate in or lead a Yokefellow small group session in a prison. Other training topics include:

- Who are the offenders?
- Who are the Yokefellow volunteers?
- Prison Policies and guidelines for dealing with inmates.
- A tour of a local prison along with an opportunity to meet some of the prison personnel.
- An opportunity to meet a chaplain from a local prison.
- An opportunity to meet a corrections officer from one of our local correctional facilities.
- Graduation! Where is God calling you to serve?



Yokefellow groups are Christian persons talking with people about topics such as life values and spiritual meanings. In Yokefellow Prison Ministry meetings development and learning takes place through the form of dialogue.

Yokefellow Prison Ministry trains and sends 60 Christian volunteers into 10 area State and County prisons on a weekly basis. In addition to going into prisons, there are opportunities for leadership in such positions as Aftercare groups, Victim groups, Family groups, letter writing and more. They are also most appreciative of financial contributions to provide the resources that volunteers need.

Does God make a difference in inmates' lives? Yes. Will it keep them out of prison once they're released? That's the real question. Changing lives is a process! But we're not talking numbers. We're talking people's lives and souls. You simply cannot dispute God's power when you look into the heart of someone who has become "a new creation."

When you support prayerfully and financially what God is doing through Yokefellow Prison Ministry you help make a difference in the lives of men and women in the jails and prisons of our area.

For more information, to volunteer, or to make a monetary contribution, contact Yokefellow at 1200 Almond Street, 326-6868, or [www.yokefellowship.org/williamsport](http://www.yokefellowship.org/williamsport).

## CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY NOTES

### AN OPPORTUNITY FOR LIFE

Adoption is the positive action! The *Pregnancy Care Center* that operates in our 5-county region provides Christian-based help for hundreds of persons each year when a pregnancy is considered to be a crisis. They have a goal of raising \$1 million this winter for expanding their facilities and operating their program in Williamsport, Lewisburg, Shamokin, and elsewhere. For more information, to volunteer, or to offer a gift or bequest to the Campaign for Life, write to *The Pregnancy Care Center of the Susquehanna Valley*, 9 North Third Street, Lewisburg, PA 17837. This faith-based organization has as its slogan *He gave everything to give them life!*

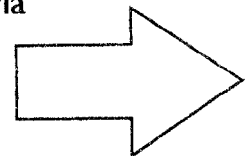
### Liberia

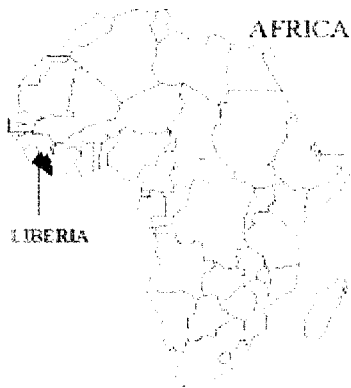
On January 10, 2006, Jean Dickey, Regina Gross, and Sandy Nelson and Pastor Detlef will be leaving on a six weeks trip to Liberia. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Liberia is the companion synod of our Upper Susquehanna Synod. The relationship between the two synods dates back to the first Lutheran missionary, Rev. Day, who came from the Central Pennsylvania area and built the first Lutheran church in Harrisburg, Liberia. He is buried in Selinsgrove.

Through the years the Lutheran Church in Liberia has been present in the prayer life of our congregation and many pastor's names who have served over there are known to us. In this relationship we embraced the responsibility to care for the Liberian church and its congregations. Twice a year we load a container to be shipped to Monrovia. It contains medical supplies for Phebe Hospital, run by the Lutheran World Federation, school supplies and clothing. St. Michael's WELCA have made school kits for children and collected a great number of T-shirts. Now we are taking the partnership to a personal level. We not only send money and goods but also want to build and strengthen personal relationships.

The Liberia work team includes 19 people, the biggest group we have sent to Liberia. A group of seven will stay in Zorzor to roof and fix up a hospital serving the northern region of the country. Three pastors will work out of Totota and do pastoral education and lay ministers' training. There will be three nurses who will work in Phebe Hospital near Gbarnga. A group of six women will work with Liberian women's groups to do what is called Women's Empowerment Workshops. Women often carry the whole burden of the family, caring for children and at the same time providing income and food – an almost impossible task in a country with 80% unemployment and 80% illiteracy. We hope and pray that when we return on February 23 we will have made a difference for the church and the people in Liberia.

\*\*\*\* See next page for a historical timeline and other information on Liberia





## Liberia: A Brief Historical Timeline

**1807**  
Congress bans the importation of slaves into the U.S.

**1816**  
The American Colonization Society (ACS) formed in Washington DC, for the purpose of sending free Blacks to Africa.

**1822**  
The first African-American settlers arrive from the United States. Over 13,000 would be sent between 1822 and 1862.

**1823**  
The ACS names the colony Liberia, for liberty, and the capital Monrovia, after U.S. president James Monroe.

**1847**  
Liberia becomes an independent republic with the signing of the Liberian Declaration of Independence. Voting is restricted to immigrants who were formerly slaves. Indigenous Liberians quickly became second class citizens, serving as exploited laborers.

**1860s**  
Liberia's territorial boundaries are expanded, with assistance from the U.S. following various treaties, purchases, and battles with indigenous chiefs. The True Whig Party wins the first presidential election. It becomes the dominant political party until 1980.

**1926**  
Firestone Tire and Rubber Company gains the right to lease one million acres of land for 99 years to establish rubber plantations in Liberia.

**1930**  
A League of Nations report exposes forced-labor practices in Liberia.

**1944**  
President William Tubman comes to office, pursuing a policy of national unification to draw the indigenous people into the state and society, formally establishing laws to rid Liberia of practices that favor those of settler descent. Tubman encourages economic development through foreign investment. Liberia becomes wealthier, though the wealth is still concentrated in the hands of the Americo-Liberian elite.

**1951**  
Women and indigenous property owners vote for the first time in a presidential election.

**1971**  
William Tolbert becomes president.

**1980s**  
Tolbert is assassinated; a bloody military coup brings Sgt. Samuel Doe to power. Doe, with no political experience and little formal education, is installed as the first indigenous Liberian president after winning controversial elections in 1986. Ethnic tensions rise and the economy begins steady decline, despite heavy financial support from the U.S.

**1990s**  
Civil war breaks out, leading to the eventual death of more than 200,000 Liberians and the displacement of a million others, and the destruction of the country's infrastructure. Samuel Doe is executed by a rebel faction leader. Charles Taylor's troops, invading Liberia from Ivory Coast, capture most of the country.

**1997**  
After seven years of civil war, failed cease fires and broken peace accords, Charles Taylor is elected president of Liberia.

**2000**  
Charles Taylor is accused of supporting Sierra Leone's rebel movement against the government by trading arms and other resources for diamonds. The U.N. bans diamond exports from Liberia and reinforces its ban on arms exports to Liberia.

**2003**  
In June and July, fighting escalates in Monrovia, killing more than 1,500 people, despite peace talks beginning in Ghana. On August 11, Charles Taylor, under international pressure to quit and hemmed in by rebels – steps down and goes into exile. All-party peace talks lead to a transitional, power-sharing government that is to steer the country towards elections in 2005. The two rebel movements (LURD and MODEL) and the transitional government headed by Monrovia businessman Gyude Bryant struggle for power, control and influence within the country.

**2004**  
In February, an international donor conference results in pledges of more than \$520 million dollars. The US pledges \$200 million for humanitarian and reconstruction needs. In April, nearly 15,000 United Nations peacekeeping forces assist in beginning the Disarmament, Demobilization, Resettlement and Rehabilitation Program (DDRR). The first step is to disarm the estimated 60,000 ex-combatants, including many women and children among the fighting forces.

## SPECIAL DATES ~ BIRTHDAYS

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

## SPECIAL DATES ~ ANNIVERSARIES

Art & June Decker

January 20

Charles & Ruth Homan

January 23

## A SPECIAL INVITATION FROM MEN'S MINISTRY

We would like to invite all men to attend a Thursday morning Bible study held in the middle lounge. Since the start of the Men's Ministry in late August of 2005, we have studied the following sections of the Bible:

1. For eight weeks we studied the seven letters to the churches in Asia Minor from the book of Revelation chapter 2 and 3. In each letter, Jesus wrote to the churches, commended the good things, rebuked the bad things and gave them instructions to follow with a promise. We then asked if Jesus wrote a letter today to St. Mark's Church what would it say? Better yet if He wrote you a letter, what would He say?

2. We then focused our study on Jesus' final instructions before ascending into heaven according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. This study took 6 weeks. Jesus gives us the Great Commission in Matthew 28:16-20 and in John 21:15-19. Jesus asked Peter 3 times do you truly love me more than

these? Peter answered, "Yes, Lord you know that I love you." Jesus answered, "Feed my sheep and follow me." Now you substitute your name for Peter.

The study time is broken down as follow:

- Start time 6:31 am The Good Mornings
- Opening Prayer
- Read the Bible verse(s)
- Study time
- Any thoughts - Open discussion
- Closing Prayer
- End time 7:04 am Singing (It's not that bad)

As you can see, we are busy every Thursday morning. We stick to a time schedule and we study God's word along with some not so bad singing. Our prayer today is to encourage all the men of St. Mark's Church young and old to make time to study God's word. We will reconvene on January 5, 2006 at 6:31am. The next study will be on Matthew chapter 13, Jesus' parables.

## SPECIAL THANK YOUS

### Thank you for Parents' Morning Out!

I'm writing to thank Bernadette and Sharon for the time and effort they contributed to the Parents' Morning Out on December 10.

As a stay-at-home mother of an active 3-year old, I had done exactly no Christmas shopping before this date. Imagine my delight when I read that I would have three whole hours to shop without having to beg, cajole, wheedle, plead, and finally yell in order to maneuver my son around the mall!

I know that other parents appreciated this opportunity, since I passed the Webers and the Fortins as I rushed from store to store. It was such a comfort to know that my son was having fun in a caring environment, while I had a little taste of freedom!

Like most parents of young children, when I'm alone I can get more done in a few hours than most people can do in a week. Kind of makes me think, if parents of young children were organizing the war effort, we'd have been out of Iraq long ago! (wishful thinking.)

When I returned from the mall, the majority of my shopping done, I was greeted with three craft projects that I was proud to display. These were not the standard toilet-paper roll Santas or paper cup Christmas trees! I put the wooden Christmas tree in my kitchen window, and the decorated floor mat at the bottom of the stairs. The birds are enjoying the pine-cone treat hung on the front-lawn tree.

To me, being a true Christian is helping ease the burden of life for others. Sharon and Bernadette certainly did that for me! Thanks to you and to your helpers for a wonderful day.

~ Pam Jensen

### To My St. Mark's Family:

Thank you for your kind thoughts and prayers for me and our team during our dental mission trip to Tanzania. Your prayers were a source of great strength to all of us and we thanked God each day for you.

It was a blessing for me to be part of a group of people who were serving God by serving the less fortunate in our world.

I came home humbled and inspired by our team members and by the missionaries who have dedicated their lives to being disciples of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I hope to share my pictures and experiences with you in the near future.

~ Carl O. Hieber

### THOUGHTS FROM A CARE RECEIVER

"Would you like to have a Stephen Minister?" was the question from Jane Larson. She believed my situation warranted having one so my answer was "Yes." What a match those Stephen Ministry leaders made between care giver and care receiver. I have been blessed with almost weekly visits from a truly committed St. Mark's member. After reading a recent article in the *Lion*, this friend brings much to our visits:

"affirms me" - assures me I have some worth in this world and God is there for me  
 "listens to me" - oft times family is not available and there is need to "talk"  
 "shares spiritual food" - sharing scripture that gives strength and hope. We also share edible food.

Sincere thanks to St. Mark's for providing this program, realizing my need and answering this call by providing such a wonderful Stephen Minister.

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS & THANK YOU'S

### *From our Church Archivist:*

As archivist of St. Mark's Church, I wish to report that we are beginning to find our work is showing progress. We have almost 40 large boxes filled with history of our church, with more to come. I am happy to report that we have completed filing copies of weekly church bulletins, beginning with 1920, with only a few missing here and there. The church office holds bulletins for a two-year period as a reference before they are placed in archival files. We also have a file of many UNDATED BULLETINS... but we are certain we can identify them by using the church calendar.

We are now working on completing files of the church newsletter which dates from 1888, when it was called *The Herald*. In 1934, the name was changed to *Parish News* and in 1954, a new name was selected—the *Lion*.

If you have old copies of church bulletins or newsletters, don't throw them out. We would be happy to take them in hopes they may be able to fill in the empty spots in our files.

Many thanks to Ted Larson, Larry Lundy, Pam Jensen and Gary Weber for getting involved. We would love to have you join us, too! Just give me a call at 326-9459.

~ Dot Berndt

**Lunch 'N' Fellowship**  
will meet on Wednesday, January  
14th at 12:00 noon for pork,  
sauerkraut and mashed potatoes.  
Please join us!



### *MEMORIAL GIFT*

A gift in memory of **Anna Harris** has been presented to the church recently. Because Anna was in the nursing profession, this gift consists of an assortment of medical and emergency supplies which will be located in Fellowship Hall.

**Contents of the medical bag include:**

- 1 blood pressure cuff and stethoscope
- 2 instant cold packs
- 25 4x4 sterile pads (1 box)
- 3 Kling 3-inch bandage rolls
- 1 universal arm sling
- 1 digital thermometer
- 10 ammonia inhalants (1 box)
- 5 tongue depressors
- 1 flashlight and batteries
- 1 memo pad
- 1 pencil

### *Thanks From the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:*

Report of our 2005 contribution (as of November 15) designated for:

Hurricane response	\$1, 807.00
World hunger	\$ 182.00
Bette McCrandall, Missionary	\$ 561.00

December 9, 2005 contribution for:      Bette McCrandall, Missionary      \$ 180.00

## HEALTH, HEALING AND WHOLENESS

*"...in all things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, neither angels or demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom.8:37-39, NIV)*

We are conquerors! Today there are more than 10 million cancer survivors in the United States. Many are leading productive lives years after diagnosis! According to the American Cancer Society, "The risk of being diagnosed with cancer and the risk of dying of cancer have decreased since the early 1990s. Fewer than half the people diagnosed with cancer today will die of the disease. Some are completely cured, and many more survive for years with a good quality of life, thanks to treatments that control many types of cancer." (www.cancer.org). If you want to be uplifted, just read a few of the 90 plus stories of survival on the organization's website!

Cancer treatment has changed. Today it is even possible for some individuals to continue to work while receiving treatment – a concept unheard of in the past. For those who do, working can provide some stability or 'normalcy' to a life that has seen some upheaval. It allows for some sense of control and connectedness to people who care about them, while providing a focus other than the disease.

Treatment affects everyone differently, and you may not know if it is possible to continue working until you've completed a few treatments. What happens will depend a number of factors, including, the type of cancer, its advancement, and the form of treatment. Your doctor can give you an idea of what to expect. If you decide to, and are able to continue to work, here are a few things to consider:

- You may want to schedule your treatments later in the day, or just before the weekend. This will allow you some recuperation before going to work.
- Decide who needs to know about your treatment; take into consideration that your colleagues may prove to be important sources of support during your treatment.
- Information you choose to share with your employer is protected, what you share with co-workers is not.
- Meet with your supervisor ahead of time, so you can plan together; perhaps you can do some of your work from home, or you may want to negotiate for a reduction in hours.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act affords you protection from discrimination and allows you to be afforded "reasonable accommodations" to continue doing your job.
- Everyone reacts to the news differently – some co-workers will have questions or concerns, and some may try to avoid you. Try not to judge.

If you are the co-worker of someone undergoing cancer treatment, here are a few tips for you:

- Take cues from the person receiving treatment. Some folks need privacy, while others need to talk about the illness.
- Listen – sometimes, without feeling a need to respond – I'm convinced God gave us two ears and only one mouth for a good reason.
- Offer to help in concrete ways: organize meals, drive to appointments, provide childcare
- Expect good days and bad days – let them know you care!
- Donate vacation or sick time if possible.
- Arrange for a parking spot closest to the building.

Finally, the **most important** thing you can do, whether you are the one receiving treatment, or are a colleague - **"pray without ceasing! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [will] be with you". (1Thess. 5: 17 & 28, NRSV).**

Debbie Best, Congregational Health Ministries & Family Life Services  
Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries

# West Branch Conference

of the Upper Susquehanna Synod  
January 2006 conference news

## Peer Ministry

Lutheran Shared Ministry invites students for a peer ministry Workshop that will be held at St. Mark's Saturday, January 14 and Monday, January 16 at St. Mark's Lutheran Church. The presenter will be Rev. Kerry Aucker. The program helps students to better relate with each other and to enable them to minister to their peer groups. Please call 326-7082 for registration.

## Lutheran Shared Ministry

The Lutheran Shared Ministry of Williamsport offers their annual Confirmation Retreat Saturday, January 7, 9:00 Am to 2:00 PM at Messiah. Snow date is January 21. The unique feature of the retreat is that parents and students are taking their classes separately in the morning and then in the afternoon have two joint workshops.

## Liberia

An 18 member work-team is leaving for Liberia January 10. This is the greatest number of people ever participating in the synods effort to keep the companionship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Liberia alive. From our conference are participating Paul Shaner (St. Mark's, Lairdsville), Jean Dickey, Regina Gross, Sandy Nelson and Detlef Huckfeldt (all St. Michael's, Quiggleville). Please keep them in your prayers as they travel.

## Yokefellow Prison Ministry

The Upper Susquehanna Valley Yokefellow Prison Ministry will hold a new volunteer training session on Tuesday, January 24, 2006 at 7:00 PM at the Yokefellow Center at 1200 Almond Street (rear), Williamsport, PA. This session will give volunteers an overview of the Yokefellow movement and give details on available volunteer duties.

## United Campus Ministry

The United Campus Ministry at Penn College offers a weekly worship service followed by a dinner prepared by local congregations. In the new year the services resume at Trinity, Episcopal, Wednesday, January 11 at 6:00 PM.

## Great with Child

A daughter was born on November 26 to Rev. Andrea Rice and Rev. Nathan Rice who serve the Nittany Valley - Sugar Valley Parish since last summer. Her name is Elisa Megan Rice.

## Donate Musical Instruments

Members of three collegiate musical organizations at Susquehanna University are collecting musical instruments to send to two schools in Louisiana whose musical instrument collections were devastated by two hurricanes last summer. Brass and percussion instruments are in particularly need. If necessary instruments will be refurbished before sent to Louisiana. Drop of site is St. Luke.

## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

United Churches of Lycoming County will issue a program for the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18-25. Please watch for services and events. Also watch for events in your local communities.

## Contact

Please let us know about any events you would like to see published in this newsletter. Call or e-mail Debbie Best (570) 320-0520 ([bestd@diakon.org](mailto:bestd@diakon.org)). The next two West Branch Conference newsletters will be produced by Rev. Maurice "Chip" Frantz since the editor will be in Liberia. Thanks Chip!

## Lifting Up The Ministry:

St. Mark's has been on the crossroads of transportation in Williamsport since 1852: canals, railroads, highways and bridges have always been our close neighbors! The present nave was built in 1959 and is the third one in our 153 years. With its excellent acoustics and striking stained glass, it is a great setting not only for the congregation's worship, but also for organ, choral, and instrumental concerts and community events. St. Mark's has been using the one-to-one caring relationships of Stephen Ministry for more than 7 years, and has been drawing in new members and reinvigorating long-time members through the adult Catechumenate process called The Way for the past 6 years. More recently, St. Mark's has been happily developing the Milestone Ministry portion of Child in our Hand—Passing on Faith emphasis.



## SPECIAL CONCERNS LIST

Patricia Alexander  
1745 Chestnut St.  
Williamsport, PA 17701

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

Nancy Bohartz  
624 Sixth Ave.  
Williamsport, PA 17701

June Decker  
338 Sherwood Ave.  
South Williamsport, PA 17702

Larue Dieter  
2150 Warrensville Road Apt. 2  
Montoursville, PA 17754

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

Harriet Fornwalt  
729 Wilson Street  
Williamsport, PA 17701

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

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

Jean Gulliver  
3039 Elimsport Road  
Montgomery, PA 17752

Charles Homan  
2215 Warrensville Rd.  
Montoursville, PA 17754

Charlotte Hughes  
140 Blueberry Lane  
Williamsport, PA 17701

Lucille Markel  
Rose View Center, Room 213 A  
1251 Rural Ave.  
Williamsport, PA 17701

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

Anne Miller  
947 Hepburn St.  
Williamsport, PA 17701

Jane Oakes  
833 Funston Avenue  
Williamsport, PA 17701

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

Anne Rhodes  
c/o Carole Finn  
20308 Cabana Drive  
Germantown, MD 20876

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

Marian Rubendahl  
1900 Ravine Road Bldg. C  
Williamsport Home Apt. 1010  
Williamsport, PA 17701

James Sheaffer  
Rose View Court Rm. 321  
1251 Rural Ave.  
Williamsport, PA 17701

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

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

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

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

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

Ira Tuxford  
1838 Blanchard Ave.  
Williamsport, PA 17701

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

# GREETINGS FROM THE BOARD & STAFF AT CAMP MOUNT LUTHER

It is an exciting time of year as we prepare for the birth of Christ. It is also an exciting time at Camp Mount Luther. Just as Mary received good news from the angel Gabriel, we've received some good news about our capital campaign.

To date, the 40 By Faith campaign that is raising funds to enhance our ministry has raised nearly \$650,000 toward "Our \$1 million or more goal. These gifts will help us with the costs associated with the construction of the new Evergreen Center and provide for future camp opportunities.

The Board of Directors has recently approved to extend the 40 By Faith Campaign to June 30, 2006 due to an exciting and generous gift from an anonymous donor - with a challenge attached. The donor wishes to honor the ministry of The Reverend Dr. Raymond "Padre" Shaheen with a gift that could help us reach our goal. The Challenge is this: for every \$3.00 the Camp raises it will be matched by an additional \$1 (up to a \$70,000 total match). Among his many roles as a church leader, Pastor Shaheen served as pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church, South Williamsport and later as pastor of St. Luke Lutheran Church, Silver Spring, Maryland. He currently serves as Special Assistant to the President at Susquehanna University.

We are asking your help with this important effort. If your congregation has already given to the campaign, please consider making a one-time gift or pledge to assist us in meeting this challenge. If your congregation has not yet contributed, please prayerfully consider supporting this endeavor now that your donation will be matched. We would also appreciate your help in identifying other persons who might be interested in helping the camp by making a contribution toward this effort. A gift form is enclosed.

Please call the camp office at (570) 922-1587 with any questions or for additional information on our campaign. You are always encouraged to visit our website at [www.campmountluther.org](http://www.campmountluther.org). Thank you for your consideration and Happy Holidays!

Bishop A. Donald Main  
Upper Susquehanna Synod

Merrill M. Smith  
Camp Board President

Chad Hershberger  
Executive Director

Robert C. Zimmerman, Jr.  
Campaign Chair



### 40 BY FAITH

"Celebrating Our Past, Building Our Future"  
[www.campmountluther.org](http://www.campmountluther.org)



#### INDIVIDUAL GIFT FORM

In support of the intentions of Camp Mount Luther's 40 BY FAITH campaign, to enhance the ministry and to strengthen the church, I/we give the following gift:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Gift: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

Payments for this pledge will begin \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ and will end \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Payments to be made:

- Annually
- Semi-Annually
- Quarterly
- Monthly
- Other (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_) Can include securities or properties

Method of Payment:

- By CHECK made payable to:  
Camp Mount Luther "40 By Faith"  
355 Mt. Luther Lane  
Mifflinburg, PA 17844
- By CREDIT CARD:  
Visa \_\_\_\_\_ Mastercard \_\_\_\_\_ Discover \_\_\_\_\_  
Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_
- Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Simply Giving Automatic Deduction (Call Camp Mount Luther at (570) 922-1587 for details and form)