



The Lion of St. Mark's

MARCH 2016

BUSY? WHERE IS THE FOCUS?



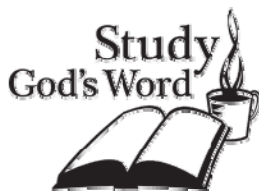
What words might we use to describe our lives? Anxious, busy, rushing around, or.....? Is there a focus for all of those activities? Is there a center around which all of our busy-ness revolves? Let's take it as our special task this year, as Lent continues, to discern again that the center of life is Jesus' connection with us that was initiated in Holy Baptism and which is at work every day since that event. How does what I am doing today giving honor to the Lord Jesus? How am I giving thanks to God today for his continuing gifts to me? In what ways is the Holy Spirit nudging me to specific new or renewed actions?

It is always easier to think and plan for these things when we are together than when we are alone. In addition to our basic gatherings on Sunday mornings, we have Morning Prayer at 9 AM each weekday. In this early part of the year we are reading the narratives in the books of Genesis and Exodus, and discerning how the challenges form more than 3,000 years ago are still ours as well. On Wednesdays at 11:30AM and 7:00 PM we've been focusing on the parts of the catechism in turn, and exploring specific hymns that can serve as commentary on the catechism. If weather or infirmity keeps one away from these gatherings, the Sunday bulletin each week lists the scriptures, Psalms, Hymns, and Lessons for each day.

Take time to think and do those things which point ourselves to the center of life!

OUR STUDIES CONTINUE...

There are four opportunities for thought and study that continue each week at St. Mark's:



1) The Crossways group meets in the Crossways room in the choir hallway at 9:15 each Sunday morning. Recently, the group has been exploring the Gospel of John. A question was raised about those books that didn't make it into the New Testament, and so the group has spent two sessions on the *Protoevangelium of James*. We discovered that even though it is not in the canon, it has nevertheless been the source of various ideas and motifs in Christian thought and art across the centuries.

2) The Middle Lounge group meets on Sundays at 9:15 in Middle Lounge. This year they have been discussing the book *Reclaiming the C word; daring to be church again*.

3) The Wednesday study generally meets at noon on Wednesdays (but on Thursdays during Lent). They continue to work their way through the Psalms, one each week. Currently they are at Psalm 100. They talk about the structure, mood, and message of each Psalm, hear bits of scholarly info, and are guided by the reflections on the Psalms by Fr. Patrick Henry Reardon, Orthodox pastor and theologian from Chicago.

4) The Grumpy Mens' Study meets on Thursday mornings at 6:31 AM. (It is easy to be grumpy at that hour!) They usually are working on a Bible book, but recently they have been reading C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters*, one or two each week, and discovering interesting insights into the reality and methods of the evil one.

Prayer Chain



One of the things which we can do as members of the Body of Christ is to support and encourage one another by naming persons and causes in prayer. We do this every Sunday when we are together in worship, and we can do this individually at home as well. We try to have an up to date list of names in the bulletin and the Prayer of the Church, but things happen that don't fit our publication schedule.

Whenever a person or cause needs to be named in prayer, please contact Kathy Kolb at kathy@kolbnetworks.com, and also the church office at stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org. Laura in the office will take care of listing the person or cause in bulletin and elsewhere, if it is appropriate to do so. Kathy will pass the names and causes along to persons who volunteer to serve in the Prayer-Chain. Sometimes a reason for the request for prayer may be given, other times only a name – depending on what is appropriate in a given situation. Please send a note to Kathy to become a Prayer-Chain volunteer. Sometimes we can help one another with physical assistance, but every time we can help one another with prayer.

Can you spare a few moments for that?

Lutheran Shared Ministry

LSM is Lutherans from congregations in the greater Williamsport area praying, proclaiming, caring, connecting, sharing, and serving in Christ's name. LSM presents October's School of Religion for adults (25 yrs.), leads the annual Catechetical Retreat for tweens (17 yrs.), and seeks new means of outreach and communication in order to more effectively advance the mission of Christ's church in this community.

LSM meetings are open to leaders and laypersons from our local Lutheran congregations. Their next meeting is Tuesday, March 22nd, at 6:00 p.m., in our Middle Lounge.

Staff Office Hours

570-323-4619

Sexton: Lou DeSeau, Sun--Thurs 5:30 AM-1 PM

Parish Musician: Jungwha Kim
Sun.6:30-12, Mon - Wed 6:30-10:30

Financial Secretary: Graydon Yearick
Mon & Wed 8-11 AM

Youth & Family: Bernadette Jones
Tue.10-3 PM, Wed.9:20-2 PM, Sun 8-1 PM

Youth & Family: Michele Owen
Wed, 9-2 PM, Fri.11-2 PM

Secretary: Laura Schreckengast Mon-Fri 9-1 PM

CALLING ALL LECTORS (and others)!

Have you ever had any interest in serving as a Lector? Would you like to learn how to be more confident when speaking in public? Lou Kolb has offered to meet with present lectors and anyone who might like to work on developing these skills! If you are interested, you are invited to gather with Lou, our own spoken word expert, for an hour on Sunday, March 13th at 2:00 P.M. in the Nave.



DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS TO:



Newsletter

...Saturday,
March 12th



Church
Council

...Sunday,
March 13th

Let's Go to the Movies!



If Christians don't take a stand today, will we even have a choice tomorrow?

Welcome back to Hope Springs ... home not only of Hadleigh University, but also Martin Luther King Jr. High School, where beloved teacher Grace Wesley helps students understand and enjoy history. Her love of teaching, her love for her students, and her love of life all come from

the same place: her love of Christ.

So when Brooke, a hurting student grieving the loss of her brother, reaches out to Grace, their coffee-shop conversation naturally leads to Grace sharing the hope she finds in Christ.

When Brooke later asks an honest question about Jesus in the classroom, Grace's reasoned response lands her in big trouble—almost before she even finishes giving her answer.

With the principal and superintendent joining forces with a zealous civil liberties group, Grace faces an epic court case that could cost her the career she loves and expel God from the classroom—and the public square—once and for all!

Hoping to make it opening weekend, Sunday, April 3, for the 3-ish showing (don't have specific info as yet). Matinee price is \$7 for all ages. Check the bulletin for further information or changes.

St. Paul Scholarship

The St. Paul Lutheran Church Scholarship Program, founded by the congregation of the former St. Paul Lutheran Church here in Williamsport, was established to benefit Lutheran students in Lycoming County in perpetuity.

Complete eligibility requirements and the new online application may be found at InFaith-Found.org/scholarship_applications

Beginning this year, paper applications will be available only by request.

For consideration, all applications and necessary documents must be received by the InFaith Foundation no later than May 13. incomplete applications will not be considered.

If you have any questions about the scholarship awards, the application process, or InFaith Community Foundation, please call 1-800-365-4172.



Family Promise Visits St. Mark's



I'm writing this on Valentine's Day. Our Family Promise guests left today. It was an interesting week, starting with having five families, one over the maximum allowed. It was a week of ups and downs. An overwhelming, emotional evening one night contrasted with quiet evenings for the rest. One family made other arrangements and exited the program. Two families had work schedules and were often absent. One gentleman guest gave a heart-felt Christian witness about the devil's work in hurting families. I discovered this same gentleman sweeping Fellowship Hall one morning, quietly expressing his thanks to us for our hospitality. And then there were all the volunteers from our church and our Presbyterian friends. Excellent meals appeared and were gratefully received. Friends were made through conversation. An average of over

20 hours of volunteer time went into each and every day. For this we are all thankful.

I came home late Sunday afternoon to relax with the newspaper and found a lengthy article about homeless school children. A moving article, it claimed that Pennsylvania has 22,000 homeless children in grades K - 12. I am thankful that St. Mark's and Family Promise can address this problem in our area. Thanks to each and every volunteer who stepped up to the call this week. Perhaps you would like to volunteer next time, which will be the second week of May. I schedule overnight hosts, Deb Maggs is doing meals, Phil Thomas is scheduling drivers, Vicki Haussmann arranges for evening hosts, and Sally Bjornstad is in charge of set up and take down. Talk to or call one of these people to get your name on the schedule.

n

Donna Elkin

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY



VALENTINE FUNDRAISING DINNER A SUCCESS!

The Youth of St. Mark's did a wonderful job preparing and serving food and entertaining about 50 people on Sunday, Feb. 14, raising \$390 dollars toward their annual mission project, Heifer International (Project Heifer)!

A few of their guests asked if they could do that every week! Ah, if only we could!

The kitchen crew (pictured) consisted of Owen Gair, Evan Barone, Dylan Ott, Jacob Schreckengast, and Ben Haussmann, under the leadership of and assisted by Bob & Declan Jones and Devin Owen.

Entertainment was provided by Anna & Laura Zeigler, Grace Schreckengast, Taylor Wentzel, Hannah Haussmann, and Sara & Declan Jones. They also doubled as servers along with Sadie Wentzel, Elizabeth Haussmann, and Jonah Schreckengast.

Their thanks go out to everyone who attended and gave so generously!

A special thanks to those who made the mints at 2nd Saturday!!

Acolytes



MARCH SCHEDULE:

March 6	Laura & Anna
March 13	Ezra & Gillian
March 20	Hannah & Jonah
March 24 (Holy Thursday)	Stefan & Sean
March 25 (Good Friday evening)	Evan
March 26 (Easter Vigil)	Ben, Ezra & Gillian
March 27 (Easter)	Jacob, Grace & Dawson

Milestone Ministry

Prayer Pillow: On February 7, we celebrated a very special milestone with two young gentlemen: Dallas Hanford* and Brennan Comerford. They and their families were lifted up in prayer during the service and they all enjoyed a special lunch afterward. The boys received the prayer pillow and their parents received a booklet with prayers and suggestions for family traditions of prayer in the home.

**Unfortunately, Dallas was ill on this day, but we were pleased to share and celebrate with his mother, grandparents and great-grandmother.*



YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY (cont.)

Seder Celebration Meal

Wednesday, March 23rd, at
6:00pm in Fellowship Hall



*Please call the office to let us know
that you're attending!*

From Clara Cooper,
President and CEO of
Souper Bowl of
Caring:



THANK YOU!

The St. Mark's Lutheran Church's
2016 collection raised
\$105 AND 85 food items!

Thanks to your efforts this year, more dollars have been raised, more lives have been changed, and the nation has seen the impact of people working together to help those in need. Thank you for working to transform the time around the Super Bowl into the nation's largest celebration of giving and serving.

Easter for the Children!

March 26 is Breakfast with Pastor and St. Mark's Annual Easter Egg Hunt

Please join us as we have fun with our youth, ages ranging from toddlers up to grade 5, here at the church during the morning of Saturday, April 4, starting at 9:45 a.m.! We will begin by having breakfast with the Pastor and then we will have our Easter Egg Hunt.

You are welcome to bring extended family or friends, BUT...**PLEASE CALL NOW TO LET US KNOW HOW MANY (adults/kids) ARE ATTENDING!!!**

Donations of small erasers or egg-sized Easter toys would be appreciated and accepted! We look forward to seeing you all there!



Milestone Reminder!

Blessing of the Keys: We have a special milestone celebration for the youth in our congregation who obtain their driver's licenses. It's a meaningful observance, during which the new driver gives up something from his or her childhood in exchange for the new responsibility of driving.

AS WITH ALL OUR MILESTONES, YOU NEED TO TELL US WHO SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED!!

Different families have different timetables for these events, we can't just refer to the records for information. We have no idea which youth are reaching this important milestone in their lives—unless you tell us!! Please let the church know if your child has recently received their license as soon as possible. A date for celebration will be set once we know who these special teens are.

PLEASE CALL US!!

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY (cont.)



NOTES from the PEWS

On a snowy Monday afternoon I was thinking about this message – that it comes in

February – the month of Valentine's Day- the day to remember those we love and how we came to love them. So I called those members I could reach and we explored this topic with some interesting results!

It has been said that to be fully seen by somebody and then be loved anyway – this is a human offering that can border on the miraculous! I'll let you be the judge.

The record for the longest awareness belongs to Ted and Jane Larson – Ted reports they first met at the tender ages of four and six at St. Mark's Sunday School! Obviously they were not married until later- that union has lasted 58 years!

A close second for longevity goes to Carl and Audrey Albright who met at a lifesaving class at Edgewood Pool in Shamokin. Audrey was a junior in high school and Carl a senior. After some years of dating they were married and will celebrate 50 years together this year!

Two other high school sweethearts- Carl and Beverly Hieber met when Beverly was a junior and Carl a senior. They dated for six years and then with Mom and Dad's approval were married when Carl was a senior at Lycoming College. They will celebrate 53 years this summer!

Tim and Deb Maggs might never have gotten together had Deb not worked at the Campus Casino, a hoagie shop, in Lock Haven where both were students at what was then Lock Haven State Teachers College. After Tim consumed 50 or so hoagies they began to date – one thing led to another and they have been married for 42 years. I wonder if Tim has ever eaten another hoagie!

Probably the most unusual meeting was that of Pastor Elkin and Donna-as he puts it they met on an organ bench. Donna was having an organ lesson at Wittenberg and Pastor was there to interview as a potential student in the master's performance in sacred music. Ken listened avidly to her performance and Donna back to her roommates and said "He's mine!"! And indeed he is and has

been since their wedding in 1973!

Greg and Kathy Dancho had mutual friends – one told Kathy that Greg would be perfect for her but she wasn't ready at that time – then Greg bought some snow tires another friend urged him to get in touch with her and he called her. Many phone calls later they got together and have been together for 16 years.

This is like the tv program "The Naked City" – these are just a few of the many other stories we could talk about – it was great fun for me and I might just do it again.

After all if love doesn't make the world go round, it certainly make the ride worthwhile!

Lots of Valentine love,

JoyceAnne

Please submit items to Joyce via her email deermountain2@comcast.net or call her at 322-0410.



CHILDREN'S CHURCH next meets Sunday, March 13, at 10:30, in the chapel. Our special offering is contributions toward the expenses for the food packaging which is scheduled for Friday, April 1, over at Messiah in South Williamsport. See you in the Chapel on March 13!

Calling all teens!

Cancelled for this month!

Please keep an eye on the bulletin!



OUTREACH MINISTRY

Meals to End Hunger

Don't Be Fooled – Hunger is No Joke!
Meal Packaging Event at Messiah Lutheran Church
Friday, April 1, 2016 beginning at 5:00 PM

Locally, nearly 1 in 5 children in our area struggles with food insecurity. You can help remove this insecurity by donating funds (\$.25 per meal), working the event or donating desserts for use at the refreshment counter. Messiah's goal is to package 20,000 meals of mac and cheese to be distributed to local food banks.

During each Sunday in March, monetary donations may be placed in the container in the Narthex. Checks can be made payable to St. Mark's with the memo listed as End Hunger.

To volunteer your time or to donate a dessert, see the poster in the Narthex. If preferred, folks working the event may sign up online at:

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0845a5a623a4fcl-endhunger>.



FREE COMMUNITY DINNER

Redeemer Lutheran Church
Thursday, March 10, 2016 at 5:30 P.M.
All are welcome!

The Bazaar Room is Open!



The weather outside has been frightful, so if you are passing the time indoors by cleaning closets or cupboards, the Women of St. Mark's continue to welcome your donations. The Bazaar Room is open for your donations of holiday decorations, housewares, toys in good condition and other treasures you no longer need or want. Please be sure all donated items are clean, in good condition and working properly.

We are asking anyone who is placing items in the Bazaar Room to pack them securely in a box that we can move easily at the time of the bazaar. Computer paper boxes, Liquor Store boxes or similar sized boxes work the best. FYI: Last year our profits were down by \$300.00. With your donations and help we hope to return to our usual profit of \$1500.00. We can do it with your "stuff" to sell. **This year's Fall Bazaar will be Sat., September 10, 2016...With your help it will be a success!**

Contact Shirley Hill or Becky Miller Pryor w/ questions.

Daniel's Closet - 1 Week Earlier!



Cooler weather is still with us. Now is the time to donate sweaters, coats, and other cold weather gear that your family is no longer wearing. Please no summer items. The greatest needs are for infant and children's clothing and plus-size clothing for men and women. Shoes and sneakers in good condition for all family members are always needed. Blankets, throws and afghans are most welcome this time of year.

Due to Easter week, Drop-Off at Redeemer Lutheran Church will be one week earlier than usual - Thursday, Mar. 17, from 4:30 pm - 6:00pm

Other times for drop off may be arranged by calling Redeemer's office at 570-322-2333.

Michele Owen has also offered to take any clothing brought to St. Mark's to Redeemer.

If you are placing clothing in the Bazaar Room, please place it on the stack of tables near the doorway so it does not become confused with items for the Bazaar.



OUTREACH MINISTRY continued

Easter Hospitality

He is risen! He is risen indeed!



On Easter Morning, please join with others in Fellowship Hall from 9:15 to 10:15 for light refreshments, conversation and a time for Pastor Elkin to be with the children.

Valentine's Day Wishes

The Outreach Committee thanks the congregation for their enthusiastic support of our recent Valentine's Day card event. More than thirty folks on the Special Concerns List and others we do not see as often as we wish received a cheery card or two marking this sweet holiday. We feel certain there were many smiling faces when those charming messages arrived!



Sharing in the Caring



Many thanks are given to the congregation for their regular donations of non-perishable food items. Recently our bins were full and delivered to the United Churches Food Bank.

This time of year sees a slowdown in receiving donations at the Food Bank, but the need for food does not diminish. Please consider regularly donating one or two non-perishable food items to assist with their outreach.

The Shepherd of the Street's office is in great need of family hygiene items as well as baby care items, disposable diapers in all sizes and bedding (especially blankets.) It has been a few months since we delivered supplies to this office. Please also consider donating an item or two to the Shepherd's outreach.

All donations may also be placed in the bins in the in the Narthex.

SAME MISSION, NEW NAME



The purpose of the Social Ministry Committee is to proclaim Jesus Christ to each other and to the entire world by providing opportunities to share Christian love. To this end, the committee will address social needs by leading the congregation in extending Christian compassion and helpfulness to the aged, ill, orphaned, homeless and persons of all ages in need.

The current Social Ministry Committee felt that to better reflect this committee's work both in the congregation and the community a name change was in order. With recent approval from Church Council this committee will now be the **Outreach Committee**.

We remain committed to our long standing mission. Current members are Karen Boone, Audrey Comerford, Deb Holmes, Becky Pryor and Michele Owen. Speak with Becky Miller Pryor to join us.

Raise the Region 2016

The First Community Foundation of PA (FCFP) is excited to announce Raise the Region 2016, an online event to help the communities of Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder and Union counties support local nonprofit fundraising efforts.

FCFP, in partnership with Blaise Alexander Family Dealerships will be launching a 30-hour fundraising event starting on Wednesday, March 9th at 6:00 PM through Thursday, March 10th at 11:59 PM.

Take a few moments and visit the www.raisetheregion.org to see the many registered charities. Some that have been seen at St. Mark's include, but are not limited to, the Community Theatre League, Williamsport Civic Chorus, Newberry Branch of NGA, Family Promise of Lycoming County, Habitat for Humanity and Camp Mount Luther. All gifts are tax deductible and will help make your favorite nonprofit's mission possible.



United Churches of Lycoming County

FOOD PANTRY ITEMS CURRENTLY NEEDED:

Soups	Cake Mix & Frosting
Tuna Helper	Spaghetti & Sauce
Sugar & Flour	Macaroni & Cheese
Noodles	Pancake Mix & Syrup
Cookies	Canned Fruit & Juice
Pizza Mix	Jell-O & Pudding
Condiments	Hamburger Helper
Beef Stew	Canned Vegetables
Chicken Helper	Oodles of Noodles
Desert Mixes	Tea/Coffee/Cocoa

Hours are: 9:30 - Noon
on Mondays for delivery.

Tuesdays/Thursdays from 10-3
clients by appointment only
570-322-1657

Castellano Center
320 Park Ave.,
Williamsport, PA

Wednesday Ecumenical Lunches

A tasty \$6 lunch, warm, ecumenical fellowship & a thoughtful program designed to enrich your life mentally, physically, spiritually and socially at Pine Street U. M. No reservations are necessary.

FEBRUARY:

3rd The Rev. Spencer Sweeting, Pastor, City Alliance Church, *“God Is Doing Amazing Things in Thailand and Across the Asian Pacific Region”*

10th The Rev. Doug Eberly, Pastor, Pine Street United UM Church, and The Rev. Gwen Bernstine, United Churches, *“Ash Wednesday”*

17th The Rev. Dr. Susan Halverstadt, Pastor, Warrensville UM Church, *“Mexico Mission Trip to Give Ye Them to Eat Project”*

24th Ms. Mona Rundio, United Churches Food Pantry Coordinator, *“The Gift of Receiving”*



Our 24 hour Devotion Line is available to encourage you in your relationship with God. Devotions are under three minutes and change weekly.
Call 570-322-5762 anytime!

Narthex addition: Operation Christmas Child



We've put a container for donations toward Operation Christmas Child shipping costs in the Narthex. If you have any spare change any time you're passing by there, please drop it in this box. Many of you have been very generous in giving to this effort and we thank you so much! Hopefully, this will make it easier to reach our \$300-400 goal for this mission project. Thank you!

Ongoing Collections



We are still collecting stamps and they can be placed in the basket in the narthex. The stamps are used in various activities for those in rehabilitation and physical therapy.

Tags are collected all year round and are donated to the Ronald McDonald House which helps with their cost of maintenance, electricity, etc. Tags can be dropped off in the narthex or in the clear container in Fellowship Hall.



Special Concerns List

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

Edith Anderson
Rose View Center
1201 Rural Ave.
Williamsport, PA 17701

Jane Angle
Rose View Court, Room 206
1251 Rural Ave.
Williamsport, PA 17701

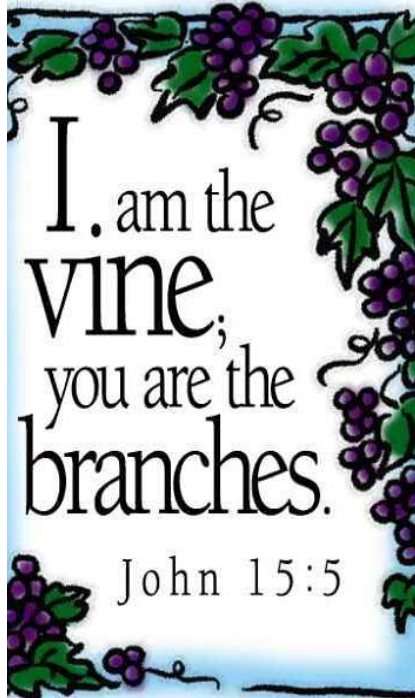
Dottie Bingaman
Williamsport Home, C 1004
1900 Ravine Rd.
Williamsport, PA 17701

Larry Bair
The Meadows
2160 Warrensville Rd.
Montoursville, PA 17754

Marie Byerly
Loyalsock Creek -
Rehabilitation & Nursing
Home - Room 547
1445 Sycamore Rd.
Montoursville, PA 17754

Hugh Byerly
1625 Ritchey St.
Williamsport, PA 17701

Art Decker
Williamsport Home,
1900C Ravine Rd. Apt. 1209
Williamsport, PA 17701



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

Reba Jacobs
c/o Holly Carlson
524 Locust Dr.
Danville, PA 17821

Roxanna Larson
450 Center St.
Williamsport, PA 17701

Carol McMorris
330 Forest Hills Circle
Prescott, AZ 86303

Kay Poliska
1100 Allen St.
Montoursville, PA 17754

Elizabeth Ruesskamp
Rose View Center
1201 Rural Ave.
Williamsport, PA 17701

Robert Swartz
1522 Country Club Lane
Williamsport, PA 17701

Henrietta Tyson
Valley View Nursing Ctr.
Rm. 601
2140 Warrensville Rd.
Montoursville, PA 17754

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

SECOND SATURDAY

We need a Coordinator for this event in March!

Janet will be away during this time. If the youth would like to make chocolates to sell (our normal 2nd Saturday project for March), we need someone to take charge of the event. If we don't have a volunteer, it will be cancelled for this month. Call or email Bernadette if you are interested.

2nd
SATURDAY

Happy Birthday!



3/1 Ruth Pile
 3/5 Trisha Harvey
 3/5 Barbara Switzer
 3/6 Robert Shaible
 3/6 Madison Walz
 3/9 Robert Lynn
 3/9 Patricia Thayer
 3/9 Beulah Wrede
 3/11 Michael Kinney
 3/14 Romain Bastian
 3/15 Kimberly Caster

3/15 Roxanna Larson
 3/16 Dinah Labenberg
 3/16 Hannah Lynn
 3/17 Henrietta Tyson
 3/17 Alan Zimmerer
 3/21 Randy Lukens
 3/22 Lauren Sims



3/27 Raymond Stiller
 3/24 Gary Weber
 3/25 Leah Hausmann
 3/25 Sara Larson
 3/27 Jonathan Bower
 3/28 Sandra Edler
 3/28 David Walz
 3/29 Mark Bittenbender
 3/29 Tyler Bower
 3/29 Carl Hieber
 3/29 April Lewis



Happy Anniversary!

3/6 Gary & Donna Clark



3/19 Kenneth & Lois Goldy

ANNUAL ALL-CHURCH PICNIC

WE HAVE IT! MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!

We have the same lot as last year
 for the annual picnic on June 5,
 2016! So, we will once again be
 celebrating "Down by the riverside,
 down by the riverside..."



Flower-time!



The time has arrived for us to place orders for flowers for the Easter celebration. The date is earlier than usual, and is firm.

We have a choice of four types of flowers: white lilies, Asiatic lilies, tulips, and chrysanthemums.

Please make use of the envelope included with the newsletter and get them in to the office now!

We must have the orders in hand by Monday, March 7 for our supplier.

After they give their gift of beauty for the beginning of the Easter season, many of them will also bring joy to folks on our special concerns list.

New Home Needed...

...for a venerable veteran!

The 5' grand piano in Fellowship Hall has served the congregation well for decades, but last summer we secured a studio size piano to replace it. The grand can still be very good for a piano student in a home that can accommodate it. The only cost would be for transportation, and there is a firm right beside the church that can provide that service.

Please speak with Pr. Elkin or Jungwha Kim if you are interested!



Iron Chef at Rest

Three congregations declined the challenge to participate in Iron Chef competition this year (chickened-out?). St. Mark's team's record stands at 6-1 over the past seven years. Thus it has been decided to take a rest this year, and perhaps look for a different way to encourage funds to be given to Family Promise of Lycoming County.



The needs still continue, whether we hold the competition or not. How might you help?

...and More Thanks...

Dear Folks,

The four people who sang Christmas carols to me sounded wonderful. Please thank them for me. Also thank those people who baked those wonderful Christmas cookies. Also thanks for the funny card with all the names inside.



I Love All of You.

Liz

Ruesskamp

Thank You...

Thank You for all the cards, visits, phone calls, prayers, and flowers that I received following my surgeries and recoveries from my new knees. The therapy I'm undergoing is helping me to return to normal movement. I should be back to renewed mobility very soon and able to return to the activities I am now missing.

Grace Arner

Dear Families,

Thank you for all the cards you have been sending me, especially for your last card which is so lovely! Alson with other cards I receive, I tape your cards to the wall where I can see them every day.

Again, thanks for your thoughtfulness.

All My Love, Liz



Pastor's Notes



PASTOR'S TRAVELS

Pastor Elkin joined 22 other Deans and Officers of the Society of the Holy Trinity at St. Christopher's Retreat Center belonging to the Anglican Diocese of South Carolina on January 26-28 for the Society's annual leadership retreat. It was fortunate that the snows in Philadelphia and elsewhere had melted sufficiently that normal travel was possible. Since Pastor was still recovering from his surgery, he asked for and received assistance in the airports and it was graciously given.

The purpose of the retreat is to handle all of the administrative questions and organizational matters so that the annual retreat of the whole society in September can focus on study, worship, and mutual conversation and consolation. While Pastor was thus occupied in S. Carolina, Donna was visiting with the youngest granddaughter in Philadelphia (and the rest of her family.)

The Society is made up of 300 Lutheran pastors from across the US and Canada who pledge to encourage one another in faithful pastoral practices, in accord with the Lutheran confessional documents and their ordination vows.

On Monday, February 1, Pastor Elkin led a one-day retreat of the Susquehanna Chapter of the Society of the Holy Trinity at St. Jacob's Lutheran Church, Glen Rock, PA. Five persons locally traveled together to be a part of the retreat, where the subject was the writing of the Intercessions, the Prayer of the Church. The session was led by Pr. Cathy Ammlung, who has a gift for

clear language and expression, and who has been writing prayers for some years and offers them for more than 100 pastors to adapt for their own parishes. The day ended with a Holy Communion service with Pr. Elkin presiding, at which the Prayer of the Church was enlivened with petitions prepared that afternoon by each of the participants.



The next retreat will be on April 11-12 in Danville PA, when the Susquehanna chapter gathers with a pastor who has studied deeply on the difficult question of driving out evil within and among us, exorcism in the proper sense. Although membership in the Society is limited to pastors, lay members of the congregations are always welcome to attend the retreats and benefit from the presentations and conversations. Also, persons from other Christian traditions are often in attendance.

To learn more about the Society and its purposes and work, contact Pr. Elkin, who will be glad to answer any questions and to share a copy of the "Rule", the Society's organizational document that is based on the patterns of various reforming orders that have grown up in the wider church over the centuries. It will make for interesting conversation!

HEALTH AND WELFARE

Pastor Elkin's recovery from hip replacement surgery is continuing. He spent only two days in the hospital, and then made use of the congregation's loaner hospital bed at home, as well as walkers,



canes and other medical equipment that we have available for anyone to use as needed. He was busy with preparations for Lent while at home with his computer, and was able to drive on the 12th day. Pastor Shipman was available to lead worship on one Sunday and the catechetical retreat on that same weekend, but Pr. Elkin returned to lead worship the following Sunday. The Property Committee moved the altar from the chapel into the nave so that everything could take place on one level without steps. All of the servers were gracious in adapting to this situation for two Sundays, and we have now returned to our usual customs with the use of the main altar.

Pastor attended a third and final therapy session on February 5, and expected to be dismissed by the surgeon on February 12. However, this is not the end of the matter. Energy has been returning more slowly than the pastor anticipated, and he will need to rest more than is his wont. He thanks the congregation for their patience and encouragement as this process continues.

The Pastor has been in conversation with our Stephen Ministers, discussing what can be learned from the experience, and how those insights might be helpful to other care-givers. Among other things, he can now say to various surgical patients "I do now better understand how you feel!" The Pastor again thanks the members of the parish for cards, well-wishes, and gifts received during this time. They have been very much appreciated.

A message from the president of council:

Many of you have been wondering what is happening with the Reconciliation process. We will have much detail in the annual report and at the congregational meeting in May. Many of the recommendations from the Synod team have been, or are in the process, of being adopted.

One goal was to have members of the congregation submit ideas for the good of the church. With much congregational help, council was able to go through all of the recommendations. We then grouped some with others having the same basic idea and went from there. The idea was, and still is, to have a "bottom up" approach from the congregation rather than doing what we have been doing for so much of the time in the past.

Suggestions were sent to the appropriate committees, discussed, modified (if appropriate), and sent to council for consideration. Two items that were recommended by the Worship and Music Committee were adopted at the February 21 meeting.

The first one is having a Youth Service on May 8. This is also Mother's Day. We have many talented youth who have given of their time and talent throughout the year during the service. We are looking for volunteers to be ushers, lay readers, psalm singers, musicians and the like. We are reminded in the words of Jeremiah, "*Do not say that I am only a youth...*". To paraphrase the rest of the passage: *Do not use youth as an excuse not to venture something great for God.*

I think that we should all be grateful that our youth will have the opportunity to lead this special service and to do so in the future. They will continue to serve as they have in the regular service as well. We deeply appreciated their contributions to our Lord and our church.

The second item involves a change in the summer schedule. We will have a combined service starting the Sunday after Memorial Day (June 5th) and concluding the Sunday before Labor Day (August 28). The service will begin at 9:30. Again, this came from members of the congregation, through committee, and as a recommendation to council. At times it seems as though we are two congregations and this will give us a chance to worship together.

There will be feelings for and against this combined service. Any time that a change occurs, there is some discomfort. Redeemer Lutheran Church did this over the summer and had great success. The early service attendees will be able to get some more sleep; the late service attendees will escape some of the heat of the summer.

We have many members. Unfortunately, so many of them either do not attend church on a regular, or even irregular basis. We need to look at ways to change that as well.

I'm excited about these tangible decisions from your council. Our youth are our future. Let us heed the words from Jeremiah.

Yours in Christ,

Ray Huff

St. Mark's MARCH Calendar of Events

Tuesday March 1, 2016

8:00am City Pastors
9:00am Morning Prayer
7:00pm Mutual Ministry

Wed March 2, 2016

9:00am Morning Prayer
9:20am Staff Meeting & Quilting
11:30am Mid-Day Lenten Prayer
12:00pm Lenten Lunch
1:15pm Pericope Study
6:15pm Lenten Evening Meal
7:00pm Evening Lenten Study

Thu March 3, 2016

6:31am Men's Ministry
9:00am Morning Prayer
11:45am Bible Study
6:30pm Girl Scout Meeting
7:00pm Choir

Fri March 4, 2016

9:00am Morning Prayer
6:00pm Tubing at Ski Sawmill

Sun March 6, 2016 - Lent 4

8:00am Holy Communion
9:15am Sunday School
10:30am Holy Communion
12:00pm The Way

Mon March 7, 2016

9:00am Morning Prayer
7:00pm Civic Chorus
7:30pm Bell Choir

Tue March 8, 2016

9:00am Morning Prayer
6:30pm Stephen Ministry

Wed March 9, 2016

9:00am Morning Prayer
9:20am Staff Meeting & Quilting
11:30am Mid-Day Lenten Prayer
12:00pm Lenten Lunch

Wed March 9, cont'd

1:15pm Pericope Study
6:15pm Lenten Evening Meal
7:00pm Evening Lenten Study

Thu March 10, 2016

6:31am Men's Ministry
9:00am Morning Prayer
11:45am Bible Study
5:30pm Redeemer Community Meal
6:30pm Girl Scout Meeting
7:00pm Choir

Fri March 11, 2016

9:00am Morning Prayer

Sat March 12, 2016 (Lion Article Deadline)

6:00am Catechetical Trip
10:00am 2nd Saturday

Sun March 13, 2016 - Lent 5 (Council Agenda Due)

8:00am Holy Communion
9:15am Sunday School
10:30am Holy Communion
10:30am Children's Church
12:00pm The Way
2:00pm Lectors' Workshop

Mon March 14, 2016

9:00am Morning Prayer
7:00pm Civic Chorus
7:30pm Bell Choir

Tue March 15, 2016

9:00am Morning Prayer
6:30pm Property Committee

Wed March 16, 2016

9:00am Morning Prayer
9:20am Staff Meeting & Quilting
11:30am Mid-Day Lenten Prayer
12:00pm Lenten Lunch
1:15pm Pericope Study
6:15pm Lenten Evening Meal
7:00pm Evening Lenten Study

MARCH Calendar of Events continued

Thu March 17, 2016

6:31am Men's Ministry
 9:00am Morning Prayer
 11:45am Bible Study
 4:00pm Daniel's Closet Drop Off
 6:30pm Girl Scout Meeting
 7:00pm Choir

Fri March 18, 2016

9:00am Morning Prayer
 9:20am Lion Crew
 10:30am Christian Education Committee

Sat March 19, 2016

9:00am Daniel's Closet Clothing Giveaway
 6:00am Alternate date for Catechetical Trip

Sun March 20, 2016 - Palm Sunday

8:00am Holy Communion
 9:15am Sunday School
 10:30am Holy Communion
 12:00pm The Way
 6:00pm Confirmands Mtg./Meal

Mon March 21, 2016

9:00am Morning Prayer
 6:00pm Civic Chorus Board
 6:30pm Council Meeting
 7:00pm Civic Chorus
 7:30pm Bell Choir

Tue March 22, 2016

9:00am Morning Prayer
 6:00pm LSM

Wed March 23, 2016

9:00am Morning Prayer
 9:20am Staff Meeting & Quilting
 11:45am Bible Study
 6:00pm Seder Meal

Thu March 24, 2016 - Maundy Thursday

6:31am Men's Ministry
 9:00am Morning Prayer

Thu March 24, cont'd

9:30am Stephen Ministry
 11:45am Bible Study
 7:00pm *Footwashing Service*
 8:00pm Choir

Fri March 25, 2016 - Good Friday

9:00am Morning Prayer
 12:00pm *Eccumenical Service*
 7:00pm *Tenebrae Service*

Sat March 26, 2016

9:00am Breakfast with Pastor & Egg Hunt
 8:00pm *The Great Vigil of Easter*

Sun March 27, 2016 - EASTER SUNDAY

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

Mon March 28, 2016

9:00am Morning Prayer
 7:00pm Civic Chorus
 7:30pm Bell Choir

Tue March 29, 2016

9:00am Morning Prayer

Wed March 30, 2016

9:00am Morning Prayer
 9:20am Staff Meeting & Quilting
 11:45am Bible Study
 1:15pm Pericope Study

Thu March 31, 2016

6:31am Men's Ministry
 9:00am Morning Prayer
 9:30am Stephen Ministry

