



The Lion of St. Mark's

March 2021

The Lion looks a little different this month due to the illness of our Church Secretary. We wish Bernadette a "speedy recovery" and ask for your patience during her absence. Thank You!



Members and Friends of St. Mark's,
The following came to me by way of the office of the Presiding Bishop. I share it in this edition of the Lion as my Pastor's message.
Grace + Peace, Pastor Vasey.

Dear Partners,
I cannot wait for the future: getting vaccinated, hugging my family, sending my kids back to school, enjoying the parts of my vocation that make my heart sing (yes, in that order).

In December, the news of vaccinations filled me with hopeful anticipation. In that light, I could see the silver lining of a heinous year. Growing numbers of people were educating and equipping themselves and their communities to be anti-racist. The global ecumenical and inter-religious movements were evolving in digital spaces so that seeking unity and cooperating for justice and peace for all people and creation can flourish. 2021 seemed poised to realize at least some of 2020's empty promises of perfect vision.

Indeed, the first day of the new year was met with a challenging, bold and inspiring message from Pope Francis for a World Day of Peace, entitled, A Culture of Care as a Path to Peace. Days later, in the United States, the political divisions and social unrest of the preceding months rolled right over all our New Year's resolutions in violent insurrection. To date, we mourn half a million people who have died from COVID-19 in the United States and millions more worldwide. We are painfully aware that the future is not yet here and that the waiting will get harder before it is over.

Pope Francis' message is not a utopian vision but a mandate for life based on what is essential and true. For Christians, when we recenter our relationships with Christ, our lives are grounded in and guided by the future that God has already reconciled in Christ

Jesus. As disciples seeking to manifest that unity, we can walk the path to peace one step at a time, together. As my kids like to say: "We can do hard things." We can because of our sure and certain hope that God's reconciled future is, in fact, already.

In Companionship,
Kathryn M. Lohre
Executive for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Relations
and Theological Development
Office of the Presiding Bishop, ELCA

I'VE BEEN HACKED!

Dear St. Mark Members and Friends,
If you receive an email from me requesting "a favor involving a sum of money", please disregard. This is a scam! A good rule of thumb is to always make sure the return address is either bvasey@stmarkswilliamsport.org or cryptol@comcast.net. You can also contact me by telephone or email to verify (570-323-4619).

Pastor Vasey

HAPPENING THIS MONTH:

By action of our Church Council, Sunday morning in-person worship services will resume Sunday, February 21 at 8 and 10:30 am. Sunday morning Church School will also resume February 21 at 9:15 am. Although in-person worship will resume, we will continue to make available video worship from our website and Facebook page so that all may have the option to worship in-person or by way of video. In-person worship applies only to Sunday morning. All mid-week Wednesday Lenten Services will be virtual. They will be available to view by way of our website and Facebook page every Wednesday by 12 noon. A decision regarding our calendar for Holy Week and Easter Sunday Worship (including the Easter Vigil) will be made at the March Council meeting (March 8). Parts of our "world" may be shut down, but Christ is with us! Congregational Council of St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Pastor's at church "Office Hours" during our suspension of in-person worship:

Monday - Thursday 9 am-Noon
Friday Pastor's Day Off

*Should you have a pastoral need and/or wish to schedule an appointment, please call the Church Office 570-323-4619. Pastor is always available by email (bvasey@stmarkswilliamsport.org). Home phone (emergencies only please) 570-523-1415.

UNITED CHURCHES NEWS:

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Outreach Committee

New Director of UCLC

Gwen Bernstine is retiring as executive director of United Churches of Lycoming County. Gwen started her career there in 1991 following after Dr. Alton Motter. I, Deb Buckman, worked with Gwen as an advisor of United Campus Ministry and also with the Newberry Branch of NGA. She will be missed. Her replacement is Pastor Tammey Aichner, who I worked with on UCM. Tammey will begin her service on March 1. The email and office telephone number will remain the same, as will the address.

The UCLC office is located at New Covenant United Church of Christ, 202 East Third St, Williamsport, PA

The UCLC is always looking for volunteers for ministry, food pantry, and other activities. The Wednesday luncheons are currently being held virtually with the link for March <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88609741957>. You will need Zoom for this.

- 3- **Rev. James Wooster**, Pastor, Pine Street United Methodist Church, *"Psalms of Lament"*
- 10 - **Rev. Sheila Core**, Member, First Church of Christ Disciples, Wmspt., *"Psalm 51"*
- 17 - **Mr. Derek Slaughter** - Lunch with the Mayor.
- 24 - **Vicar Carol Johnson**, Pastor at Redeemer and St. Michael Lutheran Churches, *"Psalm 95"*
- 31 - **Pastor Tammey Aichner**, Executive Director, United Churches, *"Psalm 121"*

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

_"I took each item out of my box one by one. I wanted to rejoice for everything." ~ Andy, shoe box recipient.



Please consider donating to our shoebox collections this month. The items are small, and yet so meaningful to the child who receives them.

- In March, we will be collecting:
- Combs/Brushes/Hair Accessories**
 - Toothbrushes/Plastic Toothbrush Cases**
 - Soap/Plastic Soap Boxes**
 - Mini Flashlights**

Monetary donations are also welcome as we are looking into including "Grow With Me" shoes in this year's boxes. While these are a bit pricey, they adjust over time and can "grow" 5 sizes as the child's foot grows. A huge blessing indeed! Checks may be made to St. Mark's with OCC in the memo line.

These items (or any others) can be placed in our red, OCC bin located in the narthex. We thank you for your generosity!

*The age ranges for the boxes we fill are 2-4, 5-9, and 10-14 (both boys and girls)

The Faith and Fellowship and Outreach Committees thank the congregation for their many donations of non-perishable food items, snacks and hygiene items during the Advent and Christmas seasons. A total of 335 food items and snacks were distributed to the American Rescue Workers' Food Pantry and the New Covenant UCC Blessing Boxes. The United Churches Food Pantry is requesting only monetary donations at this time. The 106 hygiene items were welcomed by the Shepherd of the Streets' office. The Shepherd requested that the blankets, adult toothpaste and toothbrushes be given to Family Promise for use at their Day Center as SOS is currently well stocked with these two items. All of the churches and non-profits were grateful for our donations. Thank you again for sharing in the caring.

Raise the Region

First Community Foundation of PA in partnership with Blaise Alexander Family Dealerships will once again be launching a 30-hour online fundraising event starting Wednesday, March 10, 2021 at 6:00 PM though Thursday, March 12, 2021 at 11:59 PM. Take a few moments and visit www.raisetheregion.org to see the many non-profit organizations accepting donations. A few charities that come to mind at St. Mark's are Civic Chorus, the SPCA, United Churches of Lycoming County, the Community Theatre League and the Newberry Branch of NGA. All gifts are tax deductible and will help make your favorite nonprofit's mission possible particularly as the pandemic continues. Minimum donation per agency is \$25 with a credit card required.

Sharing in the Caring

With the resumption of in-person worship, please consider making a donation to one or all of the following ministries in these unprecedented times. A table in the Narthex and bins in the coat room are available for your donations.



COUNCIL BRIEFS

Council met on February 8, 2021.

Jackie Kinney, Treasurer reported that St. Mark's was eligible to obtain the 2nd PPP loan to assist with expenses during the pandemic.

Coronavirus discussion:

M(Pam Jensen – 2nd by Ray Huff) SC: CC: 21.2.1 Motion approved to reopen St. Mark's for in-person services beginning on Sunday, February 21, 2021.

M(Mel Wentzel – 2nd by Ralph Ziegler) SC: CC: 21.2.2 Motion approved to suspend mid-week in-person Lenten services. Mid-week Lenten services will be available online.

Ray Huff and Mel Wentzel were elected to represent St Mark's for the Virtual Synod Assembly on June 19, 2021.

Pastor will make calls to have the sound system in the Nave evaluated due to recent static and sound issues.

Committee Reports:

Safety Committee: No update.

Property Committee: Update provided by Ed Gair.

M(Ralph Zeigler – 2nd by Herb Poff) SC: CC: 21.2.3 Approved motion to move forward with the installation of a water heater in Pastor's Sacristy, subject to Finance Committee's approval. Estimated cost of \$1,180.00.

Rental parking spaces and snow piles were discussed and tabled at this time.

Fellowship A/C replacement was discussed and tabled at this time.

Faith & Fellowship: Update on Sunday school provided by Vicki Haussmann.

Sunday school to resume on Sunday, February 21, 2021.

Outreach Committee: Update provided by Becky Pryor.

At this time the Food Pantry is asking for monetary donations only.

Personnel Committee: Update provided by Becky Pryor.

Worship & Music: Update provided by Ray Huff.

New Business:

Plankenhorn Land: Linda provided an update on behalf of Gary Weber: An Agreement of Sale has been executed by all parties for the sale of the Plankenhorn land. Closing to occur within 45 days.

M(Mel Wetzal – 2nd by Herb Poff) SC: CC: 21.2.4 Approved motion to allow the Williamsport Music Club the use of St. Mark's Nave for their "Music Gala" event on April 27, 2021 at 7:30 p.m.

Next meeting: March 8, 2021 @ 6:00 p.m.

Make sure to send in any corrections for the Church Directory so that they can be printed here! We don't know unless you tell us! Call or email stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org

Ongoing Events at Redeemer Lutheran:

Community Supper on Thursday, March 11, 2021 from 5:00 PM until the meals are gone. Curbside pick-up only. Last month over 100 meals were served. All are welcome. Monetary donations are still being accepted for the purchase of take-out containers. Checks may be made payable to St. Mark's with the memo line indicating Take-Out.

Daniel's Closet - Still closed and not accepting donations. If you have clothing to donate, please take them to the American Rescue Workers. The ARW has numerous programs for the homeless and families in need. The sale of your donations enables the ARW to fund these needed programs..

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SHARING IN THE CARING

Ongoing Collections at St. Mark's:

- **United Churches Food Pantry:**
Due to COVID, monetary gifts are preferred. Please send to United Churches (Food Pantry), 202 East Third St, Williamsport, PA 17701
Or you can make a check out to St. Mark's with the memo line listed as Food Pantry.
- **Shepherd of the Streets:** This month the SOS is looking for Men's and Women's body wash, Shampoo and Conditioner, Bars of Dove soap., Baby diapers sizes 3 and up Baby wash, Baby shampoo, Children's toothbrushes and Children's toothpaste
- **Blessing Boxes at New Covenant UCC:**
Individual Snacks, Cup of Soups, Microwave Mac & Cheese, Ramen Noodles and warm socks (new or gently used are needed).
- **Blessing Hedges at Redeemer Lutheran:** They need hats, gloves and socks (new or gently used) that are placed in plastic bags and tied to their hedges for folks walking by.
- **Aluminum Soda Can Tabs:** Tabs are given to support the Ronald McDonald House in Danville.
- **Pennies for Youth Activities:** A container is available in the Narthex for your donations.
- **Bazaar Room:** The Women of St. Mark's continue to accept donations for the annual Fall Bazaar. Please pack donations in small boxes for ease of moving. Place them in the Bazaar Room away from the door. If you cannot get to the Bazaar Room, items may be left on the lower landing of the back stairwell as you enter from the parking lot.

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Please remember our shut-ins and those who are ill..

Drop them a card or call one of them on the phone.

Remember—Loneliness can be cured with your help.

Liz Ruesskamp Grace Arner

Ruth Pile Gary Clark

Doris Brown Gladys Knauss

Patricia Alexander Ashton Ott

Lenny Sherlinski Esteban Mazer

Elsie Sechler Cheryl Williams

Bernadette Jones Kay Poliska

Tanya Bower Steve Dewar

THANK YOU! Connie Shiable and Family thanks all for their thoughts, prayers, cards and well-wishes offered at Bob's passing.

Our Church Secretary, Bernadette Jones,

continues to undergo treatment UPMC, Wmpst. She thanks you for your prayers. You may send her greetings/cards at her home address: 665 Fifth Avenue, Williamsport, PA 17701

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Birthdays

COMERFORD, Theodore	03/01
PILE, Ruth U.	03/01
SWITZER, Barbara	03/05
LYNN, Robert	03/09
PELUSO III, Mason	03/10
KINNEY, Michael	03/11
BASTIAN, Romain	03/14
CASTER, Kimberly	03/15
LARSON, Roxanna	03/15
GEORG, Eileen	03/16
JONES, Robert	03/16
LABENBERG, Dinah	03/16
LYNN, Hannah	03/16
BARDSLEY, Diane	03/18
DAVENPORT, Diana	03/18
SIMS, Lauren	03/22
WEBER, Gary	03/24
HAUSSMANN, Leah	03/25
LARSON, Sara	03/25
BOWER, Jonathan	03/27
EDLER, Sandra	03/28
BOWER, Tyler	03/29
HIEBER, Carl	03/29
LEWIS, April	03/29

Family promise

Our next hosting is April 11-18 and maybe by then we will be back to a normal rotation. God bless all our volunteers!

Mid-week Lenten Series: "By Faith" begins February 24

What is Faith? The text from Hebrews 11:1 defines it this way: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." This series focuses on the book of Hebrews, especially the eleventh chapter and **will be virtual and on-line**. The first four weeks provide a journey through the faith of the Old Testament figures, especially Noah, Abraham, Moses, and the Israelites. The fifth week brings us to Jesus, "the pioneer and perfecter of our faith", and his path to the cross. Join us! The devotionals will be posted on our web and Facebook pages by noon beginning Wednesday, February 24.

Easter Wishes

Please help the Outreach Committee spread some spring cheer by sending an Easter card or two to folks we do not see as often as we wish. Cards will be available on March 28, 2021 after each service. Add a cheery thought and mail it in time for Easter day. These Easter wishes are sure to brighten the day of those who receive them. Still worshipping virtually? Then consider telephoning a few folks and chatting a bit during Holy Week and Easter.

Anniversaries

CLARK, Gary & Donna	03/06
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2021 Lenten Daily Readings

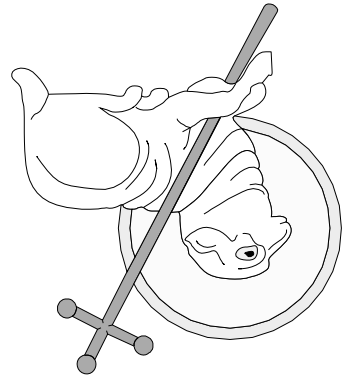
- Monday, March 1, 2021: Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45; Genesis 21:1-7; Hebrews 1:8-12
- Tuesday, March 2, 2021: Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45; Genesis 22:1-19; Hebrews 11:1-3, 13-19
- Wednesday, March 3, 2021: Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45; Jeremiah 30:12-22; John 12:36-43
- Thursday, March 4, 2021: Psalm 19; Exodus 19:1-9a; 1 Peter 2:4-10
- Friday, March 5, 2021: Psalm 19; Exodus 19:9b-15; Acts 7:30-40
- Saturday, March 6, 2021: Psalm 19; Exodus 19:16-25; Mark 9:2-8
- Sunday, March 7, 2021: Third Sunday in Lent
Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22
- Monday, March 8, 2021: Psalm 84; 1 Kings 6:1-4, 21-22; 1 Corinthians 3:10-23
- Tuesday, March 9, 2021: Psalm 84; 2 Chronicles 29:1-11, 16-19; Hebrews 9:23-28
- Wednesday, March 10, 2021: Psalm 84; Ezra 6:1-16; Mark 11:15-19
- Thursday, March 11, 2021: Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; Genesis 9:8-17; Ephesians 1:3-6
- Friday, March 12, 2021: Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; Daniel 12:5-13; Ephesians 1:7-14
- Saturday, March 13, 2021: Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; Numbers 20:22-29; John 3:1-13
- Sunday, March 14, 2021: Fourth Sunday in Lent
Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21
- Monday, March 15, 2021: Psalm 107:1-16; Exodus 15:22-27; Hebrews 3:1-6
- Tuesday, March 16, 2021: Psalm 107:1-16; Numbers 20:1-13; 1 Corinthians 10:6-13
- Wednesday, March 17, 2021: Psalm 107:1-16; Isaiah 60:15-22; John 8:12-20
- Thursday, March 18, 2021: Psalm 51:1-12; Isaiah 30:15-18; Hebrews 4:1-13
- Friday, March 19, 2021: Psalm 51:1-12; Exodus 30:1-10; Hebrews 4:14-5:4
- Saturday, March 20, 2021: Psalm 51:1-12; Habakkuk 3:2-13; John 12:1-11
- Sunday, March 21, 2021: Fifth Sunday in Lent
Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 119:9-16; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:2-33
- Monday, March 22, 2021: Psalm 119:9-16; Isaiah 43:8-13; 2 Corinthians 3:4-11
- Tuesday, March 23, 2021: Psalm 119:9-16; Isaiah 44:1-8; Acts 2:14-24
- Wednesday, March 24, 2021: Psalm 119:9-16; Haggai 2:1-9, 20-23; John 12:34-50
- Thursday, March 25, 2021: Annunciation of the Lord
Isaiah 7:10-14; Psalm 45; Hebrews 10:4-10; Luke 1:26-38
- Thursday, March 25, 2021: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Deuteronomy 16:1-8; Philippians 2:1-11
- Friday, March 26, 2021: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Jeremiah 33:1-9; Philippians 2:12-18
- Saturday, March 27, 2021: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Jeremiah 33:10-16; Mark 10:32-34, 46-52
- Sunday, March 28, 2021: Sunday of the Passion
Mark 11:1-11; Isaiah 50:4-9a; Philippians 2:5-11; Mark 15:1-39
- Monday, March 29, 2021: Monday of Holy Week
Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 36:5-11; Hebrews 9:11-15; John 12:1-11
- Tuesday, March 30, 2021: Tuesday of Holy Week
Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 71:1-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; John 12:20-36
- Wednesday, March 31, 2021: Wednesday of Holy Week
Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 70; Hebrews 12:1-3; John 13:21-32
- Thursday, April 1, 2021: Maundy Thursday
Exodus 12:1-4, 11-14; Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-17, 31b-35
- Friday, April 2, 2021: Good Friday
Isaiah 52:13-53: 12; Psalm 22; Hebrews 10:16-25; John 18:1-19, 42
- Saturday, April 3, 2021: Holy Saturday
Daniel 6:1-24; Psalm 16; 1 Peter 3:17-22; Matthew 27:57-66



A Prayer for Lent

O God our deliverer, you led your people of old through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide now the people of your church, that, following our Savior, we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.

STAFF OFFICE HOURS
Pastor: The Rev. Brian Vasey
 Mon.-Thu 9am—12pm & by appointment
Church Organist: Sam Robinson
 By appointment
Sexton: Lou DeSeau
 Sun, Mon, Wed, Thu 8:30am—1pm
Bookkeeper: Jackie Baysore
 Tue & Thu 8am—12:00pm
Secretary: Bernadette Jones
 On Leave at Present



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 wjkinney1@yahoo.com
 Jackie Kinney, Treasurer
 Janet Jones, Parish Life
 jgmaccokie@comcast.net
 Debra Buckman dbuckman@pct.edu or dabuckman65@gmail.com
 Family Promise Coordinator
 Prayer Chain—coordinator needed
 Sally Bjornstad, Altar Flowers
 570-494-6637

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