



# THE LION OF ST. MARK'S

Special Church Reopening Edition, July, 2020

Dear Members and Friends of St. Mark's,

“...pray for us,...that God will open to us  
a door for the word...” (Colossians 4:3)



On Friday, June 5, Lycoming County entered the “green phase” of Pennsylvania's reopening. On Monday, June 15, the Congregational Council of St. Mark's accepted the recommendation of the Safety Committee and will reopen St. Mark's for public worship with two service times (8 am and 10:30 am) on July 5. While the Coronavirus is far from over, Council feels that it's now safe to once again gather for public worship so long as guidelines established by the Center for Disease Control and the Safety Committee are followed. These guidelines are included in this newsletter.

Our guidelines are not a cure-all. They do not mean that “everything is now back to where it was before the pandemic.” The guidelines are just that, guidelines. They were enacted upon and are in place to help keep persons safe. If you as a member of the congregation do not feel comfortable returning to public worship even with these guidelines in place, that is perfectly understandable. It is not considered “blasphemous” or “cowardly” to continue to shelter in place. Please, act in ways that feel right to you and your situation.

Finally, thank you! Thank you to our paid staff, the Congregational Council, the volunteers and of course to you members of our congregation. During this pandemic your financial and prayer support, as well as ministry in general, has been nothing short of stellar! The labor you do for our Lord is something in which to take pride. I commend you for your generosity, thoughtfulness, and commitment to St. Mark's in the name and way of Christ, as you continue to “To Know Christ and Make Christ Known.”

Grace + Peace,  
*Pastor Brian Vasey*

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## ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH OPENING POLICY DURING CORONAVIRUS Draft – June 15, 2020

**To St. Mark's Congregation:** Please note that each member of St. Mark's will continue to have a choice of watching our service on line **or** attending in person, starting on Sunday, July 5, 2020, at 8:00 AM and/or 10:30 AM. There will not be a Saturday evening service at this time.

*Before coming to church, it is very important that:*

- ◆ If you are considered at risk in contracting the coronavirus, please consider remaining at home and worshipping online.
- ◆ If you have symptoms related to the coronavirus, or if you believe yourself to be ill, please do not come in person to worship. Take advantage of video worship. Symptoms include cough, fever, and/or shortness of breath.
- ◆ If you cannot be positive about keeping these guidelines and requests regarding in-person worship, please remain at home and worship on line.

*On-Line Services:*

- ◆ Please note that starting July 5<sup>th</sup>, the on-line service will be a recording of that day's Church Service.
- ◆ To allow time for those who prepare the video, the service will not be available until later in the day each Sunday.
- ◆ We do plan to send out an email to advise that it is available.

*When you come to church:*

### **Safety:**

- ◇ Safety of our staff and members is our highest concern.
- ◇ We are following recommended guidelines by the CDC, PA Department of Health, and our Bishop .... which include wearing masks and social distancing.
- ◇ Wearing gloves is at your discretion (whatever makes you the most comfortable) .
- ◇ We apologize if this causes any inconveniences to our members.

### **Mask:**

- ◇ Please note that masks are required. A medical excuse from your doctor for not wearing a mask will be honored. Your mask needs to be in place as you enter the church building, during worship (except when receiving communion), and as you exit the church building.
- ◇ If you forget your mask, extras masks will be provided as you enter the church.
- ◇ This includes any children over 2 years old.
- ◇ Pastor Vasey, Sam Robinson (our organist), and guest vocalist may not wear masks during all or part of the service and will be safely distanced from one another and the congregation.

**Hand Sanitizers** will be available as you enter church, in pews, outside the restrooms, and as you leave. Please use hand sanitizer. *(continued on p. 2)*

*(continued from p. 1)*

### **Church Entrance:**

- ◇ On Sunday morning, everyone must enter only through the Narthex door.
- ◇ All other doors will be locked.
- ◇ **Please go directly to your seat.**
- ◇ All doors will be propped open when possible by the Ushers.

### **Church Exit:**

- ◇ At the end of the service, everyone must exit through the Sacristy/Handicap door.
- ◇ Please follow social distancing as you exit.
- ◇ All doors will be propped open when possible by the Ushers as you leave.
- ◇ Please do not go into other sections of the church (such as the hallways, Fellowship Hall, etc.)

### **Pews:**

- ◇ All Hymnals, Bibles, pencils, etc. have been removed from the pews.
- ◇ End of pews are marked to identify where to sit. An usher will advise you.
- ◇ 8:00 service will sit in different pews than the 10:30 service.
- ◇ Families or couples may sit together.
- ◇ This is to adhere to social distancing.
- ◇ Examples of proper social distancing in a pew is designated by blue crosses on the rear facing pews at the back of the church.

### **Belongings** (coats, umbrellas, etc.):

- ◇ Please take all belongings with you to your pew since we will be exiting from the front of the church.
- ◇ If you bring a Bible, please be sure to take it with you when you leave.

### **Service:**

- ◇ The length of the service will be purposely shortened.
- ◇ Lectors will be scheduled. They will be "miced" and will read from their pew (in place).
- ◇ Lectors will lead the intercessions from their pew (in place).

### ◇ **Bulletins:**

- Bulletins will be placed in the pews where you are asked to sit.
- Hymns will be printed in the bulletin. Hymns should be sung or hummed **while wearing masks.**
- Masks are required for participating in the liturgy.
- Please take your bulletin home or discard it in the trash can when you exit.
- We will NOT be reusing bulletins.

### ◇ **Offering:**

- There will also be an Offering Basket at the Sacristy/Handicap door in which to make an offering as you exit the church.
- You can contribute online (if you have any questions, contact church office).

- ◇ **Sharing of the Peace:** Due to social distancing, we will not share the Peace with physical contact.

### ◇ **Communion:**

- Prepackaged elements for Holy Communion (cup with grape juice and a wafer) in a sealed bag will be provided by the Ushers to each communing worshiper as he or she enters the Church.
- Worshipers will take Communion while remaining in their pews.
- Used or unused Communion items are to be placed back in the sealed bag, and placed in a designated container as you exit the church using the Sacristy/Handicap door.

- ◇ **Children** are to remain in pews during the children's sermon.

### **Restrooms:**

- ◇ Bathrooms will only be "open" in the Narthex.
- ◇ Please limit rest room use to extreme needs only.
- ◇ If you use the rest room, use the hand sanitizer before leaving the pew and wash your hands for 20 seconds before leaving the rest room.
- ◇ Please do not go into other parts of the church to use rest rooms.

**Hospitality:** due to Social Distancing, there will be no hospitality or coffee after each church service.

### **Environment:**

#### ◇ **Windows:**

- When possible, windows in the Nave will be open and the rear exhaust fans turned on.

#### ◇ **Cleaning:**

- Before the service, door handles & panic bars, the ends of the pews, and the pews that you will be using will be cleaned, as well as sanitizing stations and pew sanitizers.
- Rest rooms will be cleaned.

**St. Mark's is taking important safety precautions for in-person worship. If, however, you still are uncomfortable with these steps, please remember that online worship continues to be available through this pandemic.**

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## **Report from Church Council for June, 2020**

**CC: 20.6.1:** Approved reopening St Mark's for Sunday worship services beginning July 5, 2020. (There will be no outside meetings, weddings or funerals held at this time).

**CC: 20.6.2:** Approved allowing the blood drive to be held in Fellowship Hall on July 17, 2020 as this is an essential benefit to our community.

**CC: 20.6.3:** Approved going to two Sunday services effective on the reopening date of July 5, 2020: 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m..

*(continued on next page)*

(Report from Church Council, continued from p. 2).

**Committee Reports:**

**Worship & Music:** As submitted.

**Property Committee:**

- ◆ Discussed moving forward with previously approved capital project to rekey the building.
- ◆ Discussed other needed repairs such as electric heaters in Narthex, painting the staff hallway and parking lot lights. Jackie Kinney will take this back to Finance for discussions first.

**Personnel Committee:**

- ◆ Sam Robinson, Church Organist, started on May 24, 2020.
- ◆ **CC: 20.6.4** Approved hourly staff remaining on reduced hours until further notice.

**Safety Committee:** As submitted.

- ◆ Thank you to the Safety Committee and Herb Poff for drafting and refining the St Mark's Lutheran Church Opening Policy During Coronavirus.

**Ongoing business:** Council requests all Committees who have not yet provided their annual reports to Bernadette to please do so.

**New Business:** Discussed adding inviting messages to the exterior sign to welcome new individuals to St. Mark's Lutheran Church.

Next meeting: July 20, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

Remember that Christ is with you!

*The Congregational Council of St. Mark's Lutheran Church*

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**DIRECTORY UPDATES**

Well, the directories came out in May—updates will continue to be posted here:

**STILLER, Mary Ann**  
Home Phone: 480-364-5082

*PLEASE call the office if you discover any mistakes!*

*(We don't know if you don't tell us)*



**STAFF OFFICE HOURS**

**Pastor: The Rev. Brian Vasey**  
Mon, Tue, Thu 9am—12pm & by appointment

**Church Organist: Sam Robinson**  
Summer: Mon 1pm-3pm & by appointment

**Sexton: Lou DeSeau**  
Sun, Mon, Wed, Thu 8:30am—1pm

**Bookkeeper: Jackie Baysore**  
Tue 8am—12:00pm

**Secretary: Bernadette Jones**  
Mon, Wed, Fri 9am—1pm

**Remembering Richard J. Lakey**



On Monday June 8, 2020, the St. Mark's Family as well as all in the Williamsport community, were saddened to learn of the death of Richard J. Lakey. Richard, or Dick as he was better known, served as the Music Director of St. Mark's Lutheran Church from 1977 until his retirement in 2010. Dick was beloved at St. Mark's and served his church and his Lord well during his 33 years as our parish musician. What some of you may not realize is the relationship Dick had with the Vasey Family:

- When a student at Lycoming College I attended St. Mark's and Dick was the organist.
- Dick was Joanne's organ teacher when she began to study organ at Lycoming College as well as when we returned to the Susquehanna Valley.
- Dick served as organist for our wedding at Beaver Memorial United Methodist Church, Lewisburg in 1986.
- When Janet Masser (Joanne's sister) married Robert Fitch in 2005 at Beaver Memorial, Dick was again at the organ console.
- During Tim's years at Lycoming (2012-2016) Dick was choir accompanist.

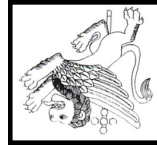
Our family kept in touch with Dick through the years, and along with St. Mark's Family, have very fond memories of his music, his ministry and his friendship.

Prayers are with his friends, his family and the St. Luke congregation as they too mourn his passing.

May the promises of life eternal, through our Lord Jesus Christ, be our comfort now and always.

*Pastor Vasey*

<b>Church Office 570-323-4619</b>		<b>Fax 570-323-2452</b>
<b>Website: stmarkswilliamsport.org</b>		
<b>Main e-mail: stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org</b>		
<b>Rev. Brian Vasey, Pastor</b>	bvasey@stmarkswilliamsport.org 570-323-4619 or 570-523-1415	
<b>Sam Robinson, Church Organist</b>	srobinson@stmarkswilliamsport.org	
<b>Bernadette Jones, Secretary</b>	stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org	
<b>Jackie Baysore, Bookkeeper</b>	jbaysore@stmarkswilliamsport.org	
<b>Lou DeSeau, Environmental Serv.</b>	stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org	
<b>Linda Rosini, Council President</b>	lr10152@yahoo.com	
<b>Becky Miller Pryor, Vice-President</b>	home 570-971-4585	
<b>Wanda Fortin, Secretary</b>	570-337-9137	
<b>Jackie Kinney, Treasurer</b>	jskinney1@yahoo.com	
<b>Kathy Eshelman, Stephen Ministry</b>	570-433-0522	
<b>Janet Jones, Parish Life</b>	jgmacookie@comcast.net	
<b>Debra Buckman</b>	dbuckman@pct.edu or dabuckman65@gmail.com	
<b>Family Promise Coordinator</b>		
<b>Prayer Chain—coordinator needed</b>		
<b>Sally Bjornstad, Altar Flowers</b>	570-494-6637	



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ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
 142 MARKET ST.  
 WILLIAMSPORT, PA 17701  
 Address Service Requested  
 Phone: 570-323-4619  
 Fax: 570-323-2452  
 Website: <http://www.stmarkswilliamsport.org>  
 Email: [stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org](mailto:stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org)



St. Mark's regular services  
 will resume July 5 with  
 services at 8:00 & 10:30 AM.  
 Please follow our worship guidelines.

