

St. Mark's Episcopal Church Messenger

Newsletter

61 Payne Ave, North Tonawanda

February & March 2016

Thoughts from Father Chris:

I begin my first newsletter entry with words of thanks, many thanks to one and all for the wonderful welcome I have received from all of you as you and I begin a new chapter together in the life of this gorgeous church.

I am deeply honored, humbled and privileged to have been called as your new priest in charge by both the search committee and the vestry. I am very excited to be in your midst and I equally look forward to working with each of you as we proudly and boldly proclaim the wonders of God's Kingdom in this part of Western New York.

Looking ahead ...

We begin the holy and penitential season of Lent on Wednesday, February 10th (Ash Wednesday). Please let me know if there are special things you folk do during this special season (I'm very anxious to learn and know all the 'traditions' of St. Mark's that help enrich your participation in the life and worship of the Church).

The weekly celebration of the Eucharist on Wednesday mornings, followed by Bible/Adult Ed. study, will become a regular part of my weekly schedule at St. Mark's. All are welcome to participate ...

In terms of regular office hours, etc., these details will be worked out as soon as possible and I will make them known to all as I get a better feel for my working schedule from week to week.

In closing then, let me simply say thanks again to everyone who has helped to make me feel welcome and 'at-home' here. Next month I will begin to share some 'bio' material about myself and my family.

Have a good February and may our loving God bless us all in our Lenten journey.

With much appreciation and fondness to you all,
(Fr.) Chris

Father Chris; welcome to St. Mark's:

We are very happy and enthusiastic that you were called to be the rector of St. Mark's family. Together, we will embark on a new spiritual journey with a shared sense of community and fellowship.

Thank-You to the supply priests who kept St. Mark's family in the presence of our Lord

The St. Mark's family thanks Father Webb, Father Joe, Father Sam and Father Isaac for their guidance, prayers and dedication during our search for a new rector.

Thanks to all the parishioners for their patience, prayers, encouragement and hard work to keep St. Mark's family together.

We had a Joyous and Amazing Christmas Season:

- Donation of a very beautiful 12 foot imitation tree that looked just like a real tree. Thank-you
- Our 4pm Christmas Eve service was very well attended and the carols were sung with gusto and joy. There were 187 people attending. Extra chairs were needed to seat the families.
- Our 7pm Christmas Eve service although more lightly attended was treated to an inspiring duet sung by Jeff and Tennille Trenchard.
- On Christmas Day a new event was introduced by Scott Elliott and Ben Phillips. The church was open, no service but Ben Phillips played heavenly organ music while parishioners prayed.

Vestry Election Results: Congratulations to all

- St. Mark's elected Jim Maurer and Steve Mead to the vestry for a term of 3 years.
- Scott Elliott agreed to stay on the vestry for 1 more year.

Annual Meeting: meeting was well attended

Cathy Holesko chaired the meeting.

- Reports: Treasurer's report given by Claudia Conroy, Altar Guild report given by Jean Isroe, Eucharist Minister report given by John Kucharski, Eucharistic Visitor report given by Peggy Thrasher, Organ Status/Music Report by Ben Phillips.

Ash Wednesday Service will be celebrated at 7pm. The Lent and EASTER Sunday Service Schedule will be published later

Lenten reflections from your priest ...

As you probably know, we begin once again the holy and penitential season of Lent on Wednesday (Ash Wednesday), February 10th.

I want to underscore the words 'holy' and 'penitential' for I believe that together, they **both** shed light on the meaning and significance of this particular liturgical season in the life of the Church.

By virtue of our common Baptism, we are **all** called to holiness with our Lord - this is something that is shared by all of us. Not just your priest. Lent is a time of the year where we all can take stock of our lives and simply ask, "Am I living my life in a way that is characteristic of Christian holiness?"

In St. Matthew's gospel, three practices are often identified as characteristic of the Christian life and are equally seen as 'penitential': prayer, fasting, and almsgiving (Mt. 6:1-6, 16-21). Perhaps for many, these three 'practices' have often been considered 'negative' things to do. Don't we often say, "I'm giving up so and so for Lent" Though many may understand this as the 'norm' for Lent, I invite you to seriously consider how you might put a 'positive' spin on these practices.

Therefore, I invite you to listen attentively to my sermons during the six weeks of Lent as I address the importance of this season and the ways we can live out our Christian lives and do so in positive and proactive ways.

As strange as this may seem to read, Happy Lent everyone!!

Fr. Chris+

Spaghetti Dinner; Saturday, February 6th has been CANCELLED

February 9; Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner: 5 – 6:30pm

- Please sign up on the hall bulletin board if you plan to attend so we can plan accordingly.

Theme Tray Sunday, February 21st after the 10am service:

Comments from Leslie Ann Kane; Event Chairperson, Co-Chairperson Jill Sylvis;

This year the St. Mark's Theme Tray Auction will be held on Sunday, February 21st. We have moved this event to a Sunday, in hopes to draw more parishioner involvement. The baskets will be set up and ready for perusing after both the 8:00 and 10:00 services where you will be able to purchase tickets without the \$5 admission. Doors will open at 1:00 for the general public and the drawings will be at 3:00.

The Theme Tray auction is one of St. Mark's largest fundraising events, and it wouldn't be as successful as it is, without all of your help. With that being said, we are looking for donations of **NEW ITEMS** for our auction. Items can be put into already made baskets or just left loose (and we will make them into a basket for you). You could also give a monetary donation and we will go buy things for the theme tray, or you could purchase gift cards through the script program. Also, we will be collecting empty baskets and boxes to create these additional theme trays. All donations can either be given personally to Jill Sylvis or Leslie Ann Kane, or just left on the table in the Jr/Sr Classroom.

Organ Blessing and Dedication Recital: Sunday, May 15

Comments from Ben Phillips; Organist/ Director

The name is familiar: **Hector Olivera**. (No, not the Atlanta Braves baseball player.) This **Hector Olivera** is a world-renown organist & master improviser who will play the dedicatory recital at our own St. Mark's Church, North Tonawanda, at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 15th, the Feast of the Pentecost. We plan to bless the new 54-voice, 4 division, Allen Bravura organ at the 10:00 a.m. service. Then, Mr. Olivera will play his recital including music "*from Bach to Broadway*", to the amazement and entertainment of us all, we're sure!

One of Mr. Olivera's pieces will show his most brilliant skill. He will improvise a complete organ symphony on a theme he has never seen nor heard before. A member of the audience will present him a sealed envelope with a newly-composed theme...and off he'll go...right before our very ears. Maestro Olivera is in demand all over the world. To miss this opportunity means the loss of a musical experience of a lifetime. Mark calendars (!) and get set for unrivaled mastery at the organ.

Diocese News:

- From the Episcopal WNY News email posted 1/7/2016:
Bishop Franklin named and installed four new honorary canons at Evensong at St. Paul's Cathedral on the Feast of Epiphany:
The Rev. Canon Jerre Feagin, The Rev. Canon Earle King
The Rev. Canon Colleen O'Connor The Rev. Canon Gloria E.E. Payne Carter
were honored for their extraordinary service to the Diocese. The Bishop reaffirmed and reinstated the Rev. Canon Barbara Price, who had been named Canon by Bishop Bowman, but whom Bishop Franklin wanted to honor for her service.

Altar Guild: *Excerpt from Altar Guild Report delivered at the Annual Meeting*

The guild accepts memorial donations which are used to purchase and care for linens, vestments, hangings and other décor in the sanctuary. There is a need to replace the white priest's chasuble and stole and some linens. Currently there is a balance of \$3,535.14 in the Altar Guild Memorial fund. If you are interested in joining our group or need more information, please contact an Altar Guild member.

Prayer Shawl Ministry: *Chairperson: Ellen Hall*

Prayer shawls provide warmth and the comfort of our Lord to those in need. The shawls are not only for our parishioners, but also close family and friends outside our church family. These shawls are blessed and prayed upon during our service before given to the person in need. Knitters and crocheters are needed to make these shawls to keep our supply ready. Anyone in need of a prayer shawl, please contact Ellen Hall at tel# 694 1425. Anyone interested in joining this group, also contact Ellen for shawl size needs.

Church School: *Comments from Leslie Ann Kane, Church School Superintendent*

Both the Children and Teachers of St. Mark's Sunday school truly embrace our program's mission and vision on their journey to better serve God as loving Christians.

Our Mission: To build a faith foundation for children by guiding them into a personal relationship with Jesus.

Our Vision: To provide a worship experience that enables children to experience Jesus every day.

Our Program:

- **Real Faith** – we lay the foundation for a personal relationship with Jesus for a lifetime. Children will understand salvation, recognize the Bible as God's word, and worship God.
- **Real Friends** – we provide fellowship opportunities for children. Children will learn to be a friend, pray for others and be Christ-like examples.
- **Real Fun** – we inspire children to worship God. Children will view church as fun and exciting and they will experience joy.
- **Real Purpose** – we help our children learn what matters most in life. They will learn to make good decisions, understand their purpose and be faithful.
- **Real Guidance** – we teach children to listen to Jesus' voice and they will learn that God hears them, God speaks to them and that God is in control.
- **Real Life** – we equip children to face everyday challenges and they will learn to trust in God.

Church School Open House: February 7th:

The Children of our parish are constantly learning new and exciting things about our faith within their Sunday school classrooms. You are welcome to see what they have been doing along with their accomplishments at our Open House on February 7th. Or pop your head in any Sunday after the service to see their work hanging with pride.

Building & Grounds: *Comments from Faith Elliott*

St. Mark's is continuing to use the Niagara County Sheriff's Dept. work crew. These workers can either be people sentenced to the NCSO work program through a court sentence or be inmates who are non-violent and usually worked their way up to Trustee status at the jail. They are all well supervised and I have never once had trouble with any of them.

This year our scheduled yard clean-ups are Thursday, May 26, July 23, September 24 and November 12. I can also get them on an "as needed" basis should the need arise.

Food Bank: *Comments from Jane Lemley; Chairperson*

The North Tonawanda Interchurch Food Pantry has been our outreach for 4 or 5 years now. Our third Sunday of the month collection ranges from \$150 to \$400. We have some very generous donors. Feel free to bring bags of non-perishable food and personal care items. Leave them in the hallway outside the Fellowship Hall or on the bench at the side entrance. Egg cartons and grocery bags are always welcome and easy to donate.

The Food Pantry uses the same eligibility guidelines as Food Stamps (now called "SNAP"). We serve the elderly and disabled on social security. We serve anyone with little or no income, like young couples starting out, mothers and children where the father has left, people just getting out of jail with no job. The stories are varied. The needs are valid. Last year the Food Pantry served 2,114 households including 3,343 adults, 2,007 children, 103 infants, and 277 elderly for a total of 52,497 meals. Every month our clients can come in on weekday mornings and we give them food for 3-5 days. We are an emergency agency. We ask that clients use their food stamps and other resources before they come to us. The North Tonawanda Food Pantry is fortunate to be able to give formula and diapers, peanut butter and jelly, deodorant and shampoo. We give what people donate like mac and cheese and tuna fish. Anything that your own household uses, like batteries and laundry soap, is a welcome donation. Our collection money fills in the gaps with perishables like eggs, milk, and hamburger.

Again this year we'll be holding a **Valentine's Day food collection the Sunday, February 14th**. I'm sure we'll fill my car to the top again!

Bereavement Receptions: *Comments from; Lin Kucharski, Chairperson*

St. Mark's will host a funeral reception for members of St. Mark's. Generous parishioners provide the menu, serve and clean-up. The family usually gives a donation to cover purchase costs, if applicable. Menu donations are always needed, but just as important are those who serve and clean up. Please contact Lin if we can call on you to help with this ministry.

Recent Successful Events:

1st annual Continental Breakfast sponsoring DeGraff Adult Day Care

Comments from Lin Kucharski; Event Chairperson

The first annual Continental Breakfast was held Saturday Dec. 12, 2015. As our Christmas ministry to our Shut-ins and to the DeGraff Adult Day Care Center, we collected homemade cookies for the shut-ins and hats, scarves, gloves, toiletries, and bingo prizes for the Adult Day Care program. After eating a breakfast of Coffee, Pastries, Fruit, Muffins, and Juice everyone pitched in to assemble several baskets of goodies for the daycare, and several plates of cookies for delivery to the shut-ins along with a poinsettia plant. A nice time was had by all, and a wonderful ministry performed. Thanks to all who contributed and helped.

Lunch Bunch:

Our Ladies Lunch Bunch meets on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at various restaurants. All are welcome to join. Call Sheila Allen at Tel# 692-3980 or Lin Kucharski at Tel 694 7929 for details.

Parishioner News:

- A joyous celebration: Quinn Olive Sylvis born on October 19th was baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit on January 24th. Quinn Olive was presented by her parents Jillian and Aaron Sylvis, and Godparents; Emily Elliott, Alex Prue, Jacob and Kayleen Sylvis.

- Jeff Trenchard sings in 2 groups described below. The concert schedule is in the calendar (last page).
 “Harmonia,” a 25 member chamber choir that performs choral repertoire from a variety of time periods, from the Renaissance to today. A donation of \$10/person is suggested for performances, but isn’t mandatory.
 “Lake Effect,” an all-male a cappella quintet that performs originals and arrangements of pop standards from the 1950’s- today. Most performances are free to attend.

Those In Need of Our Prayers:

The Prayer List is taken from the Sunday Bulletin unless someone notifies us of an addition or deletion.

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 their sorrow into joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Tom Garigan, Ken Pittner, Fr. Glen Fuller, Chuck Conroy, John Thrasher, Laura Steinke, Donald Donovan, Robert Hefner, Paul & Linda Holst, Diane & Norm Cook, Courtney Krysa, Philip Frapwell, Lois Wilson, John Pankow, Liz Moeller, and William Lucas.

In Memoriam: If you would like a loved one remembered please contact a newsletter member.

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

Jeanette Donovan Robert Elliott James Foels Ida Howarth Rose Jastrzemski
 Nancy Krieger Donald A Mather Delton Ossman Manfred Reiss Janette Rose
 Roy Wraight

Granny’s Attic: *Comments from Lin Kucharski; Chairperson*

Christmas is over and the congregation participation was great; both with the items donated and the items purchased. January donation of bedding encouraged, with items not sold going to St. Luke’s Mission. February donations of Valentine decorations by February 6. Think ahead to spring for spring donations. Every little bit helps!

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.

NEW CHURCH DIRECTORY AVAILABLE: they are placed on the table at the side door of the church. Thank-you Faith Elliott for putting the directory together.

DEADLINE FOR APRIL, MAY AND JUNE NEWSLETTER MARCH, 20 2016.

This newsletter is also available on our St. Mark's website

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!

SUNDAY SERVICES:

8am Holy Eucharist; spoken service

10am Holy Eucharist; music & choir, Sunday school

CALENDAR

February

- February 7, Holy Eucharist and Healing service
- February 7, Sunday Church School Open House, after 10am service
- February 9, Tuesday, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner
- February 9, Tuesday, Vestry Meeting
- February 10, Wednesday, Ash Wednesday Service at 7pm
- February 14, Sunday, Valentine's **Food Bank Collection**
- February 16, Tuesday, Lunch Bunch, location to be announced
- February 21, Sunday, After 8 & 10am service; Theme Tray Auction
- February 21, Sunday, Food Bank donation during services
- February 28, Sunday, 4pm: Lake Effect Concert; Calvary Episcopal Church, 20 Milton St. Williamsville

March

- March 5, Saturday, 7:30pm, Harmonia Concert; St. Louis Church, 35 Edward St. Buffalo
- March 6, Sunday, Holy Eucharist and Healing service
- March 6, Sunday, 7pm, Harmonia Concert; St. Peter & Paul Church, 5480 Main St. Williamsville
- March 15, Tuesday, Altar Guild Meeting
- March 15, Tuesday, Lunch Bunch, location to be announced
- March 21, Sunday, Food Bank Donation during services.