

# *St. Mark's Episcopal Church Messenger*

## *Newsletter*

61 Payne Ave, North Tonawanda

September & October 2016

### **Welcome Back ! Summary from letter mailed in August:**

Dear Friends in Christ,

We all know the saying "Time flies when you're having fun:"

As I sit down to write this letter to you, I find it hard to believe that Summer, 2016 is almost over. With that fact, we, as the faith community of St. Mark's are liking ahead to the fall months and the various activities that are planned for us to enjoy together.

For those of you who enjoyed the summer time out of the area, I hope this time has been well spent and relaxing. In that regard then, **welcome back!!** We have missed your presence at our weekly services and hope to have many opportunities to 'catch up' with each other.

As we all know, Mother Nature certainly provided us with lots of oppressive heat and humidity (with very little rain) this summer. Consequently, we often made use of our fellowship hall that is blessed with AC for not only enjoying coffee hours but also worship as well... I know that it often challenged some to believe that a hall that hosts coffee hours, luncheons and fish fries can also be a holy place of worship. However, the Holy Spirit really has no preference for location-what's essential is the unified faith of the community of the faithful who believe themselves to be the 'church'. Being the church does not depend on a specific location.

With the month of September right around the corner, I hope you all can enjoy the remaining days and weeks of Summer 2016. Certainly, a new school year beckons and, with that reality, I hope there will be a renewed excitement and energy throughout the parish family to faithfully serve our church and the many people we seek to serve in Christ's name.

I continue to pray that each one of us will be blessed in his or her ministry, both to St. Mark's and to the larger church and the world. May God continue to fill us with the graces we may need to continue our journeys as we invite others to walk with us.

I wish you His peace and blessings,

(Fr.) Chris

### **More about Father Chris**

As I pen these reflections on the first day of September, I am amazed how quickly the summer months have passed.

Due (may I dare say, 'thanks') to the heat that Mother Nature provided us throughout the Summer months, we had the opportunity to celebrate the Eucharist from time to time in the Fellowship Hall, making full use of the A/C that that space has. Hopefully as we move into September and approach the season of fall, the weather will be cooler and will allow us to worship in our church on a regular basis. Let's keep our fingers crossed!

By the time you read this installment of the church newsletter, you will have already received my 'welcome back' letter that I wrote in mid-August. I hope you have already marked your calendars for the many up-coming events that have been planned. I hope you will also make

good use of the Sunday school registration card that was included into that mailing, sharing it with those who might benefit from this important educational ministry that St. Mark's faithfully offers to its youth on a yearly basis.

In the last newsletter, I began a short series of biographical information about myself and my various journeys. This newsletter will speak of the years from high school graduation (1976) until my year of marriage (1985).

Yes--I graduated from high school in 1976. We were, that year, the 'Spirit of '76', celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of our nation.

From 1976-1980, I was a student at Assumption College, a small Catholic liberal arts college, located in Worcester, MA founded in 1904. I initially enrolled as a Biology major, yet within the first semester, I 'switched gears' to the Departments of Theology and Philosophy with the serious consideration of being ordained a priest in the Catholic Church.

In the spring semester of my freshman year, I moved off campus and lived at 'Austin House'. This was an alternative living arrangement that gave a very small number of students the opportunity to experience living with a religious order (The Assumptionists) and to have a much-needed place for quiet and serious study versus trying to do the same on campus, often an environment of noise and confusion.

In May, 1980, I graduated from Assumption College with a major in Theology with a strong concentration (minor) in classical Philosophy. It was a wonderful day for me and my family who was present to see their 'oldest' child graduate.

The following year (1980-1981), I taught Biblical Studies and English at St Bernard's Catholic High School in Fitchburg MA, a Catholic high school about 25 miles north of Assumption College. During that year, I continued to explore to possibility of priesthood, now with the Assumptionists Order. This led to my initial acceptance into the Order.

My first assignment as a Postulant took me to Tampa, FL to teach at Tampa Catholic High School. Following that year, I was welcomed as a 'novice' into the order and lived at their house of Formation in a suburb of Boston.

After taking temporary vows with the order, I began my studies toward priesthood. Yet, our ever-loving God had other plans for me. For, in this first year of studies, I met a woman who was equally studying ordination to the priesthood at the neighboring Episcopal seminary. We fell in love and chose to marry after much consideration and prayer. I left the Assumptionists Order in 1984, continued my studies at Weston and graduated there in 1985. Later that Summer, Collen and I were married at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Newark, NY, which so happened to be the current home of Colleen's parents.

In the following installment of this newsletter, I will briefly describe the 31 years of my activities and that will bring us to the present time in 2016 and my current ministry at St. Mark's.

Fall, 2016, promises to be a busy and blessed time for our community of faith. I don't know about you, but I am excited with all the happenings of the new season and the many grace-filled opportunities we have to carry on God's mission, both within our immediate community and in the larger community that surrounds us. Each gives us the opportunity to put the gospel message

that we hear on a weekly basis into fruitful and loving practice. As they so often say, ‘Carpe Diem’, seize the day!!

May loving God and Creator continue to bless and grace us, each and every day that we are lovingly given.

Fr. Chris,  
Your Servant in Christ

**Father Chris:** Fall Office Hours

- 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](mailto:chrisoconnor@rochester.rr.com)

**Sunday School:** Welcome Back!

This year in Sunday school we will be focusing on the classic Bible Stories as well as preparing our older children for Confirmation. As always, we have a lot of fun activities planned throughout the year. Our annual Halloween party, Christmas Caroling, Easter Egg hunt and FROG Day are all on the calendar along with other various happenings.

Our church school mission and our vision continue to remain the same.

**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. Kids will understand salvation, recognize the Bible as God’s Word, and worship God.*

\* **Real Friends** - *We provide fellowship opportunities for children. Kids will learn to be a friend, pray for others, and be Christ-like examples.*

\* **Real Fun** - *We inspire children to worship God. Kids will view church as fun and exciting, and they’ll experience joy.*

\* **Real Purpose** - *We help kids learn what matters most in life. Kids will learn to make good decisions, understand their purpose, and be faithful.*

\* **Real Guidance** - *We teach children to listen to Jesus’ voice. Kids will learn that God hears them, God speaks to them, and God is in control.*

\* **Real Life** - *We equip children to face everyday challenges. Kids will learn to trust in God and wear God’s armor.*

I am looking forward to a great year and as always, it could never be possible without the help of the congregation. With that in mind, we are always looking for donations of supplies. This year, we are in need of glue sticks, construction paper, markers and masking tape. Any and all donations are greatly appreciated.

Leslie Ann Kane  
Sunday School Superintendent

### **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. All persons at least 15 years old may be presented as confirmation candidates. Any adult who would like to be received into the Episcopal Church or reaffirm their commitment may be presented. Please contact Father Chris if you would like to be presented.

A reception will follow the service. The volunteer sign-up sheet will be posted on the Church Bulletin in November.

### **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.

### **News from our Seminarian Kate Smith:**

Classes are already starting at the Seminary this week. This semester I am taking Patristics which is a history course focusing on the study of the early Christian writers who are generally designated Church Fathers. Some examples are Justin Martyr, Origen, Athanasius, and Augustine of Hippo. My other course this semester is Field Education and Theological Reflection Seminar. I am required to complete four semesters of Field Education. I completed the first two semesters in the last school year at Trinity, Buffalo and am excited to have been reassigned to Trinity, Buffalo for my third and fourth semesters of Field Education. I will be at Trinity from September through May of 2017.

Peace and love,

Kate

### **179th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western New York: October 29 -30 And God Saw That It Was Good**

This year the convention will be held at the Niagara Falls Convention Center in Niagara Falls, NY. In addition to Father Chris attending, our delegates are Ellie Wraight, Nancy Hefner and Jeff Trenchard. Our alternate delegate is Jane Lemley.

### **Our Little Roses (OLR) Tea and Basket Auction: Saturday October 1, 1- 4pm**

This fundraising event at the **Diocese** supports Our Little Roses Home for Girls in Honduras. Besides a delicious tea and wonderful basket auction there will be Honduran items and crafts made by the girls residing at the home. See Sheryl Molnar for Tea tickets - \$25, or basket tickets that are one for \$1 and six for \$5. You do not need to be present to win. Information on this ministry is posted on the bulletin board outside the fellowship hall.

### **United Thank Offering: During the Month of October**

The women of the Episcopal Church annually participate in a fund drive to support church grant requests. The WNY donations are presented by women of each church at the annual October **WNY Diocese Convention** during a special ceremony. Please make checks payable to St. Mark's Episcopal Church and place in the offertory plate.

**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.

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

#### **Fall Festival Chicken BBQ Dinner: Sunday, September 25 at 11:30am in our Fellowship Hall** *Co-Chairpersons: Joe Durick, Lin & John Kucharski*

This year, the event will be held on a Sunday after our church service. Krolick's will be grilling the chicken in the church front yard. The delicious aroma is expected to draw our neighbors to participate. Homemade salads and a beverage will also be included. An Ice Cream truck vendor will be parked on the street for those who also want a delicious treat. We will also have a bake sale featuring delectable homemade desserts and treats. Fall items will be on sale such as pumpkins and apples plus we are making tables available to vendors wanting to display their goods. Tickets will be \$10 if purchased in advance and \$11 at the door.

A volunteer sign-up sheet is posted on the church bulletin board.

#### **5K Race: Saturday, October 15; 9:30am**

*Co-Chairpersons: Scott Ferguson & Katie Orłowski-Williams*

The St. Mark's, Get Set, GO! 5k is back for its 3rd year! This event has been a successful fundraiser for St. Marks Church but we cannot do it without help! If you are a runner or walker, you can register now online at <http://www.stmarksnt.net/>. Check out the special early-bird pricing and discounted rates for members of WNY running clubs. The course is USATF-certified and this will be a USATF-sanctioned race. Trophies will be given to the top overall male and female finishers and top 3 finishers for each five year age group will receive a medal. We also need volunteers to help with set up, take down, and help out there on the course. There will be a sign-up sheet at the church. If you have any questions please feel free to call me, Katie Orłowski-Williams at 716-628-0561 or Scott Ferguson at 716-909-8834. Come for the race or come volunteer, either way you can enjoy the after race party which will feature plenty of food and drink (pizza and beer).

Pricing now:

- Race: \$25
- Walk: \$20

Are you a member of a WNY Running Club? Take \$5 off the stated race prices!

#### **Oktoberfest: Saturday, October 22 at 5 pm**

*Co-Chairpersons: Lin & John Kucharski*

Delicious homemade German food and German ambiance are always enjoyed by all who attend this festive dinner. Tickets are limited, so purchase tickets while they are available. Tickets are \$15 each and will be available from Lin at 694-7929 starting at the end of September.

### RECENT SUCCESSFUL EVENTS:

#### **Fellowship Night** *Comments from Barb Nesbit*

On Saturday, August 13, 2016, St. Mark's hosted its first "Wines n Brews" tasting. This was our first attempt at such an event and overall it was such a fun event. There was something for everyone - a good meal (roast beef), great music provided by the very talented Dave Stayner and of course great wine and beer. Many local business' were so kind to support us by

donating everything from cheese; chocolates; and of course the beer and wine. Worth special mention are Isle View Liquors, Yancey Fancy cheese, Platters Chocolates, Niagara Landings, Arrowhead winery, Flying Bison and of course the many parishioners who generously donated appetizers. So many people had such a great time and expressed that we should have it again next year. It was such a great fellowship so spread the word if you are interested so we can have more people join the fun.

**Picnic at Pinewoods Park: Sunday, June 26:** *Comments from Connie Turtle*

A good number of members from 5 - 96 years old attended our picnic and Eucharist in the park. Father Chris celebrated his first outdoor service with us on a very warm Sunday. Music was provided by Jeff and Josh Trenchard. All enjoyed a vast potluck buffet with cheeseburgers and hot dogs by our grill masters: Joe Durick, Clem Frolick, Gerry Poleon and led by John Kucharski. Good fun and fellowship was enjoyed by all.

**Salad Bar Luncheon:** *Comments from Sue Hutt*

In spite of the lower attendance at the Salad Bar Luncheon in June, the salads were super, great variety and everyone had a good time. We always get good sized groups from DeGraff and City Hall. Thanks to all who helped. Sue

**Organ Recital:** *Comments from Tennille Trenchard*

In May, St. Mark's welcomed world famous organist, Hector Olivera, to play a dedicatory recital on our new Allen organ! The sanctuary was full with music lovers attending from all over the area as Mr. Olivera filled the church with amazing music! The recital was followed by a cheesecake reception generously donated by anonymous members of our parish.

**Church Women United of the Tonawandas:** Continental Breakfast hosted by St. Mark's in May. Approximately 60 ladies attended with a large representation from our church. Kathy Carr and her son provided the entertainment. If you are interested in joining, contact Jane Foster at 692-3471 or Lin Kucharski at 694-7929.

<b>ONGOING MINISTRIES</b>
---------------------------

**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:**

On Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, the Lunch Bunch is meeting at the Asa Ransom House, Clarence. Our Ladies Lunch Bunch meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at various restaurants. All are welcome to join. Call Lin Kucharski at Tel 694 7929 for details.

### **Annual Flu Shots:**

Flu shots will be available on Sunday, September 18<sup>th</sup> after both services.

## **PARISHIONER NEWS**

- A Joyous Twin Baptismal Celebration: Dominic Michael and Elliott James Miranto were presented by their parents Michael & Lauren Miranto On July 31.
- A Joyous Baptismal Celebration: Daisy Fabbiano was presented by her parents Anthony & Karen Fabbiano on August 7.
- 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.  
“The 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.

## **THANK-YOU TO THOSE WHO ARE SERVING IN MILITARY SERVICES AND OUR VETERANS**

**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.**

In our November Newsletter, we would like to publish the names and the military branch they serve or served. Please provide names & military branch on paper and place in the “Newsletter” mailbox in the hallway. Thanks

## 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, Betty Szewczyk, Fr. Glen Fuller, Chuck Conroy, Paul & Linda Holst, Diane & Norm Cook, Courtney Krysa, Philip Frapwell, Lois Wilson, Liz Moeller, William Lucas, Connie Thompson, Jim Thompson, David Shoen, Christopher Wolf, Nick Evans, Tom Lucas, Teresa Arndt, Robert Arnts, Jim Semrau, Ralph Scalise, Marilyn Southwell, Elaine Shultz, Gerry Poleon and Marcia Poleon.

**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**

Francis & Mary Hefner	Timothy & Robert Hefner	Bernie & Michael Isroe	Lois Lepo
Frank Maess	Donald Mather	Donald McKernan	Edward & Clara Simmons
Robert Steinke	Louis Thompson	John Thrasher	Evelyn & Walter Wacker
Granville & Rachel Watson	Sheila Yaro		

\*\*\*\*\*

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

**St. Mark's Website:** [www.stmarksnt.net](http://www.stmarksnt.net)  
**St. Mark's email:** [stmarksnt@verizon.net](mailto: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

### September

- September 11, Sunday School Starts
- September 13, Tuesday 7pm – Vestry Meeting
- September 18, Sunday; Food Bank Donation and Flu shots available
- September 18, Sunday; The Lake Effect 11-12pm, Quaker Arts Festival, Orchard Park Middle School
- September 21, Wednesday; 11am Table Eucharist
- September 25, Sunday: 11:30, Fall Festival Chicken BBQ

### October

- October 1, Saturday at 1 – 4 pm; Our Little Roses Tea and Basket Fundraising Event at the Diocese.
- October 2, Sunday Holy Eucharist and Healing Service
- October 11, Tuesday 7pm – Vestry Meeting
- October 15, Saturday; 5K Race; 9:30am
- October 15, Sunday; Harmonia, 7pm Burchfield Penney, in conjunction with *Blistering Vision*
- October 16, Sunday; Food Bank Donation
- October 19, Wednesday; 11am Table Eucharist
- October 21, Friday, Harmonia, 7:30pm, St. Bernadette, Orchard Park
- October 22, Saturday; Oktoberfest at 5pm; fellowship hall
- October 23, Sunday, Harmonia, 4pm St. Louis, Buffalo
- October 29 – 30; Episcopal Convention

### November (*Remember to turn your clocks back on Saturday Night November 5 before you go to sleep*)

- November 4, Friday, The Lake Effect; 7 – 9 pm. The White Inn, 52 East Main St. Fredonia, NY
- November 6, Sunday; 10am service Holy Eucharist and Healing Service
- November 8, Tuesday 7pm – Vestry Meeting (Election Day)
- November 16, Wednesday, Table Eucharist at 11am
- November 20, Sunday; 10am Confirmation and Holy Eucharist with reception to follow
- November 20, Sunday; Food Bank Donation
- November 24, Thursday; Happy Thanksgiving!