



The Parish Post

FEBRUARY 2023

St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church
4200 Londonderry Road, Harrisburg, PA 17109
(717) 652-6700

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The Rev. James E. Person, 717-712-8191



This month I want to share an article from CrossMarks Christian Resources by Brian Stoffregen. While these are not my own words, they are certainly worth pondering as we move into the future of St. Mark's.

I have two fears for the future of the Christian church. One is that we will fail to be witnesses -- people willing to invite others to "come and see". One of the differences that faith should make in our lives is the desire that others -- especially those without a religious faith -- might also share in and benefit from the relationship God offers through Christ. If we are not willing to invite others into this experience, what does that say about our experiences with Christ?

I've had people tell me about good restaurants, barbers, optometrists, etc. A member had encouraged me often to go to his Kiwanis Club breakfast meetings. I went a couple times. He then started asking if I would like to join. Why isn't there the same fervor over inviting and encouraging people to come and participate in our church activities? Let me suggest that there are three broad areas that are likely to influence our non-invitingness.

(1) Our culture which suggests talking about religion is taboo. (Why shouldn't we un-taboo it? We certainly won't be thrown in prison or executed like the earliest believers were.

(2) Our selves -- there may be things about ourselves that dampen our enthusiasm for inviting others into the faith. We aren't perfect Christians, but no one is -- that's why we need Christ.

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.

(a) Some may argue that we are shy and don't talk to people, but I bet that if any person, shy or otherwise, would count the number of people they speak to each week, they would be surprised how many opportunities they have to say something about their faith.

(b) Some may feel that religion is a private matter and shouldn't be shared with others. That, to me, is a false understanding of Christianity. It has always been personal, but never private. Salvation is a gift from God that is meant for the whole world. John 3:16 says that God so loved the world. If we don't tell the world that, how will they know?

(c) Some may not feel that they have much of a personal faith to share. Their experiences with God (and the church) are mostly habit, part of their culture, something their families have always done for generations. They just don't ask themselves or try to answer such questions as: "What do I believe?" "Why do I believe?" "Why do I attend worship?" "Why should I invite others to come and see what's happening at our church?" Without having answers to such questions, they don't have much of a personal faith to share.

(3) Our church -- I'm afraid that there are many congregations that offer little or nothing worth inviting others to: worship services that are comfortable for the long-time members, but confusing or boring to guests, I think that planners, when appropriate, need to give more thought to questions like, "How can we organize this program/meeting/activity so that our members will want to and be encouraged to invite other people to attend?" When planning a potluck, is the time set that is most convenient for the members, or a time that would encourage members to invite others to participate in the feast? Do we even think of a potluck as an activity to which we should invite friends, relatives, neighbors, etc.? A neighboring church in town has had free community dinners. The members bring food, but anyone who wants to come and eat is invited -- and it is located where there are a lot of homeless people.

[We should] proclaim loudly and clearly that God, through our ministries, is making positive differences in people's lives. In addition, annual meetings, however they are conducted, should also spend as much time on future plans as they do on the past. (A congregation that is always looking backwards will have a hard time moving forward.) New people can't be part of a congregation's past. They can jump on the bandwagon that's heading into future plans and ministries.

Thank you to Brian Stoffregen for sharing these thoughts and thank you for your ministry as members of the Body of Christ.

Your partner in ministry and mission,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pastor Jim".

Pr. Jim Person

Council President

Groundhog Day is just around the corner and soon we'll know what our weather will be from then until Spring.

Well, St Marks had our own Groundhog Day on Saturday. 30 of our faithful congregation members joined together at a special Church Council and Ministry Retreat. During our working sessions we didn't have time to look for any shadows. I am, however, confident that we came away very optimistic about the weather ahead for our precious Church. We all agreed that it will take work and cooperative effort but we have emerged from the gloom of Pandemic Winter, healthy and still together in our faith. St Marks family is, if anything, stronger than ever.

Sure there are budget issues, external forces, and challenges wherever we look....but we are together and together we can move mountains. We had the opportunity to review and discuss the many suggestions which have been submitted, so far, from our members. Pledges continue to accrue and we have survived Covid in all its forms.

Please join us as we look to a healthy, sunny future. We're back worshipping together, meeting together and working together. Lent awaits, and then the joy of Easter. Our leaders have guided us through some dark days but, just like the groundhog, we're ready for Spring.

Yours in Christ...Jay Snyder



Hello St. Mark's,

Well, here we are, 2023. I have to say, I truly enjoyed the Advent and Christmas season at St. Mark's.

Each week, I was in a different spot in the sanctuary just watching and listening.

The Christmas Eve services were so wonderful. The family service, which was Christmas Eve afternoon, was really special. It was so nice to have our Youth Minister Kellen serve as the storyteller, and Maggie Perry assisting while the story of the Holy Family was brought to life. And a special thank you to Madeleine Varga and Elijah Hudson who portrayed Mary and Joseph. I watched and listened in awe.

The evening service was absolutely beautiful with the music and the candlelight. I love hearing Silent Night. A huge thank you to Pastor Jim for providing special sermons and to Chris Bair for making sure all services were available for our on line viewers. I really like Chris and am so appreciative of what he does each and every day for my wonderful St. Mark's. He takes special care of me as well.

As we enter 2023 and embark on our new mission for St. Mark's ministries, I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy New Year and I look forward to another year of being the "official" church mouse for St. Mark's. I love my job!

Yours in Christian Love,

The St. Mark's church mouse



Birthdays for February

02/01 - Lori Ulrich
Carolyn Shadle
02/03 – Jenna Spencer
T. J. Bryan
02/04 – Karen Smith
02/08 – Zachary Dullen
02/09 – Xavier Webber
02/13 – Emma Malette
02/16 - Cynthia Lang
Kenneth Lang

02/22 – Logan Fleegal
Jackson Fleegal
Monique Brown
02/24 – Edward Shadle
Terry Stohler
Jenny Sustak
02/26 – Donna Woodrow
02/27 - Matthew Dudek
Matthew Johns
02/28 – Paulette Beverly

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



St. Mark's Family
Thank you for the beautiful blanket and welcoming
Scarlett into God's family. We are very appreciative.
Chris, Missy &
Scarlett Grant

My heartfelt thanks to the Endowment Fund and other St. Mark's contributors for your donation towards my mission work in Romania.

I am very blessed to be answering God's calling abroad and to have your prayers and support

Thank you!
Ruth Cheng

Dear St. Mark's family,

>

> Thank you for all of the birthday and Christmas cards. It is nice to know that you are all thinking of me. Two years away from home has been tough, but it helps to have such a good support base. I look forward to seeing all of you in person when I get back this summer.

>

> Sincerely,
> Ryan Shadle

Hey I got the package, thank you for the Love Box and kind message.
Jenna Spencer

*Thank
you*



CHRIST LUTHERAN HEALTH MINISTRIES

December 23, 2022

St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church
4200 Londonderry Road
Harrisburg, PA 17109

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We recently received a check for \$673.13 from you. Thank you so much for sharing the profits from your church's Extravaganza with Health Ministries of Christ Lutheran Church.

As you know, Health Ministries provides our neighbors with health care and services that they may not otherwise have. It is because of donors like you that we can continue to provide these services that are so desperately needed here in Allison Hill.

May God bless you and keep you safe in the new year!

Grace and Peace,

Andrew Stockstill

Thanks so much!

Rev. Andrew Stockstill

Rev. Andrew Stockstill, Pastor
124 South 13th Street, Harrisburg, PA 17104 // 717-236-8382
office@christharrisburg.org // www.christharrisburg.org

*Thank
you* 

November 14, 2022

The Servant's Heart Scholarship
Attn: Pastor James Person
4500 Londonderry Road
Harrisburg, PA 17109

Dear Pastor Jim,

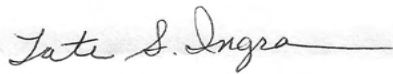
I would like to thank you for the Servant's Heart Scholarship present to me by St. Mark's Lutheran Church. It was an honor to be named the recipient of an award given by Nancy & Herman Schopman in memory of Norma and Gary Graham.

The scholarship will truly help with my education at the Pennsylvania College of Technology. I will be seeking a degree in Graphic Design. My goal will be to obtain a Bachelor of Science degree and to narrow my focus in Graphic Design as I enter the work force.

St. Mark's, Mr. & Mrs. Schopman and the Graham family are giving me a chance to achieve my goal. I will carry the memory of Mr. & Mrs. Graham with me always. I cherish the connection Mr. & Mrs. Graham had with my grandparents (Robert & Helen Ingram) in Lewistown, PA.

I am truly grateful for this generous scholarship.

Thank you again!
Sincerely,



Tate S. Ingram

Dear St. Mark's Family,
Thanks to everyone for the prayers and well wishes upon my recent hospital stay.
Thanks to the Dinger's for the flower delivery. I love them, but I plan to stay out of the hospital for a long time now, so no more deliveries are needed!!
A big thank you to all.
Love, Patty Ernest



Thank you, St. Mark's Stewards,

Thank you to everyone who responded positively to our recent stewardship education efforts. When we began the program our Congregation Council placed a challenge before the congregation based on the number of Estimate of Giving Cards returned and the amount of money indicated on those cards. In 2021 we received 31 commitment cards for a total of \$101,772 for the year. Based on those numbers, Council pledged that if we received 50 EOG cards for a total of \$165,000 (about half our total budget) each Council member would increase our giving for a total increase of \$10,000 for the year.

As of the end of 2022 we had received 51 EOG cards for a total of \$140,789. While we fell a little short on the dollar amount, the response represents a meaningful increase from the previous year. In thanks for that response I intend to honor my pledge of increased giving and I encourage all current and past Council members to do the same.

In addition to monetary stewardship, your contributions of time, skill, and whatever you can share is important and appreciated. Thank you again for this positive support for the mission and ministry of the Body of Christ here at St. Mark's.

Your partner in ministry and mission,

Pr. Jim

Thank you to everyone who attended the All Ministries Retreat in January. I was greatly encouraged by the enthusiasm and energy as we move into a bright future for St. Mark's

Pr. Jim

Changes

Change is inevitable, right? No matter how much we persevere to stick to a routine for work, home or family, things can get out of whack at the drop of a hat. We react to change through acts of defiance, over reaction, or temper tantrum. Hopefully once the initial shock of the situation subsides, we analyze and choose a more advantageous course of action.

As I resume my mission work in Romania, I observed a few things. First, my understanding of the Romanian language has weakened, and I find myself lacking in following conversations more than previously. Thankfully, the girls and the assistant at the shelter showed patience and slowed down their speech and used different words to explain something so I could keep up. The kids at the church have matured and were excited to start bible studies again. Several students were much more extroverted and initiated conversations with me, in English and Romanian. The kids were encouraged to pass out fliers to their school friends advertising free English lessons during Sunday School at our church.

I am saddened by changes I observed in two friends. The first is a woman new to Christianity and has accompanied me to the shelter a few times. I observed her as being passionate in prayer and praise, as well as evangelism. A friend told me she has discontinued her devout attendance, and is currently in an abusive relationship. I reached out to her via text and let her know the girls at the shelter were asking about her and if she would like to visit them with me next week. Her response was elusive and non-committal. She is an active participant in our WhatsApp group, and sends individual devotional snippets to me. The last thing she wrote to me was, "God is in control of my life." While this is absolutely true, please pray that the Holy Spirit guides her freedom of choice to be in a healthy and compatible relationship.

The other story I'd like to share with you is regarding another missionary in the area. He has been a hermit for about 2 years now. He patiently waits for the Lord to tell him what his next course of action should be. He lives in modest accommodations, on less than 5 lei (\$1.09) a day. He celebrates the Lord's supper daily with bread and water. We have lengthy conversations about spirituality and our unique calls to mission work. He is hesitant to have family visits for fear of receiving disapproval for his lifestyle. While I know isolation is not my calling, I respect his belief that for now, it is his. Please pray that the Holy Spirit guides his journey as he seeks clarity.

Marius and I have been able to enjoy some time together and with family. His work hours have been crazy since the day before New Year's Eve with 18 to 24-hour shifts, sometimes with only a few hours in between to devour some food before heading out again. We tried in vain to plan to look for wedding rings last week. We were supposed to visit the marriage licensing bureau today, but he just returned from a 24-hour stint, ate, and went to bed. When we are together he is happily committed and devoted to our relationship. We started reviewing some pre-marriage counseling questions from, *Nine Essential Conversations Before You Say I Do*, by Gary Thomas and Drs. Steve and Rebecca Wilke.

Anita Featherman is collecting old used Wooden Sleds any condition also Women's old Ice Skates. Call her at (717)469-0840 and she will pick them up

The vacant building across from the church was broken into and Pr. Onisim was able to talk to the owner in person about a possible purchase for a lower price than 250 thousand euros (which is a good price in US standards). Please pray for the discernment and funding stream for His work to come to fruition.

Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me – put into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:9)

Peace, Ruth

Your Giving helps support what God is doing in, and through our ministry here at St. Mark's. Scan the QR code below with your phone camera to visit our safe and secure giving site through Vanco. Thank You for your generous support of St. Mark's.



St. Mark's Book Club

| Date | Book | Author | Facilitator |
|-------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| 2023 | | | |
| Feb. 23 | Daylight | David Baldacci | _____ |
| Mar. 23 | The Last Bookshop in London | Madeline Martin | _____ |
| Apr. 27 | Mercy | David Baldacci | _____ |
| May 25 | Run Rose Run | James Patterson/ Dolly Parton | _____ |
| June 22 | The Lost Wife | Alyson Richman | _____ |

Book Club meets at 10:00 AM in the parlor

For Lent: W/ELCA is collecting items for Lutheran World Relief personal care kits. The following items are needed:

***Bath Towel, light weight, dark color preferred between 20"x40" and 52"x 27"**

***Sturdy Comb**

***Metal Nail Clippers**

***Adult Toothbrush**

***2-3 bath-size bars of soap, equaling 8-9 oz., in original wrapping.**

REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR THE 2023- 2024 SCHOOL YEAR!



« « **Monday, January 30, 2023** » »

Registration open for CURRENT Students and Families
& Members of St. Mark's Church

« « **Monday, February 13, 2023** » »

Registration open to the public.

« « **2023-2024 Classes & Monthly Tuition** » »

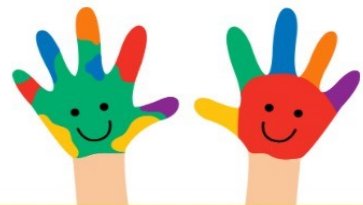
4/ 5 Year Old Class: MWF 9:00 AM- 11:30 AM- \$ 175.00

3 Year Old Class: TR 9:00 AM- 11:30 AM- \$140.00

2 Year Old Class: TR 9:15 AM- 11:15 AM- \$140.00

\$40 Non-Refundable Registration Fee Due with Application

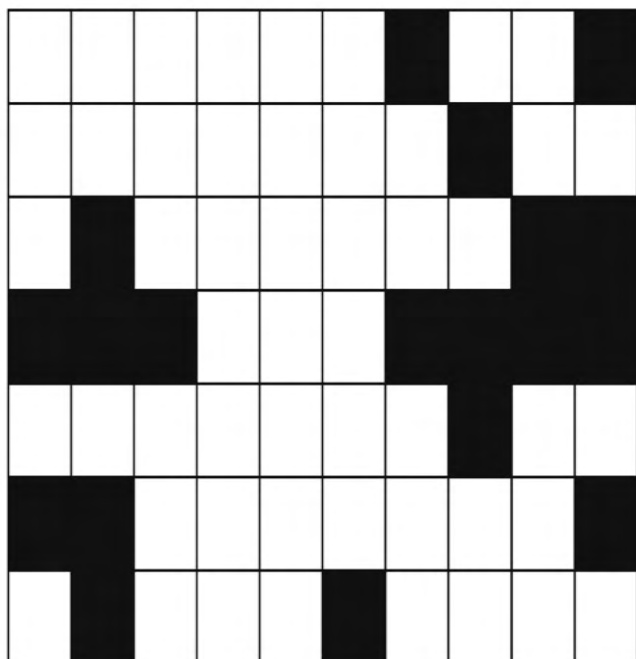
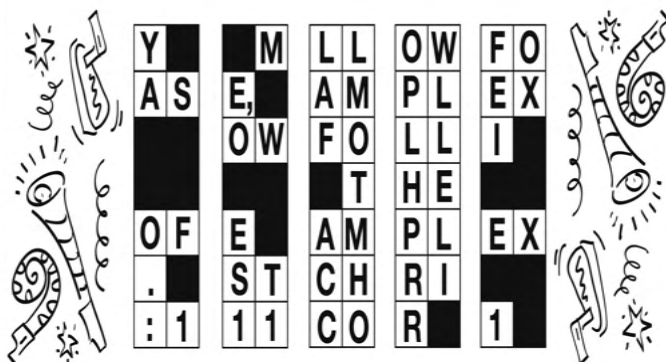
Registration fee increased to \$50 after June 1, 2023



4200 Londonderry Rd/ Harrisburg, PA 17109
(717) 652-6700 Ext. 3 stmarknurseryschool@gmail.com

Puzzle!

Match the blocks of spaces and letters to complete an NIV Bible verse about an important commitment.



Answer: Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. 1 Cor. 11:1


Puzzle!

Picturing the Lord's Supper

Jesus ate the Passover meal with his disciples as a symbol of the new covenant.



Directions: Use the picture clues to fill in key words from Luke 22:19-20, NIV.

And he took , gave  and  it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my  given for you; do this in  of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This  is the new  in my blood, which is  out for you."

LUKE 22:19-20, NIV

Answer: bread, thanks, broke, body, remembrance, cup, covenant, poured

ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
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THE PARISH POST



FEBRUARY
2023

St. Mark's Church Council

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
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| Vice President | Dave Featherman |
| Secretary | Rebekah Varga |
| Treasurer | Calvin Smith |
| Financial Secretary | Mary Sultzaberger |
| Council Members | Pastor Jim Person |
| | Chris Bair |
| | Deb Banks |
| | Paulette Beverly |
| | Emmor Boslet |
| | Jake Buss |
| | Maggie Perry |
| | Susan Shultz |
| | Dave Stanton |
| Minister of Music | Joyce Van Nieuwkuyk |
| Administrative Assistant | Loraine Mariner |
| Youth/Family Ministry | Kellen Michalowski |
| Sexton | Donald Young |
| Nursery School Dir. | Jessica Pope |

