

St. Mark's Episcopal Church Messenger

Newsletter

November & December 2015

A BIT ABOUT THANKSGIVING

The harvest meal held in 1621 seems to be the beginning of what has become our Thanksgiving event. It had to do with the folks from England and much of what they learned from the American Indian as to how to survive.

In 1789 President George Washington with the continental congress made the 1st Thanksgiving proclamation. It was in 1817 that New York State made it an official observation. It in many ways has become a religious holiday as well as secular. A good job by the Christian Church of putting God into a federal and state event.

It has been said that 90% of Americans eat some kind of bird on this day and there are many ways of preparing the birds. We at St. Mark's need to take time to say, "Thank you" for all that we are and have. I remember when The Rev. Susan Keppy came into the Diocese the Bishop ask her to say prayers at the Convention Dinner. As clergy we try hard to say something important at these times. I must confess after 60 years of going to Convention Dinners the only grace I remember was what Pastor Keppy gave. She began as usual, "The Lord be with you.... and then began, Lord God we should be grateful and we are! Amen." I say to each of you, no need for a lot of words but each of us needs to say as Susan did, "Lord God I should be grateful and I am."

Submitted by Father Sam+

Search Committee Update:

Lord, it is with your grace and sure hand that we accomplish all that we do. Come to this Search Committee; lay your loving hand upon us; fill us with your Holy Spirit so that we may see the path to find our new Rector. Bring clarity of the parish's hopes and fears to us. Let us not wallow in what was, but spring-forth in what can be. For, on the path to find our new Shepherd, we will find those things we seek and need. We praise you for your good and loving nature. We thank you for all that you do for us. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Our Parish Profile has been posted on the national registry for open rector positions. The registry is accessible to all searching clergy. All Western New York Diocese clergy have been notified of our available position.

Several copies of our Parish Profile are in the fellowship hall for you to read. Please don't remove them so that all can get a chance to review it. The Parish Profile is also available on our website; <http://www.stmarksnt.net>, under the Parish Profile tab.

Organ Fund Donations:

Thanks to all for your generous donations to pay for our new Allen Digital Organ. Some Capital Improvement funds and Rector Salary funds were applied to the purchase of our organ. Our goal is approximately \$30,000, depending on extra installation costs.

Goal:	\$30,000
Donations as of 11/4/15	\$21,889

Comments from Ben Phillips

The organ should be completely installed by Christmas. We have contracted for the removal of the old organ & the building of framework to support the new organ inside the organ chamber. When installation is complete none of the speakers be visible, and, of course, the old organ's console (keyboards) will be gone & the new one in its place. It's been a long, involved, and joyful project.

Soup Cook-Off: Saturday, November 21, 5pm:

- Get out your best recipe and enter the competition, or come and sample the soups and vote for your favorites; tickets are \$5 each, maximum \$12 per family. Bring some cards or a board game for after dinner, and enjoy some fellowship and desserts.

Building & Grounds:

- JL Auto has been hired again this year to do our parking lot and sidewalk snow clearing.
- Masonry repairs: Morris Masonry Restoration Inc. has completed outside pointing repairs totaling approx. \$6,500.

Thanksgiving Altar Decorations: Sunday, November 22

- Fall fruit/vegetable donations are needed to decorate our altar for our Thanksgiving Eve Service. Squash, pumpkins, apples, stalks of Brussel sprouts, or gourds are beautiful this time of year.
- Please place your donations on the stairway to the tower by Nov 22.
- After our Thanksgiving Service, the fruits/vegetables are donated to the “Little Portion Friary”

Vestry Elections: December

- St. Mark's needs to elect 4 Vestry Members, 3 having a 3 year term and one having a 1 year term.
- Anyone who is interested in participating in the Vestry, please contact a Vestry member or a Warden to put your name in for nomination.

Vestry Meeting Schedule

- The Vestry meets the second Tuesday of the month at 7pm unless otherwise scheduled.
- The Vestry Meeting Minutes are posted on the upstairs and downstairs bulletin boards.

Annual Meeting:

- St. Mark's Annual Meeting will be held Sunday, January 17, 2016 after the 10am service in the fellowship hall. All are welcome to attend.

Stewardship:

- Please turn in your pledge cards as soon as possible so that next year's budget can be started.
- Your prayerful pledge will help us to attract a new rector, sustain and build our church in worship, fellowship, and sharing.

Altar Guild:

Comments from Kathy Sokolowski

- St. Mark's Altar Guild is looking to add to our membership. Both men and women are welcome to join us.
- We meet the 3rd Tuesday of January, March, May, September, and November. Our function is to take care of the church altar. We set up altar for each Sunday service, weddings, funerals, baptisms and special services such as Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Lent, and Easter.
- We care for the linens and vessels used in the services and decorate the altar for Easter and Thanksgiving. The Altar Guild and the parishioners decorate the church for Christmas.
- Each member signs up for 1 or 2 months each year. There are teams of 2 or 3 members per month. The more members we have, the easier the work load. If you are interested, please contact Kathy Sokolowski or an Altar Guild member.

Bible Study:

Comments from Ben Phillips

Wednesday Eucharist & Bible Discussions continue: we have guest celebrants each week, and a Table Eucharist on the third Wednesday of the month. Canon Barbara Price and Father Andy Newbert are with us for November, and Father Joe Kozlowski will be with us for the Wednesdays in December.

Sunday School:

Comments from Leslie Ann Kane

- We had our Halloween party, and are looking forward to our Christmas activities: Caroling, Christmas Community Outreach – we will be making cards for troops and our own shut-ins, and we'll be having a Christmas party.
- Sunday school has 16-20 students attending each week. There are 3 classes this year. Grades 1-3 and 4-6 are using discussion based lessons about being a good person and a good Christian. The junior/senior class is watching movies with a message then having discussions about them. They just finished watching 'God's Not Dead.'

Diocese News:

- Peggy & John Thrasher and Claudia & Chuck Conroy attended the annual WNY Episcopal Convention October 30-31 in Mayville, NY.
 - The theme of the convention this year was "I will with God's help."
 - The convention voted to change representation of the Council from 2 representatives from each deanery to 9 members voted by the convention. The Bishop can appoint 3 lay persons to provide balance and diversity.
- The Rt. Rev. Michael Bruce Curry was installed as the 27th presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, Sunday, November 1st.
- Look at the Diocese website for events such as music events, social issues discussions, fun at Larkinville, Family Summer Camp, etc. The website is episcopalwny.org. You can sign-up to get news directly on the left, middle of the home page.

Reminders:

- Coffee Hour Hosts are needed. Please sign-up to participate in St. Mark's great love of food and fellowship. Sign-up sheets are on the bulletin board.
- New Church Directory: Faith Elliott is currently working on the directory.

Recent Successful Events:

- **Fall Chicken BBQ**

Comments from Joe Durick; Event Chairperson

I would like to thank everyone at St Marks that helped me with our chicken BBQ and fall fest this year. I would also like to thank the boy scouts and their leaders who took time out of their weekend to help with the BBQ. As always, our St Marks church family always comes through and makes things easy when running an event. I think having a few events like this every year is a good bonding experience for everyone to get to know each other a little more than just seeing each other on Sundays. I think we are truly blessed to have such a beautiful church and an even greater church family for which I am truly proud to be part of. If anyone has any ideas to help make the event any better please let me know and thanks again for making the BBQ a success again. Love always Joe

- **5k Race**

Comments from Scott Ferguson; Event Chairperson

The second annual St. Mark's, get set, go! 5k was held on October 10th. This year's race saw 68 finishers cross the line and a new course record was set for females by Kim Vona in a time of 18:26. Jim Price was the fastest overall in a time of 18:10. The fastest parishioner to finish was Bruce Elliott. The race was generously supported by many of the same sponsors as our first year, their continued contribution is greatly appreciated. Even with many expenditures to carry the race well into the future spent this year the race generated over \$500 in profit. As the race continues to be staged each year it should grow in participation to become a major fundraiser for our church.

- **Oktoberfest**

Comments from Lin Kucharski: Chairperson

A good time was had by all! The Groaning Board served up a variety of cheese and crackers, pickles, pate', pretzels, German desserts, grapes, beverages and lots more!

Beverages were graciously donated by Mike Mroczka, #1 realtor from Realty USA. A sumptuous meal was prepared by St. Mark's cooks, followed by homemade desserts and coffee. Great aromas and German music filled the air as well. Gisela Reiss and Marty Hall wore authentic German dress. You were German for a night, even if you weren't. We served 91 people, and a nice profit was made for St. Mark's. Special thanks to all!!

Parishioner News:

- Jacqueline and Ross Trainor are the proud parents of a baby boy; Liam Ross Trainor born September 26. Congratulations to David and Shirley Shoen; Grandparents and Connie Thompson Great Grandma.
- Jillian and Aaron Silvas are the proud parents of a baby girl; Quinn Olive born October 19th, shortly after hosting our Sunday coffee hour!
- Jeff and Christen Green are the proud parents of a baby girl; Aurellia Alice born October 21st. Also Congratulations to Grandpa Jeff Green.
- A joyous celebration: Kayla Violet Kemp; Baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit on November 1st, presented by her parents Brian and Tara Kemp.
- The North Tonawanda High School Drama Club is presenting 'Bye Bye Birdie' on January 14th -18th, featuring Alex Morgan as Hugo!

A Christmas Letter from Father Sam

Dear People of God at St. Mark's,

What a trying and challenging time you are in. The congregation is being held in prayer as you go through this hard but opportune time. I have been so blessed to have been with you a few Sundays this fall season. It still feels like home.

I ask the wardens if they minded me writing you all, at this time, to let you know that I will be with you for Christmas Eve. I believe the family service is at 4:00 p.m. and am sure the later service will be noted in the newsletter you are now reading.

I thought it might be fun to ask you all to think of some folks you have not seen for a time and call them and invite them to "come home" for the evening.

As we move into new things it seems good to reflect on past things. Do not misunderstand. We need to let go of past things but enjoy the memories they conjure up.

God Bless each of you as we moved toward another year. We build on the past foundation and expand our world into new things no matter how uncomfortable they are for a time. Our God is a God of life and forward movement.

Much love,
Father A. Sam+

Those In Need of Our Prayers:

Oh God, the strength of the weak and the comfort of suffers: Mercifully accept our prayers, and grant to your servants the help of your power, that their sickness maybe turned into health, and our sorrow into joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Betty Szewczyk, Bob Hefner, Donald & Jeanette Donovan, William Lucas, Charles Conroy, John Thrasher, Rose Jastrzemski, Connie Thompson, Peighton and Lincoln Hulin, Tammy Pickard, Father Glen Fuller, Stella Usiak, Lois Wilson, Paul Kurziel, Jim Foels, Courtney Krysa, Tom Lucas, Diane Wacker, Ron Wacker, Ed Popp, Sandy Hamilton, Virginia Vaillancourt, Ken Pittner, Tom Garigen, John Pankow, Janette Rose, Joan McKernan, Paul and Linda Holst, Kim Kouzan, James Thompson, Scarlette Ebling, and Phil and Joan Frapwell.

In Memoriam:

Almighty God, we remember your faithful servants; and we pray that, having opened to them the gates of heavenly life, you will receive them more and more into your joyful service, that, with all who have faithfully served you in the past, they may share in the eternal victory of Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

Joseph Cerra
Hefner families
Fred Howath

Bob Steinke
Hornsby families
Stella Trippy

Mary Hepworth

Parishioner Requests:

- If one of your family members has good news, achievements, participates in special events such as a concert or play, please contact one of us on the Newsletter Committee to publish the news.
- If one of your family members wants to be remembered or visited while staying at a hospital, nursing home/rehabilitation facility let us know the address.
- News of Stork arrival along with joyous details can be published.
- Requests to be included in the section 'In Memorial' please contact us.
- The Prayer List is taken from the Sunday Bulletin unless someone notifies us of an addition or deletion.
- News requests can be:
 - Placed into the mailboxes in the church hallway labeled 'Newsletter.'
 - Sent to church email address: stmarksnt@verizon.net. Put "NEWSLETTER" in the subject line.

DEADLINE FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY AND MARCH IS DECEMBER 27, 2015.

St. Mark's Website: www.stmarksnt.net

St. Mark's email: stmarksnt@verizon.net

Newsletter Committee:

Chairperson: Peggy Thrasher

News Reporters: Pat Miller, Janette Phillips, Connie Turtle

Thanks to all for contributing and helping to get this newsletter together and ready to go!

November, December and January Calendar

November:

- Nov. 10, Tuesday 7pm, Vestry Meeting
- Nov. 11, Wednesday, 10am in the Chapel. Feast of Martin, Bishop of Tours. Holy Eucharist celebrated by Rev. Canon Barbara Price. Bible Discussion and fellowship follow
- Nov. 14. Saturday, Fall Clean-up
- Nov. 15, Sunday, Food Pantry Sunday.
Last day to place order for poinsettias and wreaths.
- Nov. 17, Tuesday, 6:30pm in the Guild Room, Altar Guild Meeting
- Nov. 18, Wednesday 11am in the Guild Room. Table Eucharist celebrated by Rev. Andy Newbert. Silent meal with guided meditation. Dessert & fellowship follow.
- Nov. 20, Friday: Fall clean-up of the church grounds
- Nov. 21, 5pm Saturday, Soup Cook- Off
- Nov. 22, Sunday, Fall fruit/vegetables donations for Thanksgiving Altar
- Nov. 25, Wednesday, 7pm Thanksgiving Holy Eucharist; celebrated by Father Isaac
No mid-day Eucharist
- Nov. 29, Sunday, After services, pick up & pay for Christmas wreaths and poinsettia plants that you ordered

December:

- Dec. 2, Wednesday 10am in the Chapel; Ferial day in Advent; Eucharist celebrated by Rev. Joseph Kozlowski. Bible Discussion and fellowship follow.
- Dec. 6, Sunday Holy Eucharist and Healing
- Dec. 8, Tuesday 7pm, Vestry Meeting
- Dec. 9, Wednesday 10am in the Chapel; Ferial day in Advent; Eucharist celebrated by Rev. Joseph Kozlowski. Bible Discussion and fellowship follow.
- Dec. 12, Saturday; Continental Breakfast. All proceeds to benefit the DeGraff Adult Day Care Center. Bring a small gift for day care to use as a bingo prize.
- Dec. 13, Christmas Caroling at DeGraff Hospital
- Dec. 16, Wednesday, 10am in the Chapel; Ferial day in Advent; Eucharist celebrated by Rev. Joseph Kozlowski. Bible Discussion and fellowship follow.
- Dec. 20, Sunday, after 10am service, **decorating the church for Christmas – lots of fun and many hands will lighten the work.** Food Pantry Sunday
- Dec. 23 *No mid-day Eucharist*
- Dec. 24 Tuesday Christmas Eve Services will be celebrated by Father Sam at 4pm and 7pm.
- Dec. 27, Sunday Holy Eucharist will be celebrated by Father Sam. *No Church School*
- Dec. 30, Wednesday 10am in the Chapel. Feast of the Holy Innocents; Eucharist celebrated by Rev. Joseph Kozlowski. Bible Discussion and fellowship follow.

January 2016

- Jan. 3, Sunday Holy Eucharist and Healing
- Jan 17, Sunday after the 10am service; Annual Meeting; all are welcome to attend.
Food Pantry Sunday