

St. Mark's Episcopal Church Messenger

Newsletter

61 Payne Ave, North Tonawanda

November & December 2016

A few thoughts from Fr. Chris:

As I sit at my computer on a blustery Thursday morning with the leaves swirling around outside and penning this 'holiday' entry, I am eagerly awaiting my return to my ministry at St. Mark's after my medical leave in October. I have been given the 'okay' to return to work from the surgeon and plan to lead the congregation in prayer and worship on October 13th! I also look forward to the following Sunday when Bishop Bill Franklin will be with us at both services and also confirming several of our youth and one adult. That particular Sunday will truly be a day of celebration and thanksgiving!

In my last newsletter entry, I left off in my biographical sketch in 1985--the year I got married to my wife of 31 years, Colleen McHale. In those 31 years, perhaps the one common denominator was the number of moves we have made together. Each move marked new employment opportunities and the growth of our new family. In those 31 years, we have lived in Cambridge, MA, Troy, NY, Chicago, IL, Delavan, WI, and now for the last 11 years, Stafford, NY. At this point, Colleen and I truly see ourselves as expert box packers and movers. (Does anyone need expert packers/movers? Only kidding!!)

During these years, I have had the opportunity to wear many hats in terms of employment. The 'hats' include teaching Theology classes on the high school level, working in several home improvement stores, including Lowes and Home Depot, directing and managing Christian Education programs for several Roman Catholic parishes, spending a summer painting student apartment residences, working with the adult population who live with developmental disabilities and finally working in a drop-in center/social club for the Mental Health Association of Genesee/Orleans Counties. I value and cherish the variety of positions I held. Each has given me a wealth of experience in the workforce and in a quirky and mysterious sort of way, each has contributed to who I am as a person and as a minister in God's church.

As we move into the month of November (believe it or not), I am sure our thoughts are turning to the up-coming holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas. Liturgically, we come to the end of the church year with the celebration of Christ the King and look forward to a new church year with the First Sunday in the Advent season. I hope we can all balance the religious meaning and significance of these holidays with the materialism and commercialism that is equally purported at this time. I equally hope that as we move into the winter months, the true light of Christ will still burn brightly and warmly in our lives, even in the midst of the winter darkness and coldness.

I pray for the whole St. Mark's family at this holiday time. May it be a time of family and friends, both old and new, a time of hope and of peace, a time of celebration and festivity, a time of worship and thanksgiving and God's abundant grace.

Speaking of thanksgiving, let me conclude this reflection with a huge word of thanks to all of you during my recent setback. Your love and support that you showered upon me was wonderful and very much appreciated; your love and support was what helped me recuperate as quickly as I did. I will treasure all of this for a very long time.

May our loving God continue to bless you and the whole St. Mark's family!

Gratefully,
Fr. Chris

Father Chris Office Hours: November, December & January

- Mondays: 9 – 11 am
- Second Tuesday of each month: 5 – 7 pm
- Other Tuesdays: 9 – 11 am
- Wednesdays: 9 am - 12 noon

You can make an appointment by either calling 585-343-1979 or emailing chrisoconnor@rochester.rr.com

179th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western New York: Niagara Falls Convention Center in Niagara Falls, NY October 29 -30 *And God Saw That It Was Good* Ellie Wraight, Nancy Hefner and Jeff Trenchard attended.

- The 179th Convention of the Diocese of Western New York highlighted the theme of connection, collaboration and celebration. Bishop Franklin, Bishop Sean Rowe of Northwestern Pennsylvania and banquet speaker Brittany Love, executive director of A Movable Feast all struck themes of building collaborations, taking risks, trying new things and following Jesus Christ out into the neighborhood. After the Convention Eucharist on Saturday morning, the members of Convention took that advice to heart and headed out into the neighborhoods of Niagara Falls. Convention delegates visited the Magdalene Project, the Niagara Falls Community Mission and Heart, Love and Soul. All three sites are reaching out to people in need in Niagara Falls.
- The Rev. Canon Jerre Feagin & The Rev. Matthew Lincoln were elected Trustees of the Diocese. The Rev. Canon Dr. Isaac Ihiasota & Ms. Wendy Palmer were elected to Diocesan Council. The Rev. Canon Cathy Dempsey-Sims, the Rev. Deacon Lillian Davis-Wilson, the Rev. Ann Tillman and the Very Rev. Canon Colleen O'Connor were elected as clergy deputies to General Convention.

♥ St. Mark's new OUTREACH Program:

Our Outreach goal for the holiday season is to collect gift cards to help families that are victims of Domestic Violence meet their day to day needs. The best type of cards are for stores that sell food and other items, particularly baby care items - Wal-Mart, Target, Wegmans, Tops. Many of these stores participate in our Script Program! Please see Faith Elliot for script order forms and Marlene Marciniak with any Outreach questions.

Friends Feeding Friends:

Angel Viele and Terry Kraemer are working in this program run by Regina Weise. This program provides meals and clothing and blankets to the homeless in the city of Buffalo. They prepare chili, soup & sandwiches and also handout cookies and apples out of their vehicles at the corner of North Division and Ellicott across from the bus station. If you have anything you can donate, please call Angel at 716 990 5909.

Annual St. Mark's Memorial Scholarship: Recipients

Corey Poole and Megan Himes are this year's recipients of the St. Mark's Memorial Scholarship Fund.

- Corey will be going to Fredonia State University, majoring in Communication Disorders and Sciences, where he will go on to achieve his Masters Degree.
- Megan will attend Nazareth College at Rochester, she will study Studio Art for four years to attain her Bachelor's degree and two years of Art Therapy for her Masters Degree.

Coffee Hour: Volunteers for hosting are **Needed** ! Our Coffee hour is an important part of our fellowship together after our Sunday service. You can sign up as groups or several families together. The sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in our hallway.

♥ NEW Senior Exercise Class: by Linda Martina

Tuesday mornings at 10am in our Fellowship Hall. This is an exercise class that is designed for seniors with and without health issues. Included in the program are warm up, stretching, strengthening and balance exercise.

Linda Martina, is a former certified PACE (People with Arthritis Can Exercise) instructor and has been teaching exercise programs in North Tonawanda for over 30 years. For more information about the exercise program, please telephone 692-8731.

UPCOMING EVENTS & HOLIDAY SERVICE SCHEDULE AT ST. MARK'S:

Confirmation by the Rt. Rev. Dr. R. William Franklin

St. Mark's will present candidates for confirmation to Bishop William Franklin on Sunday November 20 at the 10am service. A reception will follow the service.

Thanksgiving Altar Decoration Drop-off: November 20

Please leave your donations of fruits and vegetables on the steps leading to the bell tower.

Thanksgiving Eve Service: Wednesday, November 23, 7pm: All are welcome !

Continental Breakfast: Saturday, Dec. 10th at 10AM. Cost is \$5. All proceeds and donations to benefit DeGraff Adult Daycare and our parishioners unable to attend church. Cost is \$5.00 and will benefit our shut-ins and Adult Daycare. **Please bring**

- To be distributed to the DeGraff Senior Daycare Center
 - Suitable 'Bingo Prizes', hats, scarves, mittens, gloves: toiletries- cotton balls, nail polish, etc
 - Cookies: to be distributed to those unable to come to our Church services.
- A representative from the DeGraff Daycare will give a presentation too.

More Than a Magi: FREE – Thurs. December 15 at 7pm: plus, coffee & dessert after.

Take a journey to meet the Christ Child along side one of the Magi with a heart of gold and a deep and wide faith journey. MORE THAN A MAGI is an Advent story presented in a dramatic interpretation that reveals in the end the TRUE meaning of Christmas. Denise Reichard, local public speaker and storyteller will lead the inspiring evening.

Presentation about 35 minutes

Festival of Lessons and Carols: Sunday, December 18, 10am Service

(There will be no 8am service)

The Festival of Lessons Carols is a service in Advent, celebrating the birth of Jesus that allows us to take a break from the holiday rush and prepares our souls for the Christmas miracle. The lessons tell the story of God's loving purpose through the ages and look forward to the redemption brought by the child Jesus, who is welcomed with reverence and joy through beautiful organ music and carols.

There will be a Christmas Party directly after this festive service in our Fellowship Hall.

UPCOMING LOCAL CHURCH EVENTS IN OUR DIOCESE

Church of the Advent: *54 Delaware Rd.*

November 18, 19, 25, 26 at 7:30pm & November 20 & 27 at 2pm

“**The Best Christmas Pageant Ever**” by Barbara Robinson, directed by Randy Rumley & Christine Coniglio, performed by ‘The Raiders of Niagara’. Presale tickets \$10, at the door \$13 adults, \$11 seniors, veterans & students.

Saturday, December 3; 10am – 2pm & 6pm – 8pm (evening will also feature Ukulele Christmas Carols).

Nativity Display & Bake Sale; Over 200 nativity/Manger scenes will be on display in the Parish Hall. Nativities are made of all different materials from all over the world; felt wood, glass, metal, quilts. Enjoy this fabulous display. Admission is FREE

RECENT SUCCESSFUL EVENTS:

Fall Festival & Chicken BBQ

Thank You from Joe Durick and John & Lin Kucharski to all who cooked, baked, worked, and organized our fundraiser! The chicken BBQ was delicious and nearly sold out: our bakers made the Bake Sale a HUGE success, Granny’s Attic was a hit, and the Fall Table created a festive autumn atmosphere. Thanks to all who worked so hard to make this event a success!

5K Race: *(comments from Scott Ferguson)*

St. Mark's Get Set Go! 5k was a success in its third running! Over 100 runners came out to compete on a perfect fall morning for fast times. A new course record was set with Nathan Yost completing the 3.1 miles in 16 minutes and 28 seconds. The fastest St. Mark's parishioners were, for females Jeanne Chiaromonte; and for males James Burns. Thanks to all who participated and helped out!

Oktoberfest: *(comments by Lin & John Kucharski)*

Thanks to all who donated to, prepared for, served at, and attended our dinner: many hands made it a GREAT success! The food was outstanding and plentiful, and we enjoyed the authentic German music, dress, and ambiance. A great time was had by all – Thank you to everyone! Our efforts made a profit of \$1,400 for our church.

ONGOING MINISTRIES

Calling all Singers!

St. Mark's is recruiting new members to add to our church choir!! Choir sings at the 10am service Sept - May and rehearses one evening a week for about an hour. You do not need to read music or sing a solo to join us in praising through music! Please see or call Tennille if interested: 361-9369.

Acolytes Needed

Have you ever wanted to become more involved in our church service but weren't sure what you could do? How about serving as an acolyte once a month?! We are looking for adults who would like to join our group of dedicated acolytes. It's not just for kids!!! Many churches have adults serve in this ministry. Please see or call Tennille for information: 361-9369.

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 need 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. The longer shawls (18 in by 5 ft) provide greater warmth and comfort to those who are cold due to their illness or treatment.

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 evening 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.
- If you are interested, please contact Kathy Sokolowski or an Altar Guild member.

Mid-Week Eucharist & Bible Study:

We regularly celebrate the mid-week Eucharist in the chapel on Wednesdays at 10am. Following the Eucharist, we shift gears and settle into an hour or so of faith education, including Bible Study. We have learned about various saints and feast days of the Church calendar and we study the respective lectionary readings for coming Sundays. The discussions have always been informing, interesting and lively, to say the least.

On the third Wednesday of the month, Table Eucharist is at 11am.

Everyone in the parish is welcome to attend: come for just the Eucharist or stay for both. Hope to see you there...!
Fr. Chris

Ushers:

Ushers are greatly needed for our 8am and 10am services. See Neil Ferguson if you are interested.

Eucharist Visits

If you know of anyone who is unable to attend church, even temporarily and would like to have the Eucharist delivered to them, please contact Father Chris or John Kucharski.

Lunch Bunch:

There is no lunch scheduled for November 15th. The Lunch Bunch is scheduling a 4:30pm dinner meeting at Websters in December. The date will be announced later.

Our Ladies Lunch Bunch meets on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at various restaurants. All are welcome to join. Call Lin Kucharski at Phone# 694 7929 for details.

PARISHIONER NEWS

- Alex Morgan is starring as “Donkey, one of the primary parts in the theater production of “Shrek the Musical” at the North Tonawanda High School. December 1, 2, 3 at 7:30pm.
- 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.

IN HONOR OF OUR VETERANS AND TO THOSE CURRENTLY SERVING:

Lord today and every day we seek to honor all of our loved ones who have served or who are serving our country. We are reminded that because of their service we can all live in safety and freedom.

Conroy, Charles - Army
Emery, Leroy -
Foels, James - Marines
Gagnon, Kathy S. - Navy
Green, Robert R. -
Green, Roger R. -
Holler, Richard -
Kedierski, Michael -
Kirchman, Thomas -
Kozlowski, Bradley - Navy
Lee, Art - Navy
Lucas, Thomas - Marines
Mather, Donald - Air Force
Mather, Scott A - Air Force
Matusick, Myron -

MacLean, Donald – Air Force
Mitchell, Frederick -
Murie, Frank - Navy
Orlowski–Williams, Katie - Air Force
Passino, Richard -
Phillips, Dennis - Army
Piasecki, Victor -
Riley, Patrick - Coast Guard
Smith, Francis -
Snowman Sr, Edward R. -
Stevenson, Jill M - Air Force
Turtle, Thomas - Army
Vanderburg, Robert -
Wacker, Ron - Air Force

Please add veteran names or branch of service to our list posted on the bulletin board during the coming year. It is important that we remember their sacrifice. Thanks

THOSE IN NEED OF OUR PRAYERS

The Prayer List: is taken from the Sunday Bulletin unless someone notifies us.

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, Betty Szewczyk, Fr. Glen Fuller, Chuck Conroy, Paul & Linda Holst, Diane & Norm Cook, Courtney Krysa, Phil Frapwell, Lois Wilson, Liz Moeller, William Lucas, Connie Thompson, Jim Thompson, David Shoen, Christopher Wolf, Nick Evans, Teresa Arndt, Robert Arnts, Jim Semrau, Marilyn Southwell, Elaine Shultz, Gerry Poleon, Geri Orchard, Merinda Neumann, Phil Wekenmann, Tim Morris, Ellen DiLaura, Pat Rutherford, James Poole and Harold Becker.

In Memoriam: If you would like a loved one remembered please contact a newsletter member. Names may be taken from the Altar Flower Chart or are requested since the previous newsletter.

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

James Foels John & Evelyn Frapwell Fred & Ida Howarth Lois Lepo
Thomas Lucas Ryan McNaughton Jr. Judith Middleton Mary Molnar
Dawn Prusinowski Del Ossman Irene Warchocki Roy Wraight

Christmas Memorials are published separately in the Christmas Bulletin

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

November

- November 16, Wednesday: Table Eucharist
- November 20, Sunday: the Rt. Rev. Dr. R. William Franklin will celebrate:
8am Holy Eucharist
10am Confirmation & Holy Eucharist at 10am service. A reception will follow.
- November 20, Sunday; Drop off of fruits & vegetables for Thanksgiving altar and Food Bank Donation
- November 20, Sunday, 6pm: Labyrinth – *Quiet the mind to hear the soul*
- November 23, Wednesday, 7pm Thanksgiving Eve Holy Eucharist service
- November 24, Thursday, HAPPY THANKSGIVING !
- November 27, Sunday, 6pm: Labyrinth – *Quiet the mind to hear the soul*

December

- December 4, Sunday Holy Eucharist and Healing Service
- December 4, Sunday, 6pm: Labyrinth – *Quiet the mind to hear the soul*
- December 10; Saturday, Continental Breakfast
- December 11, Sunday, 4pm, Harmonia concert at St. Leo the Great, Sweet Home Rd, Amherst
- December 11, Sunday after 10am service; Christmas Decorating Fellowship
- December 11, Sunday: Vestry member election
- December 11, Sunday, 6pm: Labyrinth – *Quiet the mind to hear the soul*
- December 15, Thursday at 7pm: “More Than A Magi”
- December 17, Saturday, 7:30pm, Harmonia concert at St. Mary of the Cataract, Niagara Falls
- December 18, Sunday; 4pm Harmonia concert, at St. Joseph University Church, Buffalo
- December 18, Sunday, 10am; Festival of Lessons & Carols (**no 8am service today**)
- December 18, Sunday, 6pm: Labyrinth – *Quiet the mind to hear the soul*
- December 24, Saturday; Christmas Eve services
 - 4pm; Holy Eucharist
 - 7pm; Holy Eucharist in candlelight
- December 25, Sunday Christmas Day service at 10am; Holy Eucharist
- December 25, Sunday, 6pm: Labyrinth – *Quiet the mind to hear the soul*

Thanks to **Pioneer Printers** for helping us get our newsletter printed !