



The Parish Post

APRIL/MAY 2024

St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church
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The Rev. James E. Person, 717-712-8191



Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain, but if it dies it bears much fruit. John 12:24 NRSV

With the passage above in mind, spoken by Jesus to his disciples before his crucifixion, put your thinking caps on while I take you on a trip along Pastor Jim's Path of Possibly Pertinent Ponderings:

I'm reading "The Longevity Diet: Discover the New Science Behind Stem Cell Activation and Regeneration to Slow Aging, Fight Disease, and Optimize Weight" by Valter Longo and wanted to share this quote with you.

"[M]y laboratory produced one of the first pieces of experimental evidence for this "programmed aging" hypothesis. We showed that a selfish group of microorganisms—in this case baker's yeast that had been genetically manipulated to *invest in their own protection and live as long as possible*—*would eventually become extinct*, whereas shorter-lived *microorganisms willing to sacrifice themselves and die early would seed future generations. In other words, the genetic alterations that make the organism act selfishly and live longer decrease its chances of generating healthy offspring.* Whether human beings are actually programmed to die, however, has not been demonstrated." (Emphasis mine).

Now, consider the following paraphrase of Jesus' words from *The Message*:

"Listen carefully: Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over. In

MISSION STATEMENT: Nourished by Word and Sacrament, the mission of the members of St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church is to spread God's Word in Jesus Christ through our thoughts, words, and actions, proclaiming God's good news for all to hear and live.

the same way, anyone who holds on to life just as it is destroys that life. But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you'll have it forever, real and eternal. John 12:24-25 The Message

I hope you might be able to connect the dots of my rambling thoughts to see that, I believe, science is finally catching up to what Jesus told us some 2000 years earlier.

I have sometimes struggled to find contemporary examples of what Jesus was talking about when he made the statements above, especially as it pertains to not only himself but to us as his followers. But I think in Valter Longo's research we might find that connection, especially in his language of self-sacrifice and that acting selfishly decreases the chances of producing healthy offspring. Considering the plight of much of the Christian Church today, and the emphasis on survival in many parts of the Church, I wonder if what Longo discovered as a natural phenomenon might be at least partially responsible for the lack of growth in the Christian Church in America.

Be that as it may, there is also a word of hope in both Jesus' and Longo's statements. While death is an unavoidable part of life, out of death or a death-like experience new life becomes possible. From the death of long-held beliefs and rituals, new experiences and traditions spring up. From the death of prejudice and selfishness new friendships and relationships become possible. And we have seen the promise of new life in the recent past following the near-death experience of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

We were advised to postpone gatherings while the pandemic was at its peak, and the recovery from those days has been slow, but when does recovery from any setback happen as quickly as we would like? I can't speak for every church everywhere, but here at St. Mark's I can see and feel the recovery happening. (One experience that hits close to home is the ending of The Extravaganza, which has been a wonderful opportunity for fellowship and support, both financially and spiritually for us and for many charities in our community. Now that this ministry has run its course, what seed can we plant to fill the void?)

This may be a somewhat convoluted path to make a point, but, as I said, I believe science is confirming what Jesus told us long ago and giving it relevance in our everyday lives and ministries. Sometimes ponderings pop up from preposterous places. When we look to our faith for meaning, guidance, and direction in our lives, we find it in some expected places that lead to possibly pertinent ponderings. Thanks for sharing mine.

Your partner in ministry and mission,

Pr. Jim Person


Council President

We have exited Lent and are rejoicing in the Resurrection of our Savior. It is still the Season of Easter and we join in welcoming Spring.

This is the time of renewal and rebirth. All around us is beauty as flowers bloom and the trees are blossoming.

Please join us at St Marks as our worship services celebrate this special time of the Church Year. All are welcome.

Yours in Christ

Jay Snyder



Hello my friends at St. Mark's!

HAPPY SPRING TO YOU ALL.

What a glorious time of the year this is and I for one love it. We all witness the re-birth of all the trees, flowers and the grass becomes so lush and green. It's awe in spiring for sure.

We have just come through the most somber and then the most amazing and beautiful times of the year in our church. We started the Holy Week celebration on Palm Sunday. Next came Holy Thursday. At this service, I along with the rest of the congregation watched with great pride as Kenny Baranowski received his first holy communion. It was such a pleasure to see Kenny celebrate this milestone in his Christian faith. His proud parents, grandparents and sister watched as he received the sacraments from Pastor Jim.

Then we moved on to Good Friday. This is such a somber service and each year I watch and wait as Pastor Jim slams the door at the end of the service. This represents the closing of the tomb and it's just very sad.

Then we end the Holy Week services with Easter Sunday. I love to see the gold altar paraments and this is the only Sunday we see them. And all the pretty daffodils and tulips. It's just so special. The bells were played and the choir sang. And best of all, we had a good congregation turn out for both services. So so nice.

I want to wish you all a very safe and happy summer. See you around St. Mark's.

In Christian Love,

The St. Mark's Church Mouse



Friends At St. Marks

Thank you so very much for all the cards, calls, texts and other expressions of recognitions of my recent birthday. As I think back over all of my 60 years at St. Mark's so many memories of the Love and Friendships that I have felt here are truly amazing and appreciated.

Thanks and God Bless you all,
Bob Gill

Fellowship Committee,

Words cannot express how thankful we are for everything everyone did to provide a wonderful luncheon to celebrate my parents lives. The donations of food & your service was very much appreciated.

I love you all,
Deb & Paul

No Eve Circle on Tuesday, May 14, 2024
Will resume May 28, 2024

Eve Circle will not meet during the months of June, July & August. May 28, 2024, Tuesday, will be our last gathering before summer.

We will again start meeting in September – 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 6:30 pm 1st September meeting is September 10, 2024

May 2024 Special Days

Some of the special days celebrated in May are:

National Day of Prayer — May 2, 2024

Ascension of the Lord — May 9, 2024

Mother's Day — May 12, 2024

Day of Pentecost — May 19, 2024

Victoria Day — May 20, 2024

Trinity Sunday — May 26, 2024

Memorial Day — May 27, 2024



Music Sunday

On May 5th, we will celebrate Music Sunday and honor the Festival Choir, Mission Bells and Soloists, and Instrumentalists who have enriched Our worship services this year at both services.

Everyone is invited to a light breakfast between services honoring our musicians hosted by the Fellowship Committee.

St. Mark's is very blessed to have so many talented Musicians.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Opposites attract?

Life is full of opposites. Opposites keep our lives in balance. For example, great athletes endure much pain through practice to obtain first place. With harsh snow storms come plentiful crops. Diet and exercise help us to stay healthy. We enjoy hot chocolate (with marshmallows, of course) to warm up after frolicking in the snow. Why do we frolic? Because we are tired of being cooped up inside with (or without) the kids.

We are here to do God's will regardless of hardships we face. We persevere adversities to experience God's unending love that never fails and never ceases. It is our responsibility to show others this unconditional love. May you have the strength and courage to pursue these opportunities to express God's love. Their needs for your support far outweigh any fears you have to take action. God is always (unconditionally) with you.

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. (James 1:2-3)

Peace,

Ruth

Blessings—Ruth Cheng

There were many blessings this month. Two girls from the shelter were baptized. Two more victims were admitted and are safe from their predators. People were released from the hospital in better health. Birthdays were occasions for family gatherings. Celebrations of life were rejoiced as dearly departed joined our Lord. We had beautiful rain to prepare the earth for crops this summer.

A verse about anxiety (1 Peter 5:7) was the theme for a youth conference in București that I attended with youth from our church. Even though the lesson was focused on youth, we adults also listen to this verse every day. We know from the bible that to worry is wasted energy. It is our faith in Him that allows us to endure these challenges. Our youth are reminded what actions are pleasing to Him. We stay on His path and avoid pornography, alcohol, drugs and other actions that do not follow His commands. As adults we know that avoiding Satan's temptation is not easy. We constantly struggle because we are sinners. Thankfully, God cares for all of us, regardless of how many times we sin. We repent and He forgives us. He wants us to succeed in spreading the Gospel and show others His love. May we be good role models for others, especially our children.

When we have many blessings in life, we should thank the Lord in prayer as a priority. It is not our hands that made things happen, but the precise plan of our heavenly Father that made it happen. Be blessed and thankful in the Lord.

1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.

St. Mark's Book Club

Date	Book	Author	Facilitator
2024			
Apr. 25	Code Name Sapphire	Pam Jenoff	_____
May 23	Stand Your Ground	Victoria Christopher Murray	_____
June 27	Lessons in Chemistry	Bonnie Garmus	_____
July 25	The Four Winds	Kristin Hannah	_____
Aug. 22	The Forgotten Garden	Kate Morton	_____



April Birthday

04/02	George Shultz	04/21	Christopher Bair
	Owen Smith	04/22	Caleb Varga
	Madeline Varga	04/23	Kristy Shoaft
04/03	Charles Walak	04/25	Kimberly Klicvk
	Jane Shetrone		Lauren Edwards (McClenahen)
04/04	William Snyder	04/26	Denise Harr
	Caden Bryan		Karin Senft
	Valerie Martellaro	04/27	Zachary Lee
	Casianne Frey		James Long
04/05	Michelle Haynos		Calvin Smith
04/13	Donald Herbster		Colleen Shemory
	Christian McClain	04/28	Charles James
04/15	Susan Simpler	04/29	Jackson Lee
04/16	Anthony Weldon		April Trout
04/20	Patty Ernst		
	Keri Miller		
	Danielle DiSerio		

If your birthday is in April and we missed it, please let us know. We hope you have a happy birthday anyway.

There's Rest for the Weary—Ruth Cheng

Imagine the things you may want to enjoy during your retirement. Does it include traveling regionally to quaint towns? How about a 16-day stay at a 3-star/4-star spa hotel? What if your stay also includes 3 meals a day? Are you sold if you could choose 4 or 5 treatments a day from a base list of 15 options?

Most retirees worldwide are on a fixed income, and can only dream of such a vacation as described above. In Romania, pensioners are eligible ANNUALLY for an extended hotel stay for health treatments and may choose from a list of participating hotels in their specific region. These benefits are included in their pension benefit package.

Why don't all retirees take advantage of these extended stays? Because life responsibilities do not cease during the 16 days the retirees are away. The crops need tended, animals fed, eggs harvested, grandchildren cared for and all the other little things that rely on the normal routines of the retirees.

I was privileged to transport 2 guests to one of these hotels and help with their registrations and check-in. The registration included a brief medical history so the staff doctor could assess what spa treatments could be most beneficial during his/her stay. All the staff we encountered were very friendly, attentive and knowledgeable. The guest rooms were beautiful, with a balcony and plenty of extra towels. I toured the facility as well as the surrounding neighborhood. A grocery store, bakery and churches were all within a block of the hotel.

All in all, how cool is that?

Psalms 103:2-5

²Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—

³who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,

⁴who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,

⁵who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

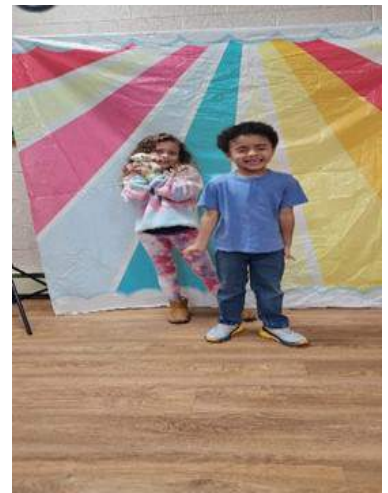


Bunny Breakfast 2024 was a great success. My deepest thank you to all those who made our event possible and run so smoothly. From teachers to game runners, table cleaners, those in the kitchen, servers, raffle room helpers, those who donated items, bake sale runners, all volunteers and for all who attended our event, thank you! Without you all we would not be able to hold such an amazing event. Bunny breakfast directly impacts the families of our Nursery school here at St. Mark's.



As our year winds down we are enjoying the warm weather and ability to get outside, learn about spring, prepare for kindergarten and have visitors in our classroom. Throughout the year we have enjoyed many visits from Pastor and Grandma Grace. We have had a wonderful year and look forward to what next year will bring! A huge thank you to my awesome teachers, Mrs. Varga and Ms. Marian and to our amazing students and families! We still have openings in all of our classes and would love to grow our St. Mark's Nursery School family. We now have extended hours in our 3 year old and 4 year old classes! Please help us by spreading the word about enrollment! If you would like flyers to hang up or pass out please let Mrs. Broome know!





Church Baseball Night



HARRISBURG SENATORS

FRIDAY, JUNE 21, 2024
PICNIC IS 6:00-8:00PM
GAME STARTS @ 7:00PM

WE NEED A HEAD COUNT BY FRIDAY, MAY 17TH

THERE WILL BE A SIGN-UP SHEET IN THE
NARTHEX AND OUTSIDE THE SIDE DOOR OF
SANCTURY.

*WE WILL NOT KNOW THE TICKET PRICE UNTIL WE
HAVE A HEAD COUNT.



10 AM UNTIL SOLD OUT

St. Mark's **Chicken & Rib BBQ**



DINNERS INCLUDE A BAKED POTATO, APPLESAUCE, ROLL, AND BOTTLED WATER

CHICKEN DINNER

\$10

RIB DINNER

\$15

MAY 18, 2024 CHICKEN

JUNE 22, 2024 CHICKEN & RIBS

SEPTEMBER 21, 2024 CHICKEN

AUGUST 17, 2024 CHICKEN & RIBS

PRE-ORDERS ARE RECOMMENDED

Order Now

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ST. MARK'S **COMMUNITY BREAKFAST**

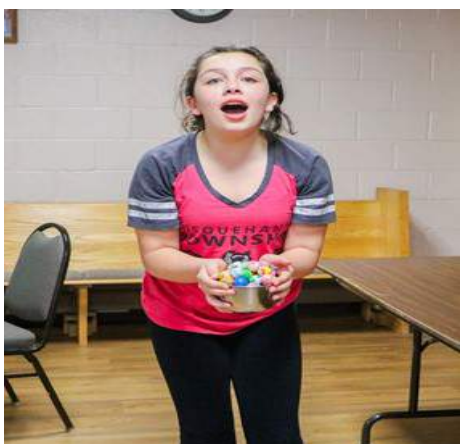
**SECOND
SATURDAY
EVERY
MONTH
8AM-10AM**

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FOR GOOD
FOOD AND
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Our Youth having fun!!



ST. MARK'S APPAREL FUNDRAISER

BENEFITTING YOUTH MINISTRY AT ST. MARK'S



LOVE OTHERS.

St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church - Harrisburg, PA

Now available for purchase on a variety of products and colors, the "Love Others." St. Mark's apparel is a great, comfortable way to support youth ministry at St. Mark's and represent our church's mission with pride! All proceeds benefit the youth group's trip to the ELCA National Youth Gathering this Summer!

Simply order online and it will be shipped right to you!

Order Yours Today By Visiting www.bonfire.com/st-marks/
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April/May 2024

St. Mark's Church Council

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	Jake Buss
	Maggie Perry
	Susan Shultz
	Dave Stanton
Co-Ministers of Music	Jenny Sustak & Faith Smeck
Administrative Assistant	Loraine Mariner
Youth/Family Ministry	Kellen Michalowski
Sexton	Donald Young
Nursery School Dir.	Jessica Broome



**"You'll love the congregation.
We're just chock-full of sermon material."**