



The Lion of St. Mark's

JANUARY 2009

A Year-end Procedure

The accounting process every end of the year includes the preparation of the annual financial statements. Thus, year-end is the time when most of the adjusting entries are recorded for the fair valuation of assets, liabilities and equity, and for the proper recognition of income. This involves the process of writing-off bad debts from the accounting records because it has been reasonably expected that these bad debts cannot be collected anymore. Probably, the circumstances indicate that keeping a particular amount of the receivables in the books will only overstate the actual figure which is collectible from debtors.

The process of writing-off bad debts reminds us of forgiveness. While in accounting, bad debts are written-off as part of the year-end routine, for Christians like us, we forgive because we have experienced the overwhelming love of Jesus when He came to earth and died on the cross for us. We forgive because we have faith in a loving and merciful God. We believe that since our Father has forgiven us, we should allow Him to wash away the stain of guilt from our hearts. We believe that since He has forgiven our family and friends, we should also learn how to forgive and forgive and forgive.

God is constantly watching us. Let us not wait for another year to end before we open our hearts to receive His mercy and start forgiving. Besides, we do not need to send "reports" to Him annually. He already knows, and He can see if our hearts are resentful and unforgiving... everyday, every hour, every minute.

"Then Peter came up and said to him,

"Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?"

As many as seven times?"

Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven."

(Matthew 18:21-22)

COUNCIL UPDATE

Inside This Issue:

A Year-end Procedure.....	1
Parish Register.....	2
Officer & Staff Contact Information.....	2
Daniel's Closet Update.....	3
<i>The Way</i>	3
United Campus Ministry.....	4
St. Mark's Logo Polo Shirts for Sale.....	4
Women's Meeting at Hoss's.....	5
Taize Services.....	5
Lunch N' Fellowship.....	5
News from the Pews.....	6
Where's the Pastor?.....	6
United Churches of Lycoming County.....	7
ELCA, Synod & West Branch News.....	8
Social Ministries.....	9
Souper Bowl of Caring.....	10
In the Kitchen with Katy.....	10
Dicken's Christmas Carol Thank You's.....	11
Overview of December Events.....	12
Milestone: Remembrance of Baptism.....	12
Friday Fun Night.....	12
Kids Morning Out & Adult Cookie Bake.....	13
Christmas Caroling.....	13
St. Mark's Lions & John Bower Basketball.....	13
Catechetical Retreat 2009.....	14
Youth Bowling Event.....	14
Children's Church.....	14
Special Thank You Notes.....	15
Directory Changes.....	15
Birthdays and Anniversaries.....	16
The Perfect Pastor.....	16
Health, Healing and Wholeness.....	17
Special Need Prayer List.....	18
January Calendar.....	19
Another Blessed Year.....	cover

COUNCIL MEETING NOTES

Council did not meet in December.



Parish Register

The funeral service for Fred M. Dieffenbach was held at St. Mark's on December 11, 2008

The funeral service for Ronald L. Smith was held in Lock Haven on December 19, 2008

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		
Sharon Comini, Christian Education		scomini@stmarkswilliamsport.org	Harold Hershberger, President	322-0410
Bernadette Jones, Christian Education		bjones@stmarkswilliamsport.org	Gary Weber, Vice-President	322-7149
Susan M-Smith, Parish Secretary		smsmith@stmarkswilliamsport.org	Donna Clark, Council Secretary	998-2290
Richard Wagner, Financial Secretary		rwagner@stmarkswilliamsport.org	Jackie Kinney, Treasurer	323-5980
Lou DeSeau, Environmental Services		ldeseau@stmarkswilliamsport.org	Jane Larson, Stephen Ministry	323-2845
Gary Weber, Website Administrator		gweber@stmarkswilliamsport.org	Bob Schultz, Adult Catechumenate	326-3929

Christian Community Service Opportunities

DANIEL'S CLOSET UPDATE!

Daniel's Closet, the free clothing program at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Williamsport, welcomed 293 friends through the door on Saturday, November 22, 2008. 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:
December 20th, January 24th, and February 28th...All are welcome!**

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!



on *The Way* in its 10th anniversary year!

We've moved to the next step in the process of formation of new members at St. Mark's this year. The seven inquirers and their sponsors were announced to the congregation at the 10:30 service on Sunday, December 7, 2008. Two of the inquirers are being led by the Holy Spirit to Holy

Baptism, and the other five will be affirming their baptism which perhaps took place many years ago. At the Easter Vigil next April, all seven will become members of the parish.

Those on *The Way* this year include: Matt Wellen and his baptismal sponsor Matt Fortin, Kevin DeSeau and his baptismal sponsor Rick Robertson, Douglas Schmitt and his sponsor Ken Shafranko, Beverly Schmitt and her sponsor Beth Shafranko, Katy Schmitt and her sponsor Brittany Toy, Joshua Lynch and his sponsor Tim Maggs, David Walz and his sponsor Bob Jones.

At the beginning of the service on December 7, each inquirer declared his/her intention to continue in prayer, reflection, and fellowship through *The Way*, and the congregation agreed to keep them in our prayers. Later in the service, each inquirer received the sign of the cross, and indication that every part of our life is touched and transformed by the good news of Jesus. Each inquirer also received a copy of the New Oxford Annotated NRSV Study Bible. This gift from the congregation will serve as their basic tool for growing as a Christian.

Each of these persons needs the encouragement and prayers of the congregation as they continue on this path, and in the years to come as well.

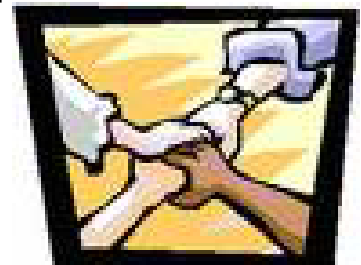
Christian Community Service Opportunities

United Campus Ministry



In December, we made 50 study bags for the students at Penn College and we gave 7 care packages to our college students here at St. Mark's over Thanksgiving Break. Special thanks to all those who provided cookies, candies, crackers and other snacks to make these bags possible. The study bags were a big hit to all of the students. Written prayers for studying and easing stress were added to the bags, so these bags fed the soul as well as the body. The students appreciated them and it was just another way to let them know that we were thinking about and praying for them during this stressful time in their lives. I am very thankful for the support that St. Mark's gives our students.

Special thanks as well goes to Lutheran Shared Ministry and to Bernadette Jones and everyone else involved for the production of "A Christmas Carol". The play was fantastic and the meal was terrific. United Campus Ministry is so blessed to have such caring partners to help continue our ministry. The money raised from the dinner theater will go directly to support our Mission Trip in the spring to feed the homeless in the Pittsburgh area. Thanks again for all your support. Please know that our ministry would not happen without you.



ST. MARK'S LOGO POLO SHIRTS FOR SALE

Childrens – GILDAN Youth Ultra Cotton – Preshrunk 100% cotton jersey with church logo silk-screened on front.

Colors: Irish Green, Vegas Gold, Sport Grey, Azalea, Black, Gold, Cardinal, Daisy, Tangerine, Forest Green, Leaf, Jade, Lime, Heliconia, Indigo Blue, Iris, Kelly Green, Light Blue, Light Pink, Maroon, Navy, Orange, Sand, Prairie Dust, Purple, Red, Royal, Sapphire, Violet, & Yellow

Adults – JERZEE Jersey Polo with SportShield, Welt Knit Collar, Placket with pearlized buttons with church logo embroidered on pocket.

Colors: White, Birch, Gold, Black, Sports Grey, Burnt Orange, Deep Purple, California Blue, Forest Green, Granite Blue, Jade, Kelly, Light Blue, Maize, Maroon, Red, Putty, True Navy & True Royal

Youth Sizes:
XS ~ XL \$13

Adult Sizes:
S-XL
\$23

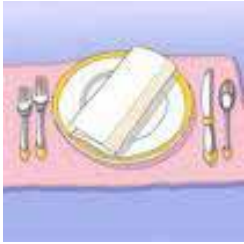


2XL~3XL
\$26

You may place your order with Donna Clark 998-2290
after 6 PM M-F or anytime over the weekend
or Susan 323-4619 M-F 9 AM-1 PM

Women of St. Mark's

JANUARY 14 - COME TO HOSS'S



Have lunch with the Women of St. Mark's at Hoss's on January 14th at noon. We will decide where the funds raised at our rummage sales will be allocated. This is an important event and needs the input of everyone.

Put it on your calendar so we can open the new year together.

RECYCLE - RECYCLE - RECYCLE

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.

TAIZE SERVICES

At
 St. Mark's

Wednesday, January 7
 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 4
 6:30 p.m.

A meal for the United Campus Ministry will follow the February 4th service. Along with the meal, help is needed to serve and clean up. Contact Sharon if you can help with this ministry of a home-cooked meal and encouragement to college students.

LUNCH N' FELLOWSHIP



Wednesday,
 January 21st
 Noon

Pork, Potatoes & Sauerkraut

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

News from the Pews

As I sit here this afternoon I am reminded of the carol which begins "In the bleak midwinter" as I gaze out my window. Lots of rain which is predicted to become snow – which will seem a bit more like Christmas. I am cheered by all the wonderful things our St. Mark's young people are doing in the community.

Brett Campbell authored a column with another Montoursville student reviewing a trip to Franco's, a local restaurant. Maybe he would like to guest author one of our notes from the pews – he certainly seemed to have the touch.

Two of our lovely young ladies, **Taigen and Tali Thorne**, daughters of Ralph and Holly, were princesses in the Loyalsock Township Homecoming Queen celebration.

Brett and Lauren Campbell were named to the honor roll At Montoursville Area High School and **Max Hospes** and **Theoron Hershey** were both on the honor roll listing for Lycoming Valley Middle School.

Spotted **Owen Gair** pictured as he observed the making of candy canes at Purity Candy as part of a field trip from Lycoming Nursery School.

An in-depth article on the United Campus Ministry of Penn College under the direction of our own **Sharon Comini** appeared on Nov. 22nd. The article explored the diversity of the students and the various mission trips they have funded and participated in.

I couldn't close this column without mentioning the outstanding job done by **Bernadette Jones** and her cast of actors, singers, set decorators, cooks and cleaner-uppers which made it possible for us to attend a dinner theater of really first class entertainment. From Scrooge to Tiny Tim, everyone was outstanding! A Christmas treat for all!

As the year ends it seems appropriate to thank all those who make worship at St. Mark's meaningful. I think especially of the lectors and assisting ministers who are always faithful and committed and also do an outstanding service. We wish everyone a blessed Christmas and echo the words of Tiny Tim "God bless us everyone!" - *Joyce Hershberger*

Please submit news items to Joyce Hershberger via her email deermountain2@comcast.net or by phoning her at 322-0410.

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**



United Churches of Lycoming County

Ecumenical Luncheons

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

No reservations are necessary.

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**.

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

Couples Needed

The Community Service Foundation is reaching out to couples who might be interested in living and working with troubled youth residing in their foster group homes in southeastern Pennsylvania. They are a non-profit organization that has provided counseling, education and residential services to troubled adolescents since 1977. (www.csfbuxmont.org)

Foster houseparent couples must be over 21 years old. They are provided with a beautiful residence, seven-passenger van and all their living expenses. One parent receives a full-time salary as the primary houseparent. The other may work at an independent full-time job in the community while receiving a part-time salary. Because all expenses are paid, for many young couples this is an excellent opportunity to save toward a house down payment or pay college loans, or for older couples to boost their retirement savings.

They provide comprehensive training and support. In addition, all of the children who live in their homes attend their school/day treatment programs, creating a consistent therapeutic environment for young people to make positive changes. Their program has a proven track record in helping troubled young people find a positive path in life. If you, or any couples you might identify want to contact the organization, Maureen at (267) 718-1326 would be happy to answer any questions.

Elca, Synod & West Branch News

Church World Service Needs Kits Urgently

Church World Service has an urgent need for **School Kits, Hygiene Kits, Baby Kits, and Emergency Clean-up Buckets!** Inventory levels of Kits are extremely low, with levels of some Kits at zero. "These last weeks have seen us receiving an incredible number of urgent requests for kits and blankets. As such, our kit inventory is rapidly depleting and perilously low given that we anticipate many further requests over coming weeks" says Donna Derr from the CWS Emergency Response Program. "We are already aware that [as] assessments are completed in coming days, we'll be getting material resource requests from Cuba and probably other areas of the Caribbean... which we'll have a hard time in honoring given current inventory."

Kits may be shipped directly to the Brethren Service Center, 601 Main St., New Windsor, MD 21776. Kit contents may be found on our website at: www.churchworldservice.org/kits or by calling the regional office at: 888-297-2767



Can you help make their wishes come true?

The following Diakon programs can use your assistance! If you or your congregation are able to donate any of these items or provide funding for their purchase, please contact Diakon's Office of Advancement at 1-888-582-2230, ext. 1219. Thank you!

Buffalo Valley Lutheran Village Nursing Care Center

- Sound system
- Rosewood Gardens walkway – construct a relaxing path for residents, families, and visitors to promote positive well-being, especially effective for residents with Alzheimer's disease by stimulating memory and senses. Needs include sensory stimulations projector, cushions for benches, overstuffed chairs, small end tables, tabletop fountains, and fiber-optic lamp.
- Televisions and VCR/DVD players (two each) for two lounges
- VCR/DVD player for Fisher lounge

- Tape recorders for residents' use
- Portable stereo/radios for residents (four)
- Carts for VCR/DVD players and televisions, for residents' use
- Display case for residents' crafts
- Portable telephones for nursing supervisor for residents without phones in their rooms

Assisted Living

- Two televisions for respite care rooms
- VCR/DVD
- Portable telephones for nursing (needed to provide privacy as well as safe environment)

Guest Cottage

- (can be used items if in good condition)
- Lamps (two floor lamps and two table lamps)
 - One overstuffed chair

Congregational Health Ministries

- Four-drawer file cabinet
- PowerPoint projector

Family Life Services – Upper Susquehanna

- Video projector

Locust Grove Retirement Village

- Hi-low electric beds
- Wheelchairs (all types including high-back and run-about)

Ohesson Manor

- Low beds
- Vital-signs monitor

Penn Lutheran Village

- Combined TV/VCR
- Aromatherapy machines
- Cassette tape players
- Disposable cameras
- PowerPoint projector
- Electric razors
- Subscriptions to large-print Reader's Digest
- Sturdy lawn and patio furniture
- Electric keyboard
- Wall hangings and wall shelf units

Social Ministry

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 more than a barrel full of canned corn. Thank you for answering the call to serve those in need in our community.



Christmas at the Selinsgrove Center St. Mark's elves made their annual visit to the Selinsgrove Center to entertain a group of 18 women in the CM-6 Living Area. The elves included Pastor and Donna Elkin, Jackie and Shirley Kinney, Bernadette Jones, Lois Smith, and Lou DeSeau. The residents and their caregivers enjoyed songs, stories, gifts, and fellowship. Heartfelt thanks and appreciation is extended to the members of the congregation who donated body wash, cups of pudding, apples, cookies, candy, and money to offset other costs of gifting. A special thank you goes to Larue Dieter for making all of our packages bright and cheery.

Recycle Christmas Gift Bags The Social Ministry Committee is collecting Christmas gift bags in good condition. The committee uses these bags to gift the ladies at our annual Christmas party at the Selinsgrove Center. If you have gift bags (the 2 for \$1.00 size) to recycle, you may place them in the bin in the Narthex.

Habitat for Humanity Brunch Saturday, January 17, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. will find folks from St. Mark's serving a brunch to volunteers at the Newberry site. The Habitat folks have found the 10:00 coffee break works better than the luncheons held previously. Will you please help us prepare? We need cans of fruit to prepare fruit cup, cookies, pastries, orange juice, and a case of bottled water. We also need a few folks to help serve. Please speak with Becky Miller Pryor if you can assist in any way.



Winter Warmth Charlie Brown and Linus know everyone needs a warm blanket. Please help the Shepherd of the Streets' many clients seeking blankets. During January the Social Ministry Committee is collecting new and gently used blankets, throws, afghans, and bedspreads in all sizes. Donated items may be placed in the bin in the Narthex.



The Pregnancy Care Center St. Mark's with assistance from the Newberry Branch of NGA recently donated more than 30 new items of clothing (maternity and infant) to our local Pregnancy Care Center. The extra containers of body wash that had been donated for the Christmas party at the Selinsgrove Center were also given to The PCC. The Pregnancy Care Center was most appreciative of these items that will help support young women experiencing a crisis pregnancy.

Children's Church Children's Church will be January 11, 2009. The children's special offering will be boxes/packets of instant cocoa mix to be given to the United Churches Food Bank.

Spring Clothing Sale The Women of St. Mark's will once again host their annual clothing sale in April. Donations of clean clothing and clothing accessories in sizes infant to adult may be placed in the Bazaar Room. Look for more details in the months ahead.

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 25 and February 1 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.



**Friday,
January 2
11:00 A.M.**



In the Kitchen with Katy!
She's back with some new recipes for fun!
And a few for food too!

Reservations are Required!

**Call the office today to reserve your counter space
and start the New Year out right!**

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

AND A LOVELY TIME IT WAS!!! Lutheran Shared Ministry's dinner theatre presentation of A Christmas Carol, on December 5 & 6, in Fellowship Hall at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, was well received and played to full houses each night.

Over \$1500 in donations was received for the United Campus Ministry at Pennsylvania College of Technology.

Many thanks go out to all of the following:

Cast: Bernadette Haas Jones, Ray Huff, David Walz, Sondra Fisher, Declan Jones, Nick Buckman, Hayley Steiger, Jocelyn Fisher, Seth Sponhouse, Mike Hooker, Diana Zeigler, Max Hospes, Anna Zeigler, Laura Zeigler, Madison Walz, Ethan Fisher, and Annika Waffenschmidt

Carolers: Bud, Margie & Makensi Doebler; Jennifer, Lynna, Amalie & Abby Robertson; Megan Wike; Eric, Sharon, Christina & Morgan Comini; Pr. "Chip" Frontz; Lois Smith; Melinda, Sadie & Taylor Wentzel; Pr. Kenneth & Donna Elkin; Mandy Feinberg; Betty Fenstermacher; Shirley Fullmer; Jeff Seeley; Mary Ann Stitzer; Georgie Ulrich; Carol Waltz; and *The Marching Millionaires*

Instrumentalists: Sara Jones, *flute*; Declan Jones, *trumpet*; and Pr. Kenneth & Donna Elkin, *recorders*

Production Staff: Bernadette Haas Jones, Bob Jones, Sara Jones, Richard Lakey, Declan Jones, Jim Buckman, and Jane Kline

Scenic Painters: Sharon Comini, Diana Zeigler, Max Hospes, Anna Zeigler, Laura Zeigler, Sara Jones, Corey Hospes, Lois Smith, Pr. Elkin, Vicki Hospes, and Richard Hospes

Construction: Lou DeSeau, Bernadette Jones, Declan Jones, Corey Hospes, Max Hospes, Sara Jones

Costumes: Company

The Performance Staff: Bob Jones, Sara Jones, Mark Bielski, Stefen Scheib, Chris Heyne, Corey Hospes, Sara Jones, and Dan Zeigler

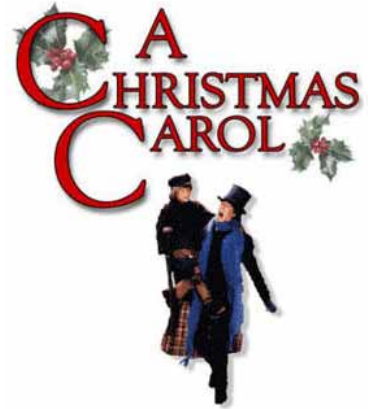
Table arrangements: Becky Miller Pryor.

Kitchen Staff: Lois Smith, Bob Schultz, Mary Schultz, Linda DeSeau, Lou DeSeau, Jackie Kinney, Vicki Hospes, Todd Smith, Pr. Detlef Huckfeldt, and Chris Seraphin with additional helpers from St. Michael and UCM.

Wait Staff: Bob Jones, Patrick Fisher, Theoron Hershey, Devin Owen, Declan Jones, Seth Sponhouse, Sara Jones, Mike Hooker, Stephen Boone, Corey Hospes, Eric Comini, Sharon Comini, and Christina Comini.

Desserts donated by: Grace Lucas and the ladies of St. Matthew, Sondra Fisher, Jane Kline, Dot Berndt, Shirley Hill, Stephen Boone, Mary Schultz, Becky Miller Pryor

**A SPECIAL THANK YOU GOES OUT TO THE CONGREGATION OF ST. MARK'S
FOR PITCHING IN AND SUPPORTING THE PRODUCTION.
WE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DO IT WITH OUT YOU!!!**



YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY



Our **group pack 'n' wrap** went so well this year that we want to try again next year. 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. We'll store it. In the beginning of November, we'll have soup and sandwiches after a 10:30 service and have a group pack-and-wrap!!! It was great fun!!! How about you? This doesn't preclude anyone packing their own boxes if they enjoy it. This is merely another reason to get folks together for a good time and to help others. So! What do you say?? See you at the mall!!

THANK YOU to everyone who contributed on the **trees in Fellowship Hall!!** As of this writing, The Kids' Clothes Closet will receive at least 4 scarves, over 53 hats, 67 pairs of gloves and 2 baby sweaters. This clothing will help to keep needy children within the community warm this season. More than 143 Teddy bears will be distributed to the Pregnancy Care Center, The Wise Options for Women shelter, and the Williamsport Police Department for the comfort of children during traumatic times. A very special thank you to all!

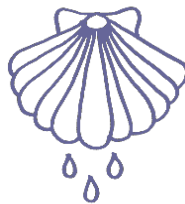


About thirty-five people attended the meal marking the beginning of Advent and celebrating the **3rd Grade Milestone event**. We all sat down to a delicious vegetable soup (courtesy of Bob Miller—thank you, Bob!) and subs after the 10:30 service. As that was wrapping up, Pastor Elkin took our third graders aside to look at and talk about the Bibles they received and the special messages written therein by relatives and friends.

The making of the **Advent Wreaths** followed. Almost a dozen wreaths were put together by folks ranging from small children to children-at-heart. Creativity abounded in the use of holly, pine, spruce and hemlock; ribbon and berry sprigs; small ornaments and, of course, candles. A photo-essay about the event is posted at our website, www.stmarkswilliamsport.org. Please bring your advent wreaths back to church so we may recycle them for next year.



MILESTONE MINISTRY



Passing on Faith:
REMEMBRANCE of BAPTISM

This event will be marked by a luncheon on January 11, the celebration of the Baptism of our Lord. Seven babies and four children will receive their Faith Chests and Baptismal Medallions on this day.

Friday
Fun Night
January
23rd
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 played games. 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 Declan, Christina, Riley, Stephen, Sara and Beverly 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 Jackie, Donna, and Beverly for their able assistance later on that Saturday with the cookie baking. We produced lots of cookies to share and for the carolers to deliver that Sunday. Declan did a masterful job running the dishwasher for both events, with Sara drying and doing some hand washing: Thanks to both of them, also.

A wonderful assortment of goodies was assembled during this afternoon: pizelles, 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 Wednesday, beginning January 7, 2008, at the Y. The Beginner Pee Wee team practices from 6 p.m. until 7 p.m. and the Midgets and Juniors from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

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 some our young ambassadors.

Your support could make the difference!

Caroling

The weather was much more cooperative this year! Two groups totaling eight adults, three teens and three children visited as many of our home-bound as they could on the afternoon of December 14.



Some residences were in quarantine because of the flu season, but 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 carolers were coming out and you did not get a visit. Let's

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

Catechetical Retreat 2009



Catechetical Retreat 2009 is scheduled for January 10, 2009, at Messiah Lutheran. Topics of discovery include:

Running the Race: Sports in the Letters of Paul, by Pastor Frontz (*Messiah Lutheran*) Picture a place where athletic achievement is highly valued. Sports are on everyone's minds. America in the 21st century? Guess again. It's the 1st Century world that the Gospel of Christ was first proclaimed in;

Dating is Mating: sexuality and the social process (including some "hot dates" in Scripture) by Pastor Zetto (*Bethany*);

Help, I Am An Alien! by Pastor Deibler (*St. Luke*) & Pastor Showers (*Church of the Savior*) We will look at God's design for the human race according to the Beatitudes and see if it works for us;

The Village, by Pr. Huckfeldt (*St. Michael's*): We are the church in the village. And we are the church in the world – a world that has become a "global village". Christians make a difference in our community and in the world. We will explore together what the church is and what the church does, and learn why serving others is fun and easy, and why fun is not everything, and everything is not easy;

Parents, Teens and Money, by Mr. Keith Woods (*Thrivent*); and

Growing Up Faithful, by Pastor Elkin and Mr. William Hill (*St. Mark's*) Small groups of students come across a box of papers and memorabilia from the 1940's, and as they investigate the contents, will discover what a person coming of age in that era may have been thinking about faith and life as a Christian. How is that compare with our experience today?

Bowling for kids of all ages!

Join us on Saturday, January 24th 2:00-5:00 p.m.

We will meet at the church at 2:00 and carpool over to Faxon Lanes.

Cost is \$4.00 per person

Parents you are welcome to stay and play with us.

Please let Sharon know if you are planning to attend so she can reserve the correct number of lanes.



**Children's Church will be held on January
11, 2009**



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

Special Thank You's

Dear Pastor Elkin & Sharon,

Thank you so much for inviting me to set a book fair at the church in November. I really appreciate it and the book fair seemed to be well received again this year by the congregation. Enclosed is a donation from my sales that day. I hope it is helpful. Again, thank you. Your friend in Christ, Sandy Grier

May the angels watch over you and guide your way at Christmastime and always.

Thank you for your continued support and help throughout the years.

Students of Penn College UCM
Michael, Michelle, Claudia, Chris, Kelly, Mason,
Jamillia & David

Dear Pastor Elkin & Congregation,

Thank you so much for your thoughtfulness in bringing the altar flowers to the house, your prayers and cards. Ed us coming along very nicely, it is a slow process, but we are thankful and really appreciate your thoughtfulness and concern. Your friends in Christ, Sandy & Ed

Dear friends,

Thank you very much for all the ways you support Gettysburg Seminary and our students. We do appreciate your partnership in ministry.

In Christ,
Emried D. Cole, Jr.,
VP of Seminary Advancement

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,
Sharon Comini & Bernadette Jones,
Youth and Family Ministry*

Happy New Year!

Dear friends at St. Mark's,

I would like to take a moment to say thank you for the wonderful new computer system! It is such a delight to use. It's 'screaming fast' as the kids would say and very reliable. It was becoming harder and harder to work on the old system so this new one is truly a God send! Thank you for your consideration! It is a pleasure to work for such loving and thoughtful people. Thank you again!

God's love and mine,
Susan Mahserjian-Smith, Parish Secretary

Directory Changes

Mrs. Maxine Chubb	11 Avalon Drive, Apt. 2,	Marlborough, MA	01752-3574
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Bardo III	497 Charles Drive	Manheim, PA	17545-9190

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 Caste	01/31



Happy Anniversary!

Arthur & June Decker 01/20

Chuck & Ruth Homan 01/23

The Perfect Pastor

The Perfect Pastor preaches exactly 10 minutes. He condemns sin roundly, but never hurts anyone's feelings. He works from 8 a.m. until midnight, and is also the church janitor.

The Perfect Pastor makes \$40 a week, wears good clothes, drives a good car, buys good books, and donates \$30 a week to the parish. He is 29 years old and has 40 years' worth of experience. Above all, he is handsome.

The Perfect Pastor has a burning desire to work with teen-agers, and he spends most of his time with the senior citizens. He smiles all the time with a straight face because he has a sense of humor that keeps him seriously dedicated to his parish. He makes 15 home visits a day and is always in his office to be handy when needed.

The Perfect Pastor always has time for parish council and all of its committees. He never misses the meeting of any parish organization, and is always busy evangelizing the unchurched.

The Perfect Pastor is always in the next parish over!

If your pastor does not measure up, simply send this notice to six other parishes that are tired of their pastor too. Then bundle up your pastor and send him to the parish at the top of your list. If everyone cooperates, in one week you will receive 1, 643 pastors. One of them should be perfect.

Have faith in this letter. One parish broke the chain and got its' old pastor back in less than three months.

-by Father McGinn

HEALTH, HEALING & WHOLENESS

“A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a downcast spirit dries up the bones.” (Proverbs 17:22 NRSV)

Winter can be an incredibly fun time of year for those who enjoy outdoor activities such as skiing, skating, snowboarding, sledding and snowmobiling. There is nothing like taking a big gulp of the crisp, cold air, and working up a sweat while bundled under all that winter gear! However, for those of us who are not winter sport enthusiasts, getting through winter can present a challenge.

For the rest of us, the credit card bills are coming due, the Christmas tree is bald, and most of the packing peanuts and bubble wrap have been cleared from the sofa cushions. It's at this point that we may begin to feel that what we would *really* like, is to become a like a bear and hibernate! In spite of the dozens of Christmas cookies, and the inevitable fruitcake that has been consumed, some of us may find ourselves *craving* still more carbohydrates, not unlike a bear, fattening up for the long cold winter. But before you run outside to locate a cave or hollow tree log, you need to know that these are normal responses to the shorter days of sunlight – a brain chemical called serotonin begins to decrease as we get less sunlight – triggering the cravings (carbs release serotonin), while at the same time we can experience an increase in melatonin – a natural tranquilizer. (Now if you find yourself wanting to stand in a stream and catch fish with your 'bear' hands, or develop a longing for grubs dug from old tree stumps, you just might be too far along to rescue!)

For the rest of us, here are a few tips for getting through the “winter blahs”:

- Get as much sunshine as possible – take a brisk walk; if you have limited mobility, open up those drapes during the day; close them again at night to help conserve energy;
- read a good book while sipping on some tea, flavored decaf coffee or low-fat and/or sugar free hot chocolate (which might help stave-off the carb craving);
- be intentional in keeping in touch with family and friends; go beyond the holiday/family crush, while combating winter isolation;
- don't oversleep; once-in-a-while sleeping indulgence is okay, but don't allow it to become a habit; getting up and getting the blood flowing helps combat daytime sluggishness and a tendency to put on extra pounds;
- let in some fresh air; take a walk, or just open a window for 15-20 minutes; stale winter air can harbor germs and toxins that build up indoor;
- challenge your brain with crosswords, sudoku, word search, board games;
- ladies, set aside a day for pampering; if you cannot afford to schedule a manicure or pedicure, get a “free” makeover at the local department store beauty counter;
- feeling really ambitious? - now might be a good time to sort and label accumulated “stuff” for a spring garage/yard sale; if it hasn't been used in a year, get rid of it; donate the money to a local charity or put it in your offering plate!
- parents – do something fun and unexpected, like making popcorn for breakfast or pitching a home-made tent in the living room and 'camp-out' in sleeping bags
- don't forget your pets can get the blahs too; schedule regular exercise time for Fido; we sometimes forget that many dogs were born to hunt or work and we don't allow them to do that; schedule an indoor obedience class, or teach him a new trick. Our feline friends also benefit from regular games and attention!

Hang in there! Spring will have arrived before you know it. This year greet it with renewed physical, mental and spiritual energy by blitzing the winter blahs!

*Debbie Best, Program Coordinator
Diakon Congregational & Community Services*

SPECIAL CONCERNS LIST

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

Edith Anderson
Roseview Center, Rm. 336
1201 Rural Ave.
Williamsport, PA 17701

Nancy Bohartz
624 Sixth Ave.
Williamsport, PA 17701

Doris Brownlee
Fulmer's Personal Care Home
201 Woodward Ave.
Lock Haven, PA 17745

Bonita Crossley
R.R. #1, Box 1001
Hills Grove, PA 18619-9300

June Decker
338 Sherwood Ave.
South Williamsport, PA 17702

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

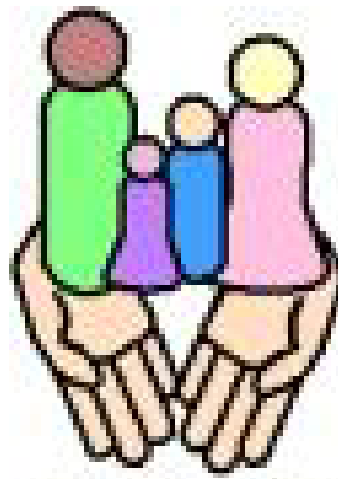
Charles Ditchfield
Valley View, Room 308
Montoursville, PA 17754

Doris Fortin
Rose View Center
1201 Rural Ave., Room 223B
Williamsport, PA 17701

Lois Graybill
Williamsport Home, Nursing Unit
1900 Ravine Rd., Rm. #306
Williamsport, PA 17701

Jean Gulliver
Rose View Center
1201 Rural Ave.
Williamsport, PA 17701

Gail Hoffman
153 Hampton Way
Montoursville, PA 17754



In His Hands

Charles Homan
2215 Warrensville Rd.
Montoursville, PA 17754

Phyllis Holmes
582 East Mountain Ave.
So. Williamsport, PA 17702

Charlotte Hughes
140 Blueberry Lane
Williamsport, PA 17701

Anne Miller
947 Hepburn St.
Williamsport, PA 17701

Jane Oakes
Presbyterian Home
810 Louisa St., Apt. 204
Williamsport, PA 17701

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

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

James Sheaffer
Rose View Center, Room 306B
1201 Rural Ave.
Williamsport, PA 17701

Eleanor Sobers
425 W Highland Ave.
S. Williamsport, PA 17702

Anna Stiadle
1900 A. Ravine Rd., Apt. 112
Williamsport, PA 17701

Ira Tuxford
210 Louise Ave.
Montgomery, PA 17752-9533

Zelma Vitolins
Sycamore Manor,
1445 Sycamore Rd., Rm. 325
Montoursville, PA 17754

Beulah Wrede
Faxon Commons,
1804 Loyalsock Drive, Apt 305
Williamsport, PA 17701

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

St. Mark's Calendar of Events

1 Thursday **New Years Day**
****Office Closed****

2 Friday
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 11:00 AM In the Kitchen with Katy

3 Saturday

4 Sunday **Christmas II**
 8:00 AM Holy Communion
 9:15 AM Sunday School
 10:30 AM Holy Communion
 11:45 AM Kantorei
 12:00 PM Acolyte Training
 12:15 PM *The Way*
 5:00 PM Family Handbells

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

6 Tuesday **Epiphany of our Lord**
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer

7 Wednesday
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 9:15 AM Quiltmaking
 9:30 AM Staff Mtg.
 12:00 PM Bible Study
 6:30 PM Taize Service
 7:00 PM Worship & Music
 7:00 PM BB Prac. PeeWee
 8:00 PM BB Prac. Midgets/Juniors

8 Thursday
 6:31 AM Men's Ministry
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 6:30 PM Evening Prayer
 7:00 PM Divine Drama
 7:30 PM Choir

9 Friday ****Agenda Deadline****
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer

10 Saturday
 9:00 AM Catechetical Retreat @ Messiah

11 Sunday **Milestone: Passing on Faith
 Faith Chest & Baptismal Medallions**
 8:00 AM Holy Communion
 9:15 AM Sunday School
 10:30 AM Children's Church
 10:30 AM Holy Communion

11:45 AM Contemporary Choir
 5:00 PM Family Handbells

12 Monday
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 6:30 PM Handbells
 6:30 PM Property Mtg.
 7:00 PM Civic Chorus

13 Tuesday
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 6:30 PM Finance Mtg.

14 Wednesday
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 9:15 AM Quiltmaking
 9:30 AM Staff Mtg.
 12:00 PM Women's Mtg. @ Hoss'
 7:00 PM BB Prac. PeeWee
 8:00 PM BB Prac. Midgets/Juniors

15 Thursday
 6:31 AM Men's Ministry
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 6:30 PM Evening Prayer
 7:00 PM Divine Drama
 7:30 PM Choir

16 Friday ****Newsletter Deadline****
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer

17 Saturday
 10:00 AM Habitat Brunch

18 Sunday **The Confession of St. Peter**
 8:00 AM Holy Communion
 9:15 AM Sunday School
 10:30 AM Holy Communion
 11:45 AM Kantorei
 12:15 PM *The Way*
 5:00 PM Family Handbells
 6:00 PM Catechetics

19 Monday **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 6:30 PM Handbells
 6:30 PM Council Mtg.
 7:00 PM Civic Chorus

20 Tuesday
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 12:00 PM Lutheran Shared Ministries

21 Wednesday **St. Thomas the Apostle**
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 9:15 AM Quiltmaking

9:30 AM Staff Mtg.
 12:00 PM Lunch N' Fellowship
 6:30 PM Mutual Ministry Mtg.
 7:00 PM BB Prac. PeeWee
 8:00 PM BB Prac. Midgets/Juniors

22 Thursday
 6:31 AM Men's Ministry
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 6:30 PM Evening Prayer
 7:00 PM Divine Drama
 7:30 PM Choir

23 Friday
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 9:15 AM Lion Crew
 6:30 PM Friday Fun Night

24 Saturday **Timothy, Pastor & Confessor**
 9:00 AM Daniel's Closet
 2:00 PM Youth Bowling @ Faxon Lanes

25 Sunday **The Conversion of St. Paul**
 8:00 AM Holy Communion
 9:15 AM Sunday School
 10:30 AM Holy Communion
 11:45 AM Contemporary Choir
 5:00 PM Family Handbells

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

27 Tuesday
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 7:00 PM Family Promise

28 Wednesday
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 9:30 AM Staff Mtg.
 12:00 PM Bible Study
 7:00 PM BB Prac. PeeWee
 8:00 PM BB Prac. Midgets/Juniors

29 Thursday
 6:31 AM Men's Ministry
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer
 6:30 PM Evening Prayer
 7:00 PM Divine Drama
 7:30 PM Choir

30 Friday
 9:00 AM Morning Prayer

31 Saturday

ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
142 MARKET ST.
WILLIAMSPORT, PA 17701

Phone: 570-323-4619
Fax: 570-323-2452

Website: <http://www.stmarkswilliamsport.org>
Email: stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org



Return Service Requested

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

Permit No. 257
Williamsport, PA 17701

Another Blessed Year

Another blessed year... God is waiting for us...

To share the abundant blessings we have received,
To take away the loneliness of the people along our path,
To make His Love known by touching the lives of others.

Another blessed year... God is providing us enough time...

To laugh and enjoy moments with friends and family,
To watch spectacular sunrises and breathtaking sunsets,
To smile and see the reflection of that smile
on the faces of others.

Another blessed year... God is granting us opportunities...

To make concrete plans and reach our goals,
To strive for our dreams until they come true,
To decide wisely and live a fulfilling life in His grace.

Another blessed year... God is eagerly asking us...

Where we have reached in our personal journey towards Him,
How much we have inspired others
and how deeply we have loved,
How we have acknowledged His presence
and how we have proclaimed His Word.

Another blessed year... God is constantly reminding us...

That even when we are not aware of it,
He can see us and hear us,
That we are His dearest children
and He loves us with an unfathomable love,
That at all times, we can begin again
because He is the One who gives us the strength.