



# SAINT MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

# “THE LION” of ST. MARK'S

A Monthly Newsletter by and for the members of St. Mark's



## Pastor's Lion Message for December 2025

### Pastor's “Lion” Message December, 2025

“I don't know what's wrong with me. Christmas is coming but I just don't seem happy about it...Is there anybody out there who knows what Christmas is all about?”

So asks the character Charlie Brown in the 1965 television special, *A Charlie Brown Christmas*.

*A Charlie Brown Christmas* will celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its television debut on December 9, 2025. I point to this anniversary because of this television special's great significance. Never before had a children's Christmas television special include the Christmas story according to Luke in its broadcast. Network television executives were leery about including the Christian Christmas story but Charles Shultz, creator of the “Peanuts” strip, insisted it be there. And so, Charlie Brown, and all the world, were told that Christmas is all about the birth of Jesus.

This year, Christmas Eve 2025, St. Mark's will use Charlie Brown's question, and the answer to that question, as its format for Christmas Eve worship. At both services we

*To know Christ and to make Christ known.*

December  
2025



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### STAFF OFFICE HOURS

Pastor: The Rev. Brian Vasey

Mon-Thu 9 a.m.-1 p.m., & by appointment

Church Organist: Sam Robinson

Summer Mon 1-3 p.m. & by appointment

Bookkeeper: Jackie Baysore

By appointment

Administrative Assistant: Michele Owen

Tuesday through Friday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

[stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org](mailto:stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org)



Serving Christ in the Williamsport Community  
since 1852  
142 Market Street  
Williamsport, PA 17701  
(570) 323-4619

will highlight each “Peanuts” characters' interpretations of Christmas before arriving at the Nativity. Will we still sing carols and hymns? Will we still celebrate Holy Communion by candlelight? Yes, and we will be renewed in a new way as to the celebration of our Savior's birth!

In a world where often the good news of Jesus' coming goes unnoticed or is simply passed over, our celebration will offer a fresh understanding of the Christmas message and how Jesus is definitely what Christmas is all about!

Join us at either worship time 7 and/or 10 pm on December 24. You will be glad you did!

The birth of Jesus; that Charlie Brown is what Christmas is all about.

Grace + Peace,  
Pastor Vasey



JOIN US FOR SUNDAY  
WORSHIP IN DECEMBER  
ALL ARE WELCOME!!

**JOIN US FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP IN DECEMBER: ALL ARE WELCOME**

**Sunday, December 7, The Second Sunday of Advent**

***One Worship Time: 9:30 am  
The Chrismon Service  
Annual meeting and Brunch follows  
No Sunday School***

**Sunday, December 14, The Third Sunday of Advent**

***8 am Holy Communion  
Sunday School, 9:15 am  
10:30 am Holy Communion***

**Sunday, Sunday, December 21, The Fourth Sunday of Advent**

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

**Sunday, December 28, The First Sunday of Christmas**

***One Worship Time, 9:30 am  
No Sunday School***

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**

**CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP:  
7 PM: A Holy Communion Service especially for children and family  
10 PM: A Traditional Holy Communion Service by candlelight.**

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**

## **PASTOR VASEY ON VACATION**

Thursday, December 25, 2025 – Saturday, January 3 Pastor Vasey will be on vacation. Should you need a pastor during this time, please contact our Church Office (570-323-4619).

## **MID-WEEK ADVENT SERVICES OF WORD AND PRAYER:**

*Wednesdays (December 3-17) in our Chapel, 12:10 pm.*

*Theme: “Preparing in Christ’s Presence”*

***PLEASE NOTE THAT IN CELEBRATION OF OUR LORD'S NATIVITY, THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED DECEMBER 25-28 AND JANUARY 1-3.***

***MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY 2026 FROM PASTOR VASEY AND STAFF.***

## **FINANCE**

**Please make sure to read the annual report and review the budget for 2026.**

Deb Buckman



**Become  
Part of  
Our  
Church  
Family**

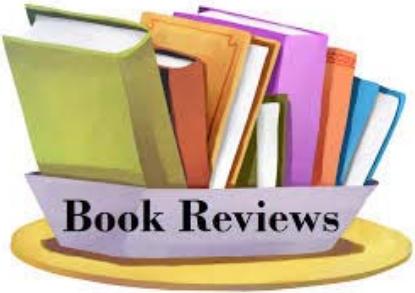
WANT TO EXPLORE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A LUTHERAN CHRISTIAN? Adults wishing to unite with St. Mark's in church membership are invited to contact PASTOR VASEY at 570-323-4619 or email [stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org](mailto:stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org).



When you or a loved one has a change of address, telephone number or email, please contact the church office at 570-323-4619 or [stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org](mailto:stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org). Please direct your intentions whether or not to share this information with our church family.



When you or a family member are ill, have a crisis of faith, or have a personal concern of which you wish to make the pastor aware, please contact him directly by church office telephone (570-323-4619) or email ([bvasey@stmarkswilliamsport.org](mailto:bvasey@stmarkswilliamsport.org)). Do not assume the pastor will know of your need any other way.



Do you enjoy reading? Do you have an interest in exploring the variety of materials found in our church library? Would you be willing to write a short synopsis of a church library book you read for The Lion? If so, the Faith Formation Committee wants YOU! Please see Vicki Haussmann, Sally Bjornstad, or Bob Campbell if you would like to be featured as a guest columnist in The Lion! We will gladly assist you in finding the perfect book to read for this newly established

(although not yet named) column. We look forward to discovering more about the materials found in our library through you. Thank you for sharing your talents in this exciting way!

### Envelopes

There are special envelopes in the pew racks for Heat (to pay for boiler repair), Roof (for the roof on the Parish house) and Organ (for repairs and general maintenance). When giving to these causes, be sure to put your name on the envelope so your contribution may be recorded correctly on your contribution statement. Please write on the memo line of your check how you wish your gift to be used (cash is always welcome).



### Memorials



A reminder that when giving a memorial for a loved one or other church member, please specify where the money is to be allocated (ex. roof fund, music fund). If you do not specify, your donation will be deposited into the "General Account".

# DECEMBER Worship Leaders

Please arrange for a replacement if you cannot serve.



## Communion Assistants

December 7

9:30 AM Ralph & Lou Ann Ziegler

December 14

8:00 AM Brian Jackson

10:30 AM Shelby & Gary Weber

December 21

8:00 AM Drew Haussmann

10:30 AM Deb B. & Mindy Wentzel

December 28

8:00 AM Jackie Kinney

10:30 AM Matt & Wanda Fortin



## Ushers

December 7

9:30 AM Miller/Poff

December 14

8:00 AM Miller/Poff

10:30 AM Tim & Deb Maggs, Dick R.

December 21

8:00 AM Miller/Poff

10:30 AM Shelby & Gary Weber

December 28

8:00 AM Miller/Poff

10:30 AM Gair Family



## Lectors

December 7

9:30 AM Phil Thomas

December 14

8:00 AM Nikki Jackson

10:30 AM Karen Mariano

December 21

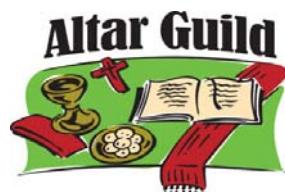
8:00 AM Vicki Haussmann

10:30 AM Theresa Furman

December 28

8:00 AM Brian Jackson

10:30 AM Ralph Ziegler



## Altar Guild

Mel & Mindy Wentzel

## December Birthdays

|                     |       |
|---------------------|-------|
| Laura Schreckengast | 12/7  |
| Scott Seyler        | 12/17 |
| Marlene Volmer      | 12/17 |
| Sarah Young         | 12/23 |
| Helen Schramm       | 12/28 |
| Cindy Huff          | 12/31 |

## December Anniversaries

|                          |       |
|--------------------------|-------|
| Tom & Becky Miller Pryor | 12/21 |
|--------------------------|-------|



# FAMILY PROMISE



Thank you to everyone who provided meals for hosting in November. It is much appreciated and if you would like to help donate to the meals in the future, please contact Deb Buckman.



Great work! Our kits were delivered to the gathering location by the helping hands at Messiah Lutheran. So we are done for this year however, please do not stop thinking about the kits and the items for them. Watch the clearance racks and shelves for items and snap them up. If you do not want to store them at home, you can bring them to the church and put them in the office opposite the middle lounge - you will know which one it is - the messy one with boxes, etc.

\*Baby clothes, towels, etc. can be found on clearance.



**THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU** for your wonderful support of Operation Christmas Child this year. Due to your generous donations, we were able to pack **85** beautiful shoeboxes, as well as cover the \$850.00 in shipping costs. Not only did we pack 85 boxes, 20 of those boxes were filled with "Grow With Me" shoes, and another 13 boxes were filled with a soccer ball and pump ~ a true blessing indeed! The impact that these gifts will have on kids is truly miraculous. God is at work!

We ask that in December you pray for these shoeboxes, asking for God's blessings on the children who receive these gifts. Pray that their hearts may be touched by God's love, and that the Good News of Jesus Christ will be planted on their hearts.. Thank you again for your support of this worldwide ministry. We look forward to working with you again in 2026!



Please join us on Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup> after the second service to share the Christmas spirit with our special concerns folks. We'll have a light lunch, then break up into teams. The more volunteers we have, the more people's day we can brighten! A WILLING SPIRIT AND A SMILING FACE IS ALL THAT IS REQUIRED, NOT MUSICAL TALENT! Please sign up on the clipboard in the Narthex so that we'll be able to plan our routes ahead of time, based on the number of volunteers. THANK YOU!



#### Reverse Advent Calendar

As we count down the 25 days until Christmas the Faith Formation and Evangelism and Fellowship Committees would like to offer congregation members an alternative to the traditional Advent calendars where a small gift is received daily. Rather than *receiving* something each day of Advent, we are counting down to Christmas by *giving* something each day of Advent.

What sorts of items are we you ask? This year we are collecting an eclectic mix of non-perishable items: canned goods, cake mixes, funfetti icing, cups of soup, and single serve items for the Blessing Boxes. Personal care items/hygiene products are welcome as well. Please take a holiday bag ~ along with an idea list ~ from the Narthex (beginning November 30). Each day during Advent place an item *into* your bag. Please pray that these small items might be a blessing to those who receive them.

Return your filled bag on Christmas Eve. Even sometime in January would be fine! We hope that this Reverse Advent Calendar will be a blessing to your Advent preparations. Thank you for your generosity!



# November 2025

St. Mark's Council meeting- November 17, 2025

Call to Order: 6:00 pm

Council recited the Defining Mission Statement

Dick Reitz read the opening prayer.

Secretary's roll call: Ray Huff

Members present: Cathy Fenderson, Vicki Haussmann, Ray Huff, Wanda Fortin, , Nikki Jackson, Richard Miller, Richard Reitz, Cindy Todd. Others excused.

Treasurer's Report: The report was accepted and filed for audit.

Memorial Funds Update: Cindy Todd presented a document showing the Memorial Contributions from 2023-25. Discussion followed and all thanked Cindy for her efforts to present the update to council.

Pastor's Report: Pastor presented his pastoral duties for the month. Lectionary Group Study, Conference meetings, Pastor's lunch, Men's Fellowship (pancake/sausage breakfast on 1/4/26), receiving Ryan Kane into membership, annual meeting on 12/7, and annual meeting were presented.

October study averaged 14 people per week.

The pastors of Redeemer Lutheran, St. Luke Lutheran, and St. Mark's Lutheran continue to provide pastoral care for the Liberty Parish.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Evangelism and Fellowship: Discussed envelopes for special concerns. The next Blood Drive will be on December 5. The committee is collecting items for residents of the Danville and Selinsgrove centers. The Newcomers will provide desserts for the Redeemer meals for the rest of the year. Caroling will take place on December 21- Karen Mariano is the contact.

## Council Minutes Continued .....

Faith Formation: 85 shoe boxes were sent. The November 1 Church United meeting had 15 attendees. Brunch after the congregational meeting on December 7. We passed a food contributions list.

**FC 2025.11.01: Motion to recommend the proposed \$434,457.00 budget for 2026 to support the ministries of St. Mark's Lutheran Church and present it to the members of the congregation for approval. APPROVED.**

**CC 2025.11.02: (M TODD/2 REITZ) TO APPROVE LITTLE LAMBS/ USE OF FELLOWSHIP HALL ON DECEMBER 18/19.2025 FOR THEIR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM. APPROVED.**

Little Lambs: Discussion of rental agreement for 2026.

**NC 2025.11.03: Motion to present the following nominees for the upcoming Council term and present these names for election at St. Mark's Annual Congregational Meeting ~ Shawn Cartright and Scott Seyler. APPROVED.**

Personnel : Committee reports for the annual meeting were all in on time.

Property: Awaiting estimates for the proposed roofing.

Publicity- No report.

Safety- No report.

Worship and Music: We have received the fabric and a test sample is at The Barn for fireproofing. We will then check it for a color match with the large roll of fabric. Communication with the committee concerning Advent may obviate the need for a meeting on 11/23.

175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee- The committee will meet on November 23, 2026. The 175<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY will be celebrated on April 4, 2027. .

Stewardship Campaign- November 2-23 Sundays. "Because of God's Mercy" os the theme. Stewardship Sunday is November 23.

Annual Meeting- December 7, one service at 9:30 with brunch following.

## Council Minutes Continued .....

**EC 2025.11.04: Motion to approve Council be authorized to elect two delegates to represent the congregation of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Williamsport, in all business to come before the Annual Assembly of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. APPROVED.**

Information from the Synod was discussed.

Dick Reitz led us in closing prayer.

The meeting ended at 6:55.

Next Meeting: December 15, 2025, 6:00 PM (fellowship to follow)



## Evangelism and Fellowship Committee Articles for The Lion

December 2025

### Be the Lifeline Patients Need

#### Give Blood

The Evangelism and Fellowship Committee in collaboration with the North Central PA Chapter of the American Red Cross will hold a **Blood Drive on Friday, December 5, 2025 from 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM in Fellowship Hall**. Please consider being a donor or encourage friends and family as the Red Cross experiences critical shortages of blood during the holiday season. Call 1-800-733-2767 or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: “St. Marks” to schedule an appointment.



### Gifting for Danville State Hospital

As we have done in years past, we will be collecting Christmas gifts for the residents of Danville State Hospital. Please consider providing a modest gift to ensure all residents will have gifts to open on Christmas morning. We supply general gifts that can be used where they are most needed. This need is greatest for those residents who arrive at the hospital in November or December.

**Items being requested this year for both men and women include socks, hats, gloves, scarves, inexpensive wallets and watches, underwear, sweatshirts, sweat pants, t-shirts and slippers in sizes large and up.**

**Regular sizes of body wash, shampoo, conditioner, body lotion and deodorant are also requested.**

All donations should be left unwrapped and placed in the tub in the Narthex. Thank you for any assistance you can give to this outreach.

**Donations for Danville State Hospital are due Sunday, December 7, 2024.**

### Christmas Party at the Selinsgrove Center

After an absence of five years, our annual in-person Christmas party for the Ladies of CM-6 at the Selinsgrove Center is back on the calendar for Wednesday, December 17, 2025! **We are in need of cozy slipper socks, pudding cups in all flavors but vanilla, (Vanilla is the only flavor the center serves.) moisturizing body wash and money to offset the cost of items not donated.** We will also take a basket of individually wrapped snacks for the caregivers. If you wish to join the Elves of St. Mark's in entertaining the ladies, please speak with Karen Mariano or Becky Miller Pryor.

Donations of needed items and snacks can be placed in the tub in the Narthex.

Monetary donations may be made payable to St. Mark's with the memo line indicating "Selinsgrove Party."  
Thank you in advance for any help you are able to give.

**Donations for the Ladies of CM-6 are due by Sunday, December 14, 2025**

## Christmas Greetings for Special Concern Folks

The Evangelism and Fellowship Committee will provide Christmas cards on Sunday, December 14, 2025 to congregation members to mail to our Special Concern Folks and others we do not see as often as we wish. Please consider taking a card or two from the table in the Narthex, write a cheery message, sign your name, apply postage and send it in time for Christmas. Thank you for helping us send more Christmas cheer.

**P.S.** John Tartline is the grandson of Phil and Barb Thomas. He currently is stationed with the military in Iraq. If you wish to add him to your Christmas greetings, his address is as follows.

John Tartline

Task Force Defender

D BTRY, 2-55 ADAR

APO, AE 09316

One regular postage stamp will deliver your greetings.

## Sharing in the Caring

### Ongoing Collections at St. Mark's:

**United Churches Food Pantry:** : As we near the holiday season, please consider continuing to offer non-perishable food items to be used by the Pantry. Choosing to participate in our Reverse Advent project is an easy and fun way to do so. Any help you can give is greatly appreciated as the need is great and growing.

**Shepherd of the Streets:** Needed are shampoo, toothpaste and toothbrushes for adults and children, boxes of tissues, baby shampoo, body wash and wipes and bars of soap.

**Blessing Boxes at New Covenant UCC:** Easily prepared food and non-perishable foods like Cup of Soups, individual packs of crackers and cookies, microwave mac & cheese, ramen noodles and individual boxes of cereal are needed. Deodorant for men and women and travel size hygiene products are also needed.

**Sojourner Truth Ministries:** Dawn dish detergent, salad dressing in any flavor, boxes of tissues, snack bags and fold over sandwich bags are needed

**Church Women United:** Members of CWU make fidget bags and small fidget quilts for hospitalized children and nursing home residents. If any members of St. Mark's have cotton or cotton/polyester material they wish to donate to the ladies, please leave it in the Narthex and the Evangelism and Fellowship Committee will deliver it to them.

**Donations to the Food Panty, Shepherd of the Streets, the Blessing Boxes or to Sojourner Truth Ministries may be placed on the tables in the Narthex Coat Room.**



### Ongoing Events at Redeemer Lutheran:

**Community Dinner** on Thursday, December 11, 2025 beginning at 5:00 PM. All are welcome. This is a take-out meal available at the curb.

**Desserts for Redeemer's Dinner:** Jim and Susan Newcomer will provide 120 Christmas brownies for this event. Thank you, Jim and Susan, for your generosity during this season of Advent and Christmas.

**Daniel's Drop-Off:** On Thursday, December 18, 2025 from 4:00 – 6:00. **This drop off date is one week earlier due to Christmas.** Warm, winter clothing including hats, gloves and scarves, shoes and boots are in particular need by men and children. Blankets, sheets and throws are also accepted. If you have a large quantity of clothing that cannot wait until the monthly drop off, please contact Redeemer's church office (leave a message) at 570-322-2333 to make a mutually convenient appointment.

**Daniel's Closet:** Distribution of free seasonal clothing will be Saturday, December 20, 2025 from 8:30 – 11:00 AM. **This distribution is one week earlier due to Christmas.**



## ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

St. Mark's Annual Congregational Meeting and Brunch are scheduled for **Sunday, December 7, 2025 immediately following the 9:30 a.m. single service of worship.**

Among the items to be presented, discussed, and/or voted upon are:

- \* Annual Report of Committees to the Congregation
- \* Election of new Council members
- \* Adoption of the 2026 budget to support the ministry of St. Mark's Lutheran Church
- \* Any other business that needs to be addressed

Please mark your calendar and plan to participate in this Annual Congregational Meeting. If you need additional information or have items that you would like to discuss, please contact one of the Council officers: Vicki Haussmann, president; Dick Reitz, vice-president; Ray Huff, secretary; or Debra Buckman, treasurer. We are looking forward to not only seeing you on December 7th, but are excited to see how our congregation will continue to "Make Christ Known" in 2026! Thank you for your participation in this important, church event.

## BLOOD DRIVE

The Evangelism and Fellowship Committee in collaboration with the North Central PA Chapter of the American Red Cross will hold a **Blood Drive on Friday, December 5, 2025 from 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM in Fellowship Hall.** Please consider being a donor or encourage friends and family as the Red Cross experiences critical shortages of blood during the holiday season. Call 1-800-733-2767 or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: "St. Marks" to schedule an appointment.



## PANCAKE BREAKFAST

The newly formed Men's Fellowship Group is hosting a Pancake Breakfast on **Sunday, January 4, 2026!** Come enjoy a plate of fluffy flapjacks and warm Christian fellowship as we kick off the new year together. We'll gather in **Fellowship Hall at 9:15 AM** for this time of food, conversation, and community.



We look forward to seeing you there!

# December 2025

| Mon  | Tue  | Wed   | Thu   | Fri  | Sat  |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| 1  | 2  | 3   | 4   | 5  | 6  |
|  |  | 12:10PM<br><i>Midweek Advent Service (Chapel)</i> |   | 11AM-3PM<br><i>BLOOD DRIVE</i>             |  |
|  | 5:30PM<br><i>Evangelism &amp; Fellowship</i> |   |   |  |  |
| 7  | 8  | 9   | 10  | 11   | 13   |
| 9:30AM <i>Holy Communion</i><br><i>ANNUAL MEETING BRUNCH</i>                                 |  |   |   | 1:00PM<br><i>Pastors' Lunch</i>            |  |
|  |  |   | 12:10PM<br><i>Midweek Advent Service (Chapel)</i> | 5:00PM <i>Redeemer Community Dinner</i>    |  |
| 14   | 15   | 16  | 17  | 18   | 20   |
| 8:00AM <i>Holy Communion</i><br>9:15AM <i>Sunday School</i><br>10:30AM <i>Holy Communion</i> |  |   | 12:10PM<br><i>Midweek Advent Service (Chapel)</i> | 10AM-11AM<br><i>Little Lambs Christmas</i> | 8:30AM-11AM<br><i>Daniel's Closet Distribution</i> |
|  | 6PM <i>Council</i>                           |   | 2PM <i>Wmspt. Home Communion</i>                  | 4-6PM<br><i>Daniel's Drop-off</i>          |  |
| 21   | 22   | 23  | 24  | 25   | 27   |
| 8:00AM <i>Holy Communion</i><br>9:15AM <i>Sunday School</i><br>10:30AM <i>Holy Communion</i> |  |   | <i>Christmas Eve Services:</i>                    |  |  |
|  |  |   | 7:00PM <i>Family Traditional</i>                  |  |  |
|  |  |   | 10:00PM   |  |  |
| 28   | 29   | 30  | 31  |  |  |
| 9:30AM<br><i>Holy Communion</i>  |  |   |   |  |  |