



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 January 2026

Pastor's “Lion” Message January, 2026

*The Church's one foundation is
Jesus Christ, her Lord*

*She is his new creation
by water and the Word.*

*From heav'n he came and sought
her to be his holy bride;
With his own blood her bought her,
and for her life he died.*

S.J. Stone, 1839-1900

Close to the end of the month of January the Church commemorates two great apostles, perhaps the greatest apostles: Simon, son of Jonah (Peter) and Saul of Tarsus (Paul). Peter, led by the Holy Spirit, confessed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Paul, a one time persecutor of the Church, met the resurrected Christ on the Damascus Road and from that point on, became an “Apostle to the Gentiles”.

These two apostles represent the character of Christ's Church: Catholic and Evangelical.

Catholic. A specific way of liturgical tradition, form and custom. A link to Judaism and Jewish reference.

Evangelical. Of the gospel; a proclamation of the good news of salvation for all

*To know Christ and to
make Christ known.*

January
2026



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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



Serving Christ in the Williamsport Community
since 1852
142 Market Street
Williamsport, PA 17701
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people (Evangelical literally means “good news” or gospel).

The Feast Days of Peter (January 18) and Paul (January 25) bookend the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This week reminds us that these two servants of Jesus put their background, pride and prejudice behind them and agreed to work for the good of the gospel. Not two separate movements, but one Lord, one faith one baptism.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is a call of the Church to work for the good of the whole; to minister in the name of Christ and to recognize all Christians for their efforts. The Week of Prayer reminds believers of our unity in Christ – the tradition of Peter and Paul – and urges us to find ways to celebrate that unity in various and specific ways of uniformity.

The Church has made great strides toward the effort of greater unity among Christians these past two decades: Ecumenical Prayer and Worship Services; Pulpit Exchanges; Full Communion among denominations; The Joint Declaration on Justification between Roman Catholics and Lutherans to name a few. These expressions of unity would have looked almost impossible a few years ago. But like the great apostles before us, we, led by the Holy Spirit and prayer, agreed to put differences aside and proclaim Christ rather than ourselves.

It is my hope and prayer that during this upcoming Week of Prayer all of us will continue to celebrate and work towards even greater unity in Christ. He is our identity. He is our one foundation. If the Church is not willing to be the Church, who will?

Grace + Peace,
Pastor Vasey



JOIN US FOR SUNDAY
WORSHIP IN JANUARY-
ALL ARE WELCOME!!

JOIN US FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP IN JANUARY: ALL ARE WELCOME

Sunday, January 4, The Second Sunday of Christmas

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

Sunday, January 11, The First Sunday after Epiphany

***Baptism of Our Lord*
8 am Holy Communion
Sunday School, 9:15 am
10:30 am Holy Communion**

Installation of Council Members at Both Services

Sunday, Sunday, January 18, The Second Sunday after Epiphany

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

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Begins

Sunday, January 25, The Third Sunday after Epiphany

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

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Ends

ALL ARE WELCOME!

PASTOR VASEY ON VACATION

Pastor Vasey will be on vacation December 25 – January 3. If you are in need of a pastor during this time, please contact Pastor Carol Johnson, 570-772-6674.

**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.**

***REMINDER: The term of those elected to Church Council begins Monday, January 19, 2026, 6 pm, in our Middle Lounge. Thank you to those whose time on Council is coming to an end. You have served your church well. Welcome to those beginning or continuing on Council in 2026!**



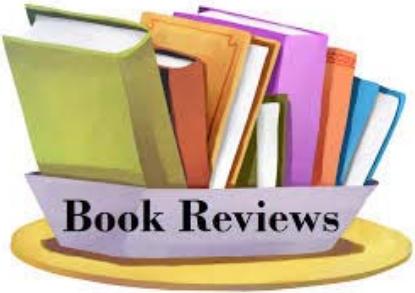
WANT TO EXPLORE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A LUTHERAN CHRISTIAN? Adults wishing to unite with St. Mark's in church membership are invited to contact PASTOR VASEY at 570-323-4619 or email stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org.



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. 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). 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".

JANUARY Worship Leaders

Please arrange for a replacement if you cannot serve.



Communion Assistants

January 4

8:00 AM Jackie Kinney

10:30 AM Gary & Shelby Weber

January 11

8:00 AM Drew Haussmann

10:30 AM Matt & Wanda Fortin

January 18

8:00 AM Becky Pryor

10:30 AM Ralph & Lou Ann Zeigler

January 25

8:00 AM Jackie Kinney

10:30 AM Deb B. & Mindy W.



Ushers

January 4

8:00 AM Miller/Poff

10:30 AM Tim & Deb M./Dick Reitz

January 11

8:00 AM Miller/Poff

10:30 AM Gary & Shelby Weber

January 18

8:00 AM Miller/Poff

10:30 AM Fortin/Yaple/Wentzel

January 25

8:00 AM Miller/Poff

10:30 AM Gair Family



Lectors

January 4

8:00 AM Candy Dewar

10:30 AM Donna Boston

January 11

8:00 AM Drew Haussmann

10:30 AM Shelby Weber

January 18

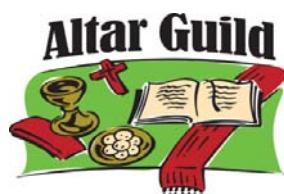
8:00 AM Becky Pryor

10:30 AM Brenda Gair

January 25

8:00 AM Vicki Haussmann

10:30 AM Theresa Furman



Altar Guild

Sally Bjornstad & Vicki Haussmann

January Birthdays

Shelby Weber	1/1
James Newcomer (Sr.)	1/4
Mary Lou Doebler	1/6
Andrew Zeigler	1/10
Jackie Kinney	1/13
Riley Weber	1/14
Anna Zeigler	1/15
Laura Zeigler	1/15
Donna Boston	1/17
Beth Miller	1/17
Ruth Rees	1/17
Shawn Cartwright	1/20
Herb Poff	1/21
Neil Eshelman	1/24
Bud Doebler	1/25
Marc Kinney	1/26
Sean Buckman	1/28
Devin Owen	1/30

January Anniversaries



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.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

We look forward to continuing the outreach ministry of Operation Christmas Child in 2026, and have set a goal to pack 75 beautiful boxes! These shoeboxes will then be sent to kids around the world toward the end of year. Monthly collections make this process a little less daunting come November, and we very much appreciate your generous donations throughout the year. In fact, thanks to your generosity we have already purchased 16 pairs of Grow With Me Shoes to be included in this year's shoeboxes which is absolutely amazing!

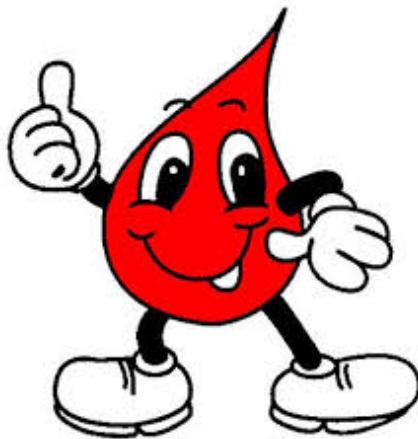
In January, we are collecting:

Fun Pads (small, activity pads)
Journals/Small Notebooks
T-shirts* ("Cute" or plain white. Either is fine!)
Socks/Undies*



These items may be placed in our red, OCC bin located in the narthex. Thank you for your continued support in helping spread the good news of God's love!

*Just a note ~ the age ranges for the boxes we fill are 2-4, 5-9, and 10-14 for both boys and girls. This may help with clothing sizes.



The Evangelism & Fellowship committee hosted a successful blood drive in December, collecting 16 units of lifesaving blood. Maybe you can donate next time!

In Memoriam

Memorials - This is a reminder that when you submit a memorial unless specified on the memo line as to where you want the memorial to be applied, the money will go in the general fund to pay daily bills. The following are suggestions as to where you might want to direct your memorial.

Roof fund

Organ fund

Dossal fund

Kitchen fund

Furnace fund

These are the large projects that we are doing in the next few years. The kitchen fund is an ongoing fund to defray costs of such events as the Congregation meeting brunch. If you have any questions, please contact me - Deb Buckman



December 2026

Minutes

St. Mark's Council meeting- December 15, 2025

Call to Order: 6:00 pm

Council recited the Defining Mission Statement

Vicki Haussmann read the opening prayer.

Secretary's roll call: Ray Huff

Members present: Deb Buckman, Cathy Fenderson, Wanda Fortin, Vicki Haussmann, Ray Huff, Nikki Jackson, Richard Miller Richard Reitz, Cindy Todd. Lou Ann Zeigler. Donna Clark- excused.

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

Memorial Funds Update: Cindy Todd explained the process she is using to organize memorials/bequests and gifts that have been given to the church. 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 Jan.4), receiving Ryan Kane into membership, vacation from December 25-January 3. Ray will supply on December 28.

Pastor thanked everyone for their prayers and sympathy on the loss of Joanne's father and his Aunt Emma.

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 very successful Blood Drive held on December 5. The committee is collecting items for residents of the Danville and Selinsgrove centers. Caroling will take place on December 21- Karen Mariano is

Council Minutes Continued

the contact. We had an excellent brunch after the congregational meeting on December 7. Parish Life- We had an excellent brunch after the congregational meeting on December 7. Faith Formation- 23 were in attendance for Advent Wreath Making. Advent materials were sent to several families to be used at home. Reverse Advent Calendar bags flew out the door. We very much appreciate the generosity of our congregation.

Little Lambs- Discussion of rental agreement for 2026. The Christmas presentation will be held on December 18 and 19.

Nominating- No report.

Personnel- No report.

Property- No report.

Publicity- No report.

Safety- No report.

Worship and Music: Poinsettia delivery will be on December 19 around 10:00 am.

175th Anniversary Committee- The committee will meet on January 11, following the late service.

Unfinished Business:

Awaiting color match from the samples that were sent for fire retardant.

Stewardship Campaign- We reached 75% of the goal. A total of \$120,469.00 was pledged.

New Business:

EC 2025.12.01: TO APPROVE \$100.00 DONATION TO LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY AT PENN STATE. APPROVED.

Council Minutes Continued

Council devotion and offering collection sign-up sheets were passed.

Closing prayer: Vicki Haussmann led us in the Lord's Prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 7:17 pm.

Next Meeting: January 19, 2026, at 6:00 pm.

We shared hospitality for a successful year during and after the meeting. We also shared our thoughts and answers to a *Christmas Trivia* game.



The Evangelism and Fellowship Committee

January 2026

Thank You for the many December's Gifts

The Evangelism and Fellowship Committee thanks the congregation for their support of our many December projects. Without your continued support we could not have been the hands of God at this very special time of year.

During December the Evangelism and Fellowship Committee, with generous assistance from the congregation, provided the following outreach:

We participated with the congregation in the Reverse Advent project. We will assist the Faith Formation Committee with the sorting and delivering of these many donations.

Congregation members donated more than one hundred assorted clothing items, hygiene items, fleece throws, activity books and watches to the residents of the Danville State Hospital. The committee is grateful for Tracy Fox of Redeemer Lutheran for transporting our items along with Redeemer's items to Danville.

Congregation members also donated body wash, assorted snacks and pudding cups for the sixteen ladies of CM-6 and their caregivers at the Selinsgrove Center. Each lady received a gift bag of slipper socks, body wash and a pack of pudding cups. A basket of snacks were prepared for their caregivers. Finally, after an absence of several years we were able to entertain the ladies in person. A good time was had by all.

On December 5, we hosted our third Red Cross Blood Drive of 2025 in Fellowship Hall. Sixteen units of blood were collected including a donation from Wanda Fortin. We have tentative plans to schedule three blood drives for 2026.

Thank you to the members of the congregation who took Christmas cards from the table in the Narthex, added a cheery message and mailed them to our Special Concerns Folks and others we do not see as often as we would like.

The handmade ornaments crafted by Theresa Furman, Cindy Todd and Lou Ann Zeigler brought joy to many. All monetary donations will be given as grocery gift cards to Code Blue, an emergency, overnight shelter for the homeless at First Church.

After an absence of many years, members of the congregation went caroling to many of our Special Concern Folks. It was a sunny day, made more merrier by these visits.

These gestures of Christmas spirit given by members of our congregation were certain to cheer the individuals receiving them in Christ's name.

Go Green for Gifting

Have more Christmas gift bags, new greeting cards and tissue paper than you can use? Donate them to the Evangelism and Fellowship Committee for gifting the ladies of CM-6 and others in 2026. Although a record number of calendars and planners have already been donated, we can still find homes for extra 2026 calendars and day planners. Donated items can be placed in the tub in the Narthex.

Resolutions for 2026?

Are you thinking of making any changes to your life in 2026? Maybe you want to become more fit or be more organized. Maybe our Lord has been calling you to be more involved at church or in our community. If so, please consider joining the Parish Life Committee, Faith Formation Committee or the Evangelism and Fellowship Committee. All three of these committees are in desperate need of additional members.

If joining one of these committees does not work in your life at this time, please consider being part of the Card Ministry team. From the comfort of your home, on the month of your choosing, you can send one or two cards per week to folks on our Special Concern list. All cards, stamps and addresses are provided. All that is needed is you. A sign-up sheet is available in the Narthex.

If any of these opportunities are a fit for you or for more information, speak with Vicki Haussmann or Becky Miller Pryor.



Sharing in the Caring

Ongoing Collections at St. Mark's:

Please know we understand that much was given in December for a number of projects, but the need continues. The Evangelism and Fellowship Committee is grateful for any items members can donate at this time.

United Churches Food Pantry: Canned fruit, canned Chili and Beef Stew, Instant Potatoes and Ketchup.

Shepherd of the Streets: If it keeps a person clean, it is needed. They are also in need of new or gently used towels and washcloths and slightly used winter coats.

Blessing Boxes at New Covenant UCC: We are sharing the snack items that were donated during Reverse Advent with the Blessing Boxes and Code Blue. But we continue to accept travel size hygiene items and anything else you usually donate.

Sojourner Truth Ministries: Mayonnaise, salt and pepper shakers, and large, brown lunch bags.

Church Women United: The ladies of CWU sew fidget throws for residents of nursing homes and busy bags for hospitalized children. They are in need of colorful cotton or cotton/polyester fabric. Donations may be placed in the Narthex.

If you would like to be involved in making sandwiches in our kitchen for the Blessing Box, speak with Becky Miller Pryor. It takes approximately one hour per week to make the required sandwiches. Parish Life makes sandwiches the second and fourth Mondays of each month. Evangelism and Fellowship make sandwiches the first and third Wednesdays of each month. **Our biggest need is for volunteers for the Wednesday Crew.**

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

Ongoing Events at Redeemer Lutheran:

Community Dinner on Thursday, January 8, 2026 beginning at 5:00 PM until all meals are distributed. The Evangelism and Fellowship Committee will provide desserts. This is a take-out meal available at the curb. All are welcome.

Daniel's Closet Distribution of free seasonal/winter clothing on Saturday, January 24, 2026 from 8:30 – 11:00 AM. Winter weather brings the need for warm clothing and sturdier shoes for adults and children. Blankets, throws and crocheted afghans are also accepted.



This month's clothing drop off is Thursday, January 22 from 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM. It is the perfect time to make room for that new clothing from Christmas by donating your gently used winter clothing to Daniel's Closet.

If you have a large quantity of clothing, please call Redeemer's office (leave a message) at 570-322-2333 to make an appointment. Smaller quantities can be placed on our stage behind the curtains.

Dream Week

The Mission Possible II: Building Community, Uniting a Nation the Nonviolent Way

January 19 – January 24

This week gives us an opportunity to reflect on Dr. King's work and put our thoughts into action in a variety of ways in our community. Although our local plans have not yet been finalized be checking the weekly bulletins for updates and activities.

A Look Ahead---Valentine's Day Greetings

The Evangelism and Fellowship Committee needs the congregation's help in sending Valentine's Day greetings to our Special Concern Folks and others we do not see as often as we would like.

Cards will be available in the Narthex on Sunday, February 4, 2026 after each service. Please add a cheery message, affix a stamp and mail in time for Valentine's Day. Thank you for any assistance you can provide.





Pancake Breakfast

The newly formed Men's Fellowship Group cordially invites you to attend a Pancake Breakfast on January 4, 2026. Join us in Fellowship Hall at 9:15 (or so) to enjoy a hearty stack of flapjacks and enjoy Christian fellowship as we bring in the new year!

We ask that you please RSVP by today, December 28th so that we have an accurate count of those attending. You can drop your RSVP in the offering plate! Thanks!

Pancake Breakfast RSVP

Name: _____

Number Attending: _____

Please return by: Today, December 28, 2025

January 2026

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3
4 8:00AM Holy Communion 9:15AM PAN-CAKE BRKFST 10:30AM Holy Communion	5	6 5:30PM Evangelism & Fellowship	7 6:00PM Men's Fellowship	8 10:45AM Faith Formmation	9 1:00PM Pastors' Lunch
11 8:00AM Holy Communion 9:15AM Sunday School 10:30AM Holy Communion	12	13	14	15	16
18 8:00AM Holy Communion 9:15AM Sunday School 10:30AM Holy Communion	19	20 6PM Council	21 2PM Wmspt. Home Communion	22 4-6PM Daniel's Drop-off	23 8:30AM-11AM Daniel's Closet Distribution
25 8:00AM Holy Communion 9:15AM Sunday School 10:30AM Holy Communion	26	27	28	29	30