

The Parish Post

December 2022

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

> www.stmarksharrisburg.org e-mail: stmarksharrisburg@gmail.com The Rev. James E. Person, 717-712-8191



In my 22 years as a pastor, I have been with many people who have received bad news and good news from doctors. Often the scenario goes something like this, "The bad news is, you are sick. The good news is, we have found the problem and we can correct it." That's pretty much the way my report comes off this year.

It's no secret that overall, regular giving to our church does not match current expenses. Some months have been better than others. Fortunately, the month of October was a positive one. Our hope is that with the introduction of a new stewardship education program adopted by Council that trend will continue.

The bad news, and I must take much of the responsibility for this, is that we have been on a downward trend of giving for a few years now. Our receipts for 2021 were \$29,296 less than 2019, with 2020 falling about midway between. Because we have been careful with spending, and in some cases limiting our ministry, this trend wasn't particularly obvious. Now, with the effects of the pandemic, the economy, and other factors coming together, our financial poor health is glaringly obvious.

Church Council and staff are doing what we can to be the best stewards of your offerings possible. When we review the budget, you'll see that we are recommending salaried staff, other than myself, take a reduction in pay. My salary will stay the same as the past year if this budget is approved. We have also taken steps to reduce energy costs and are always looking for other ways to manage your

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.

offerings as prudently as possible.

In addition, Congregation Council is so dedicated to the importance of solving this issue that they have agreed to a challenge. If we get 50 Intent of Giving Cards, and a total of just \$165,000, about half of our budget, in intended giving from the congregation, the council, as a whole, will add to our commitment a total of \$10,000 for the year. This level of intended giving has not been met yet, but we are giving it till the end of the year for the congregation to meet the challenge.

At this point, I want to explain a little about how our budget is set up and the difference between regular offerings and designated funds. I have heard comments and questions about our investment in a new electronic sign at a time when we are also promoting better stewardship. The sign, and other projects that are not current expenses, like salaries, utilities, supplies, etc. are funded with monies designated by the givers for special purposes. If we receive a bequest that is not specifically designated, we have guidelines as to how that money is distributed among various funds such as benevolence, memorials, investments, etc.

The new sign was considered important for outreach to the community and to show that St. Mark's is alive and well, not idly sitting by. It has already proven effective in having people take part in events and fundraisers they would otherwise not have been aware of.

The sign was paid for with monies coming from a combination of funds from the Memorial Fund and special fundraising done by our Fellowship Ministry. There is a plaque on the sign thanking and memorializing those responsible for the availability of those funds. The cost of the new sign has no impact on current expenses or regular giving by the congregation.

In short, the bad news is our financial health is not well. The good news is, now that we are aware of the problem, we can take steps to remedy the situation. That is where stewardship education comes in. We are not talking about fundraising, this is not about paying the bills, although that is a priority right now. Like a medical staff that has overlooked symptoms of a problem, I and others have not been as alert to the health of our stewardship as we should have been, but it's not too late.

I hope we all agree that the church is important, the church has changed lives for the better and is an important resource for many people, members and community alike. Biblical stewardship is a matter of giving to God, through the work of the church, as we have been blessed. I believe most of us at St. Mark's have been blessed pretty abundantly. As we head into the future God is calling us to, you will hear stories of members and others for whom the church has been and continues to be a blessing in their lives. As we hear those stories, or you consider your own, know that it is the generosity of church members, through committed, regular giving that makes those stories possible.

We often hear that stewardship isn't only about money, and that is certainly true. Some of the most

meaningful ministry of this church is done by volunteers who are appreciated more than we often express, and again, I apologize if you haven't been properly thanked and vow to be more expressive of our appreciation in the future.

We are in a less than healthy financial situation, but we're not on life support yet. We have diagnosed the problem, lack of stewardship education. We are taking steps toward a remedy, awareness, information, and teaching. We have a dedicated staff and Council working to improve the situation. We have a whole congregation that is key to providing the cure.

God is calling us to be the Body of Christ in this community and the world. Together we can keep that Body healthy, vital, and responsive to that call for along time to come. Thank you all for your commitment to the mission and ministry of St. Mark's.

Peace be with you all,

Pr. Jim Person

Paste fin

From Outgoing Council President

Hello St. Mark's Congregants:

I am now at the end of my second council term and am ending my one year council presidential term. What a last couple of years this has been! When I accepted the nomination to be on council almost 7 years ago, I had no idea what would be in store for me and for all of us. Two years into my second term, the world came to a virtual standstill. But under the capable leadership of my predecessor Stephanie Carl, the council did its very best to keep the business of the church viable. Stephanie was a hard act to follow but I accepted the torch from her and now here I am ready to pass the torch on to the next capable president.

In the last year, many wins have taken place. We started 2022 with our council retreat putting the emphasis on all of us working together; council, ministries and you, the congregation. Was it easy to put into motion? Absolutely not. We are literally in a rebuilding phase and with all of my heart, I believe we will get back to and even exceed where we were pre COVID. We still have some challenges to overcome but with your loyalty and God's help, we will get there. We have a very strong foundation.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support, prayers and contributions during the last year. As I have said many times in the past, it takes a village.

I also want to say a very heartfelt thank you to my fellow council members. Your support made my job much easier and we got things done. Now we must continue to carry on and push forward.

I'll take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy holiday season and as I have said many times before, because of you, our tremendous congregation, we will continue to move forward. It has been my pleasure to serve as a member of council and as the president this past year. I can only say THANK YOU!

God's Peace be with you all,
Sandy Sherwood, Outgoing Council President

Our Incoming Council President - Jay Snyder

I am both humbled and honored to have been chosen to lead our wonderful Church Council. Many of you don't know me so I'll try to share a bit of my life...I was born into a Lutheran family in the Southwest corner of Virginia. My father was a newly ordained Lutheran minister, and his first assignment was to the Mountain Mission in Virginia and Kentucky. I am now part of the Lutheran family at Saint Marks. In between those families much has occurred in my life...I graduated from Selinsgrove High School in 1960 after attending many other schools in 3 states, as my father was called to different congregations. I graduated from Susquehanna University in 1964 with English and Theatre majors. From there it was on to the Army, Officer Candidate and Parachute training and 10 months leading a platoon in Vietnam. I spent a month in Valley Forge Hospital after being wounded and there met the young coed from Millersville University who had written to me to keep my morale up while I was overseas. Not too many months later we were married and Jeanne kept my morale up for the next 50 years.

We lost my beautiful Jeanne 2 weeks after we celebrated 50 years together. During those 50 years Jeanne was an elementary school teacher (mostly teaching kindergarten) in the Middletown School District, till she retired in 2002. I worked for 25 years in State Government here in Harrisburg, starting in the Governor's office, then on to Community Affairs, the Legislature, the Attorney General's office, Public Welfare and Labor and Industry. During all those years tennis officiating was my avocation and in 1990 it became my vocation, as I became the US Director of Officials in New York. 3 years later I was appointed the Director of the US Open. During my 9 years there we built Arthur Ashe Stadium, the largest tennis arena in the world and the US Open became the most attended annual sporting event in the world. (World Cup and the Olympics are better attended, but they happen every 4 years). After I retired I worked as a consultant for a Florida (now California) based company evaluating the operations of National Football League stadiums.

I'm now (almost) completely retired, spending my time on volunteer activities-including with the Men's group here at St Marks. My other volunteer activities include serving on the Boards of the International Youth Advocate Program (YAP), the Pennsylvania Prostate Cancer Coalition, the Vietnam Veterans Roundtable, the Indiantown Gap National Cemetery Council, the Harrisburg Lions Club and Chapter 542 Vietnam Veterans of America. I also read weekly on the Radio Reading Service for the Blind. I speak about the Vietnam War to various high schools in Central PA. I also spend as much time as possible with my grandkids Jeanne, Jay and Carson in Virginia.

The year ahead will be challenging for all of us at Saint Marks as we emerge from the fog of Pandemic and resume our lives. I am, however, confident that working together we can not only thrive as a family but continue to grow in our Christian Mission. Jay

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.





Hello St. Mark's!

Well, here we are again. My very favorite time of the year——Advent and Christmas. The church sanctuary is being decorated and the Advent Candle is once again being lit. And we are singing one of my favorite hymns, Christ Be Our Light. I just love that. The nativity is starting to appear, as is the beautiful tree in the front of the church. Each week we will see more and more added to

them both and on Christmas Sunday, which incidentally is December 25th this year, we will see all the beautiful poinsettias, the Baby Jesus in the cradle, and the tree all beautifully decorated. This makes my little mouse heart happy. I can't wait for the Christmas Eve services.

I want to take this time to wish all of my St. Mark's family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year. I'm sure 2023 will continue to be a flurry of activities and I will observe every one of them from my various posts. I also want to say thank you to each and every one of you for your love and concern for St. Mark's. And especially to Pastor Jim. I see how hard he works to keep everything and everyone positive. He is a blessing to us all.

Until we meet again in 2023, stay safe, happy and healthy.

Peace of the Lord be with you all,

The St. Mark's Church Mouse

Birthdays for December



12/01 - Taylor	r Trout
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12/02 – Jonnie Deibler

12/04 - Suzan Seitz

12/06 – Dolores Magaro Caroline Gill

12/07 – Michael Nusz

12/09 – Ryan Shadle

12/10 – Doreen Steinmacher Mary Ann Kane

12/11 - Adam Appleby Jacob McClenahen

12/12 - Alexis Ulrich

12/13 - Vaughn Heym Sr.

12/14 - Pat Ashbrook

12/15 – Mercedes Bretz

12/16 – Brandon Dinger

12/18 – Emma Betz

Sue Senft

12/19 – Clint Harr

- Linda GingellJames Miller

12/20 - Mike Betz

Colin McClenahen

12/22 – Austin Fleegal

Bruce Senft

12/25 – Christine Kroah

12/27 – Liz Harris

12/30 – Frank Dillahey Madison Spencer

Widdison Spencer

If your birthday is in December 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

Special dates

- New Year's Day, January 1, 2023
- Epiphany, January 6, 2023
- Baptism of the Lord, *January 8*, 2023
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day, January 16, 2023
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18-25, 2023

If you would like to send an Overseas Card: Ryan Shadle PSC 559 BOX 5043 FPO AP 96377-0051



October 6, 2022

St. Marks Lutheran Church 4200 Londonderry Rd Harrisburg, PA 17109-4998

Dear Friends:

Thank you for supporting MilitaryShare and the thousands of military families who receive nutritious food thanks to this vital program. Because of your generous gift of \$100.00 and 116 pounds of food to our MilitaryShare program, those who have served our country will not have to worry about putting food on the table.

Your support comes at a very important time. September is Hunger Action Month! Each year the country comes together to recognize and raise awareness about hunger in our communities and the work of food banks across the nation, during the month of September. Generous donors like you enable the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank to make an even bigger impact not just during Hunger Action Month, but all year long by providing more nutritious meals to our neighbors in need. Thank you for making this possible.

A veteran who lost her job during the pandemic told us "Bills don't always get paid, you make some tough choices. It's made life so much easier not to worry if you're going to be able to have enough food. I'm really grateful for the help and the money that it's allowed me to use for other things I need."

Thank you for supporting those who have served our country and believing in our mission of fighting hunger, improving lives, strengthening communities.

You live HUN to much!

Yours in Service,

Joe Arthur Executive Director

No goods or services were provided in consideration of your contribution to the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank. Central Pennsylvania Food
Bank is a registered \$01(c)(3) and your gift is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

www.centralpafoodbank.org

3908 Corey Road Harrisburg, PA 17109-5929 Phone: (717) 564.1700 Fax: (717) 561.4636 3301 Wahoo Drive Williamsport, PA 17701-9205 Phone: (570) 321.8023 Fax: (570) 321.8024

WHAT HAVE I LEARNED FROM LIFE?

I learned that one candle can light thousands of candles. One man can change a generation... I strive to spread the light.

I learned that if you let all the carts get ahead of you, you will not be able to move forward ... from dust.

I learned that the primary purpose of my life is not to run companies, to hold PhDs, to have vacations on exotic islands, but to be a pencil that writes stories for People.

I learned that I cannot become a hero. But where I am, I must do my duty!

I learned that I have to learn from other people's mistakes. I don't have time to do them all myself! I learned what the greatest sin is: not realizing that you are living in sin. Do not do evil by believing that you are doing good.

I learned that life is like the sea: it doesn't care that you can't swim!

I learned that not only the soul is precious. But it's also the body. It's a disposable cup. If you do not take care of it in its youth, you will bitterly regret it later.

I learned that when pride shines too brightly, all wisdom is dimmed. And where wisdom is lacking, stupidity (foolishness) dominates.

I learned that the heart is not alive if only blood is pulsating. But love also pulsates!

I learned that the world is not conquered by the sword or by force. But with love.

I learned that pointing fingers can kill. Not just the one shown...

I learned that if you want to do something, you will find a way. If not, you will find an excuse...

We learned that God gives us children not to fill the planet, but so that we can feel on a microscale what He lives in the macrocosm!

I learned that good parents give their children both roots and wings. Roots so they don't forget where their home is, and wings so they don't forget where heaven is.

I learned what happiness looks like. Look into the eyes of a beggar after offering him a piece of bread.

I learned that life is made of ... glass. It breaks so easily. But I also know that God likes to glue pieces together.

I learned that the people around me can be selfish, hot-tempered, envious and mean (evil). But either way, I must live beautifully on!

I have learned that whoever wants to live godly will be persecuted! The saints are lambs sent into the pack of wolves!

I learned that you don't have to take everything to heart. The heart is not a shed...

I learned that illusions are free. But we pay for the disappointments with a much too high price!

I learned that even though He might protect me, God allows me to be hurt.

I learned that wounds are holes through which light enters. God's "pierced" people are full of Heaven!

I learned that no matter how much pain I feel, I don't have to become a pain to others.

I learned that where there are gaps between people, it's not effective to build fences, but to build bridges.

I learned that any peak I conquer I must not stop. An even higher one follows.

I learned that God does not choose perfect people, but perfects the chosen.

I know many things, many beautiful places. But the maximum of beauty is God. Beyond Him there is nothing.

I know where I'm going to go: HOME!

What I've learned so far... that I still have a lot to learn!

I'll be returning to full time mission work in Romania in the new year, after celebrating Christmas with family and friends stateside. May the upcoming holidays be full of joy with your family and friends, AND with many lessons learned!

I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw:

(Proverbs 24:32)

Peace,

Ruth

Lessons Learned

Do you know what the true meaning of humility is? It's not just a synonym for being humble. It encompasses your attitude, a spiritual modesty. It is our realization of our minute contribution to the greater good, the overarching order of things. Personally, humility is ingrained as a part of my heritage. It is a characteristic emphasized throughout childhood and resulted in harsh consequences when not adhered to.

When you interview for a new job, you are expected to "sell" yourself by boasting about your good qualities that emphasize why you are the best candidate for hire. Seems like the opposite of being humble is needed to impress the boss, right? Actually, you need to impress yourself. God created you for a purpose, and your realization of that purpose becomes clearer when you have a relationship with Him.

As a child, I was a big fan of classic horror films like Dracula and The Phantom of the Opera. I fell in love with Bach's "Toccata and Fugue in D Minor," and vowed I would be able to play it on a pipe organ someday (just like in the movies!) After several years of practice, I was ready to try it on an organ at a local church in downtown Harrisburg. The church is over 200 years old.

The organ is visibly old, with keys in disrepair, but its tune is pitch perfect. Mentally, I got in the groove to play like the Davy Jones' organ scene in Pirates of the Caribbean. Here's where it hit me. This well-known tune is playing correctly in my head, but not translating through to my fingers. My fingers were sending signals to my brain that something is amiss (playing the wrong keys, feeling the crevasses of the broken keys). At one point, my brain was actually telling my fingers to avoid the cracked keys. Humbling indeed. I thought I was ready, but clearly had difficulties adjusting to this curve ball.

The same is true in our journey with Christ. I am a "prepared" Christian, armed with the bible, raised by a pastor, and experienced ministering to families. But everyday is different for me in the mission field. The Lord (or maybe sometimes the devil) sends new people and situations in my path. As a child of God, I have free will to choose the path. No matter how many times I weigh out the options, my decisions aren't always the right (or righteous) ones. Sometimes in order to do the right thing, you have to endure pain and play through the course. Maybe God doesn't want me to avoid the uncomfortable lessons in life. The keys were broken for a reason. The organ was well worn, with decades of beautiful music resounding through the worship space in grandiose fashion.

May the Holy Spirit guide your path and strengthen you through those unexpected tribulations to create a beautiful impression.

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (James 1:12)

Merry Christmas and thank you for your continued support! Please keep me in your prayers as I prepare to return to Romania in time for the New Year 2023.

Peace, Ruth



Support the LCC

Make a gift today to support the ministries of the Lutheran Camping Corporation.

GIVE TODAY

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS IN THE BARN at The Wittel Farm

December 18

Join us at the farm for our annual Advent/Christmas night. This year, we'll gather around the outdoor fire and have cookies and cocoa in the barn. Lights and decorations!

More Information - https://www.lutherancamping.org/event/christmas-in-the-barn-2022/

LOOKING TO 2023

Gather your family and plan to attend Family Camp in 2023!

Family Camp-K-tion at Kirchenwald - August 6-12

Family Camp I at Nawakwa - July 16-22

Family Camp II at Nawakwa - August 6-12

More Information - https://www.lutherancamping.org/summer-camp/family-camp/



Hello All!

First, I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who came out and supported our Italian Night Fundraiser in November. Your support and care means the world! This year we have been talking about the things that make us feel alive, fed, and nourished in our lives, trying new kinds of meetings and events, and seeing where we can serve the community! We have more opportunities and meetings where

the whole congregation is invited to join us, like our Flex Meeting on January 5th at the Empowerment Project, a CrossFit based Ministry in New Cumberland and we are excited to return to the Wittel Farm in the Spring to help with the planting season! And any and all folks are invited to join us for dinner with any regular youth group meeting, like the LYF Meetings on Jan. 15th, Feb. 5th, or Feb 19th! Coming up we are headed to Lancaster for Winterfest, the Synod-Wide Sr. High event, where we will be learning all about what we are "Created For..."

If you ever have any questions or need more information, just ask! We post almost everything to Facebook and Instagram, as well as regular email blasts!

Peace,

Kellen Michalowsi, Director of Youth & Family Ministry

Email: lyfstmarks@gmail.com

Facebook: LYF at St Marks Harrisburg

Instagram: LYFSTMARKS

Kellen Michalowski (he/him/his)

Director Of Youth & Family Ministry St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Harrisburg PA Email: lyfstmarks@gmail.com

And

Director of Youth Ministry
St. Peter Lutheran Church, Mechanicsburg PA
Email: stpeterlcyouth@gmail.com

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

CHECK OUT UPCOMING EVENTS HAPPENING AT ST. MARK'S



Christmas Eve – Noon – Family Service

Christmas Eve – 6:00 pm – Candlelight Service

Christmas Day Service—10:30 am

New Years Day Service—10:30 am

Fellowship Ministry is planning on bringing back the annual traditional Pork & Sauerkraut Dinner on New Year's day.

Sign-up sheets are in the Narthex or call the church office (717)652-6700. We need to see if you are interested in bringing this tradition back.

St. Mark's Book Club

Date	Book	Author	Facilitator
2023			
Jan. 26	The Missing Kennedy	Elizabeth Pentacoff	
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



Following the Lamb

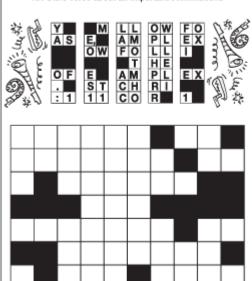
4200 Londonderry Rd. Harrisburg, PA 17109

(717) 652-6700

www.stmarksharrisburg.org/nursery



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



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



Ordering the days

God spoke and created all that exists. He separated and ordered his creation. What did God say about all he made?

Directions: Write the correct day of creation next to each clue. Then fill in the circled letters in order below to complete Genesis 1:31, NIV.

FIRST SECOND THIRD FOURTH FIFTH SIXTH

God made wild animals and livestock.

God said, "Let there be light."

God gathered the waters under the sky into one place.

God made a vault to separate the waters and called it "sky."

God created plants and trees.

God separated the light from the darkness.

God made the water teem with living creatures.

God made the sun and moon.

God made birds fly above the earth.

God made stars.

God created mankind in his own image.

God _aw all tha_ he _ad ma_e, an_ _t was ve_y g_od.

GENESIS 1:31, NIV

TASTY CREATIONS

Make this yummy treat to remember what happened on each day of Creation.

What you need:

- 6 large pretzel rods
- Candy melts (white, chocolate and blue)
- Green sprinkles
- White or star-shaped sprinkles
- Fish crackers
- Animal crackers
- Adult help



What you do:

- With help, melt the three colors of candy melts in separate dishes. Microwave for 30 seconds at a time, stirring until soft.
- Decorate one pretzel for each day of Creation:
 - Dip half in white and half in chocolate to show light and darkness.
 - Dip half in white and half in blue to show separation of the atmosphere.
 - Dip half in chocolate, add green sprinkles and dip half in blue to show land, plants and water.
 - Dip in chocolate and add white or star sprinkles to show the stars.
 - Dip in blue and add fish crackers to show sea life.
 - Dip in chocolate and add animal crackers to show land animals.
- Share the Creation story and the snack — with a friend!

ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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THE PARISH POST



DECEMBER 2022

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