

St. Mark's Episcopal Church Messenger Newsletter

61 Payne Ave, North Tonawanda

March & April 2017

Thoughts from Father Chris:

As I pen this newsletter entry, we are, as a Church, only days away from the holy season of Lent. We begin this season by marking ourselves with ashes on Ash Wednesday, March 1st, reminding ourselves that we are formed from the dust of the earth and yet, our loving God still loves us with a love that only God can provide and produce.

I pray that these six weeks of Lent will be a fruitful journey of growth and spiritual enrichment in preparation to celebrate both the mystery of Holy Week and the mystery of our Lord's Resurrection on Easter Sunday ...

On a sad note, I need to let the parish family know that for medical reasons, I am leaving my duties at St. Mark's. This has not been an easy decision, nor has it been done lightly. At a recent follow-up appointment, my doctor strongly recommended this course of action for my long term overall physical health.

I am deeply saddened to leave a parish family that I have come to love and hold deep in my heart.

Please keep me in your prayers as I will yours. I equally pray that St. Mark's will continue to be blessed and will grow in its sense of mission and identity as a house of God.

I bid you God's peace,
Fr. Chris

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We were surprised to learn that Fr. Chris resigned due to health issues continuing after his stroke. A heartfelt farewell to Fr. Chris who was enthusiastically with us for over a year. We pray that he will recover his health and again someday be able to join a parish. We are working with our Diocese to move forward. The Diocesan staff will work with us to keep a steady supply of priests and lay worship leaders in place. Again we will be searching for a new priest to join our church family. Our Parish Profile needs minimal updating so we'll be starting our search soon.
Sue Hutt Catherine Holesko

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Letter from Father Sam:

Dear People of God at St. Mark's.

It is with mixed emotion I write to you. I am very happy to be with you for a time. I will be with you until Easter Sunday. I am not happy that Father Chris O'Connor is having the health challenges he is dealing with. We need to hold him and his family in prayer.

Our family spent many years at St. Mark's and they were wonderful growing years for us and the congregation. I look forward to the next few weeks and the things we might do together.

The Church today is in a very changing situation but I believe it is only the Church that can bring a time of comfort and hope to each of us. As we get more and more "busy" with lots of things that cause stress we need, more than ever, a way to keep healthy. The stress level for each of us is at a high which is destructive. WHAT CAN WE DO?

I believe that we can find ways to open ourselves to the Spirit of God in such ways as to keep us at peace, in the midst of much noise. I believe that God has and is offering to us ways to cope with all the mess that we produce.

I invite you to be a part of the solution rather than the problem.

I ask you to consider, inviting your friends and neighbors, who do not have a Church, to come and join us.

I invite each of you and your whole family to be with us and glean, from the Word of God, helpful ways to Love God, our neighbor and ourselves.

May God continue to Bless each of us.

In Christ, your priest for now,

Father A. Sam

Vestry Election Results: Congratulations to all

- St. Mark's elected Marty Hall, Jane Lemley and Diane Wacker to the vestry for a term of 3 years.
- Scott Elliott agreed to stay on the vestry for 1 more year.
- Cathy Holesko and Sue Hutt agreed to stay on as Wardens for another year.

Current Vestry			
Sue Hutt – Warden	Catherine Holesko – Warden	Claudia Conroy – Treasurer	
Scott Elliott	Neil Ferguson	Marty Hall	Jane Lemley
Jim Maurer	Steve Mead	Barb Nesbit	Peggy Thrasher (& clerk)
Diane Wacker			

Friday Lenten Fish Frys are BACK !!!!

- 4:30pm till 6:30pm, Friday March 3 through April 7.
- Dinners include choice of: baked fish, battered fish or chicken fingers, choice of homemade American or German potato salad, baked potato or macaroni salad, plus coleslaw, bread, dessert and beverage. Adults \$11, children \$5. Dine In or Take Out available.

Services for Lenten Season:

Wednesday evenings: Stations of the Cross: will be performed by John Kucharski. A simple meal is served at 6pm and the service at 7pm.

Ash Wednesday services: 10am & 7pm

Maundy Thursday service: 7pm

Good Friday Services: 12pm – 3pm: readings and prayers, 7pm - Service

Easter Services: 8am & 10am. Music at both services

Bread Sunday: March 26

The fourth Sunday in Lent is sometimes referred to as Refreshment Sunday or Bread Sunday. It is a moment in liturgical time when people are invited to ease their Lenten discipline for a day and refresh themselves through feasting and resting.

St. Mark's observes this tradition by bringing a loaf of homemade bread to church to be shared with shut-ins or served at coffee hour. Please bring a loaf of bread, if you are able, to be shared on Sunday, March 26th.

Valentine's Day Food Drive: *Chairperson; Jane Lemley*

The St. Mark's Valentine's Day food collection was a brilliant success! 75 bags of food were welcomed at the food pantry! At approximately a value of \$15 per bag that's \$1,125 worth of food. That's more than 50% more than last year. Thanks to all your generosity, last year this parish gave a total of \$3,294 (includes 68 bags and dollar donations). This year we are doing even better!

Theme Tray Auction: *Comments from Leslie Ann Kane & Jillian Sylvis; Co-Chairs*

Our Theme Tray Auction (February 26) was a huge SUCCESS! We would like to thank everyone at St. Mark's who either donated a basket, a monetary donation, a gift card, or came and bought tickets and supported the raffle. We had over 200 baskets including multiple big ticket items.

The Theme Tray Auction brought in almost \$6,000 which is more than last year and is again the largest one day fund raising event in St. Mark's history!

Capital Improvements: *Jim Maurer, Steve Mead, John Kucharski*

Our front ramp has been repaired to once again provide an accessible entrance to the sanctuary from Payne Ave. The brick walls of the ramp were collapsing and repairs required new concrete foundations, completely rebuilding brick walls and installing new railings along the length of the ramp. In addition, the large stones supporting the stair at this door were reset and handrails along both sides replaced. The contractor recently finished this work and St. Mark's will be paying the final bill soon for a total project cost of \$21,517.

Various electrical upgrades have been completed for life safety systems in the basement and Fellowship Hall. This includes installation of carbon monoxide detectors, replacement of emergency lights (which were no longer functioning), new exit signs, and installation of several GFCI outlets in the kitchen, all of which are required by current building codes.

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 Sczewyck, Fr. Glen Fuller, Chuck Conroy, Paul & Linda Holst, Diane & Norm Cook, Courtney Krysa, Lois Wilson, Liz Moeller, William Lucas, Connie Thompson, Christopher Wolf, Nick Evans, Theresa Arndt, Robert Arnts Jim Semrau, Marilyn Southwell, Gerry Poleon, Phil Wekenmann, Tim Morris, Elena DiLaura, Pat Rutherford, Harold Becker, Lori Poole, Leslie Mulligan, Norm Sczewyck, Tom Prusinowski, Heather Kraemer, Ethan Flagg, Liz Neadow, April Orłowski, Elaine Haffenden, Ray Wolf, Valerie Preecs and Fr. Chris O'Connor.

The Calendar of Events is on the next page.

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!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March

- March 1, **Ash Wednesday**, 10am & 7:00pm services
- March 5, Sunday Holy Eucharist and Healing prayers 8am & 10am
- March 3, Friday Fish Fry, 4:30 – 6:30pm
- March 8, Wednesday, Light meal at 6pm and Stations of the Cross at 7pm
- March 10, Friday Fish Fry, 4:30 – 6:30pm
- March 11, Saturday – Harmonia* – 7:30pm, St. Peters, Lewiston
- March 11, Saturday – Remember to set your clock ahead 1 hour before going to bed.
- March 12, Sunday – Harmonia* - 7pm, Assumption Church, Buffalo
- March 14, Tuesday, Vestry Meeting at 7pm
- March 15, Wednesday, Light meal at 6pm and Stations of the Cross at 7pm
- March 17, Friday Fish Fry, 4:30 – 6:30pm
- March 19, Sunday, Food Bank Donation during services.
- March 22, Wednesday, Light meal at 6pm and Stations of the Cross at 7pm
- March 24, Friday Fish Fry, 4:30 – 6:30pm
- March 26, Sunday, **Bread Sunday**
- March 29, Wednesday, Light meal at 6pm and Stations of the Cross at 7pm
- March 31, Friday Fish Fry, 4:30 – 6:30pm

April

- April 2, Sunday Holy Eucharist and Healing prayers 8am & 10am
- April 5, Wednesday, Light meal at 6pm and Stations of the Cross at 7pm
- April 7, Friday Fish Fry, 4:30 – 6:30pm. Last Fish Fry this year!
- April 9, Sunday, **Palm Sunday**
- April 11, Tuesday, Vestry Meeting at 7pm
- April 13, **Maundy** Thursday service at 7pm
- April 14, **Good Friday**
 - 12 noon – 3pm: readings and prayers
 - 7pm – Good Friday Service
- April 16, Sunday **EASTER**. Holy Eucharist and music at both 8am & 10am services,
 - Food Bank Donation during services.
- April 27, Thursday, St. Mark's is hosting the Quarterly Niagara Deanery Council at 7pm for priests and convention delegates in the Niagara Deanery.

*Harmonia – Jeff Trenchard is a member of this 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.