



SAINT MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

"THE LION" of ST. MARK'S

A Monthly Newsletter by and for the members of St. Mark's

*To know Christ and to
make Christ known.*

March 2025



Pastor's Lion Message for March 2025

*Sunday's palms are Wednesday's ashes
as another Lent begins;
thus we kneel before our Maker in contri-
tion for our sins.
We have marred baptismal pledges, in
rebellion gone astray;
now, returning, seek forgiveness,
then restore us; make new hearts within
us Lord.*

-Rae E. Whitney, 1991

I doubt I could put the meaning of Ash
Wednesday as well as the whole Lenten
season more succinctly than these
words above.

When we gather on Ash Wednesday, the
first day of Lent, we do so to confess be-
fore our Maker two things:

1. We are mortal; we are creatures
of the God who made us.
2. We have sinned; strayed from
God's truth and seek forgiveness.
The ashes that we wear on our
foreheads nonverbally proclaim
these two truths.

If we did not observe Ash Wednesday
with the cross before us it's message

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STAFF OFFICE HOURS

Pastor: The Rev. Brian Vasey
Mon-Thu 9 a.m.-1 p.m., & by appointment
Church Organist: Sam Robinson
Summer Mon 1-3 p.m. & by appointment
Bookkeeper: Jackie Baysore
By appointment
Administrative Assistant: OPEN
Tuesday through Friday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
jbaur@stmarkswilliamsport.org



Serving Christ in the Williamsport Community
since 1852
142 Market Street
Williamsport, PA 17701



JOIN US FOR SUNDAY
WORSHIP IN MARCH. ALL
ARE WELCOME!!

would not only be solemn, but also hopeless. We are mortal, imperfect; nothing we do can change that. We are sinners who cannot wipe away our sin. But hear the gospel promise: We do not mark Ash Wednesday by itself apart from God's truth. Though we be part of creation we are created in the image of God. We have a "kinship" with the Almighty unlike any other creature made by God. And, though we be sinners, God promises us forgiveness and life eternal. We are saved by God's grace through faith brought about by God's Word (scripture, holy baptism and holy communion). What we cannot do for ourselves God does for us. God declares us worthy to receive grace. There is hope!

The Ash Wednesday experience proclaims to us the promises of the gospel. As Whitney reminds us: What began a year ago on Palm Sunday- the beginning of Jesus' trek to the cross- continues the following year on Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday tells us that repentance in Christ leads to forgiveness. It is a "Christian Day of Atonement" citing the promise the gospel brings: With God in Christ there is love, acceptance, forgiveness and life eternal.

Come, come to one of the opportunities to receive ashes on Ash Wednesday. Come and in honest repentance embrace the truth that we are mortal and stand in need of God's forgiveness. In Christ through Word and Sacrament we all receive what God so freely gives.

*Grace+Peace,
Pastor Vasey*

March 2, Transfiguration Sunday

The Last Sunday after Pentecost

Holy Communion, 8 am

Sunday School, 9:15 am

Holy Communion, 10:30 am

March 9, The First Sunday in Lent

Holy Communion, 8 am

Sunday School, 9:15 am

Holy Communion, 10:30 am

March 16, The Second Sunday in Lent

Holy Communion, 8 am

Sunday School, 9:15 am

Holy Communion, 10:30 am

March 23, The Third Sunday in Lent

Holy Communion, 8 am

Sunday School, 9:15 am

Holy Communion, 10:30 am

March 30, The Fourth Sunday in Lent

Holy Communion, 8 am

Sunday School, 9:15 am

Holy Communion, 10:30 am

LOOKING AHEAD TO APRIL, 2025:

PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 13

MAUNDY THURSDAY, APRIL 17

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 18

EASTER VIGIL, APRIL 19

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 20

SPECIAL DAYS IN MARCH

March 4- Shrove Tuesday

St. Mark's will observe "Shrove Tuesday" with our fourth annual "Fastnacht Day" or Donut Day event. We invite everyone to join us in Fellowship Hall beginning at 6:00 for light refreshments and Fastnachts (of course!).

Our event will include gathering in the courtyard to burn last year's palms to be used as our ashes for repentance and mortality on Ash Wednesday. We will conclude our time together with a brief liturgy of prayer and praise as we "Bury the Alleluia" in preparation for Lent. This promises to be a day of fun and meaning as we prepare to begin our Lenten pilgrimage in anticipation of the Easter Season. If you would like a ride, please contact Vicki Hausmann at (570) 447-3263. We are happy to pick up and take anyone home! We look forward to seeing you!

March 5- Ash Wednesday

Holy Communion and Imposition of Ashes, Chapel, 12:05 pm

Holy Communion and Imposition of Ashes, Nave, 7 pm

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on March 5. We encourage you to please find several devotional booklets in the Narthex that may aid you in your daily study throughout this Lenten season. We pray these seasonal meditations will help prepare your heart and mind as we move through this season of Lent heading toward our celebration of Easter.



Lenten Bible Study

The Faith Formation Committee is pleased to be offering the opportunity to grow in our faith through a Lenten Bible Study Series. Please join us in Fellowship Hall on Wednesdays throughout Lent from 12:10 -12:45 for education and discussion. Our topic this Lenten

season is based on the **5 Traditional Atonement Theories of the Church**. Light snacks will be provided. All are welcome. We look forward to seeing you beginning March 12!

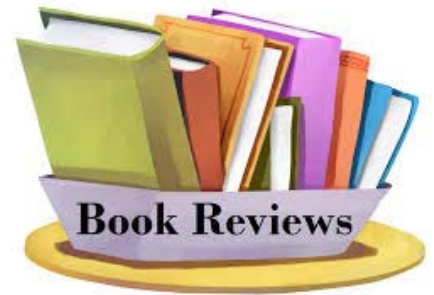


When you or a family member are ill, have a crisis of faith, or have a personal concern of which you wish to make the pastor aware, please contact him directly by church office telephone (570-323-4619) or email (bvasey@stmarkswilliamsport.org). Do not assume the pastor will know of your need any other way.



When you or a loved one has a change of address, telephone number or email, please contact the church office at 570-323-4619 or stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org. Please direct your intentions whether or not to share this information with our church family.

Do you enjoy reading? Do you have an interest in exploring the variety of materials found in our church library? Would you be willing to write a short synopsis of a church library book you read for The Lion? If so, the Faith Formation Committee wants YOU! Please see Vicki Haussmann, Sally Bjornstad, or Bob Campbell if you would like to be featured as a guest columnist in The Lion! We will gladly assist you in finding the perfect book to read for this newly established (although not yet named) column. We look forward to discovering more about the materials found in our library through you. Thank you for sharing your talents in this exciting way!



*Please enjoy reading a review of *The Secret of the Howling Cave* by Sally Bjornstad on page .*



Congratulations to Levi Gair, the newest driver in our St. Mark's Family! Levi celebrated this milestone with the Blessing of the Keys on Sunday, February 2nd. We pray that God will keep you in his care as you spread your wings and experience new adventures!

MARCH Worship Leaders

Please arrange for a replacement if you cannot serve.



Communion Assistants

March 2
8:00 AM Brian Jackson
10:30 AM Deb Buckman & Mindy Wentzel
March 9
8:00 AM Drew Haussmann
10:30 AM Matt & Wanda Fortin
March 16
8:00 AM Nikki Jackson
10:30 AM Shelby & Gary Weber
March 23
8:00 AM Becky Prior
10:30 AM Ralph & Lou Ann Zeigler
March 30
8:00 AM Brian Jackson
10:30 AM Deb Buckman & Mindy Wentzel



Lectors

March 2
8:00 AM Vicki Haussmann
10:30 AM Donna Clark
March 9
8:00 AM Drew Haussmann
10:30 AM Phil Thoman
March 16
8:00 AM Brian Jackson
10:30 AM Shelby Weber
March 23
8:00 AM Nikki Jackson
10:30 AM Donna Boston
March 30
8:00 AM Candy Dewar
10:30 AM Brenda Gair



Ushers

March 2
8:00 AM Miller / Poff
10:30 AM Maggs-Reitz Team
March 9
8:00 AM Miller / Poff
10:30 AM Weber Team
March 16
8:00 AM Miller / Poff
10:30 AM Fortin Team
March 23
8:00AM Miller / Poff
10:30AM Albright Team
March 30
8:00 AM Miller / Poff
10:30 am Maggs-Reitz Team

Altar Guild

Bev Heiber & Audrey Albright

March
Birthdays

Trisha Harvey	3/5
Robert Shaible	3/6
Michael Kinney	3/11
Eileen Georg	3/16
Dinah Labenberg	3/16
Diane Bardsley	3/18
Lauren Sims	3/22
Gary Weber	3/24
Leah Haussmann	3/25
Sara Larson	3/25
Jonathan Bower	3/27
Sandra Edler	3/28
David Walz	3/28

March
Anniversary

Gary & Donna Clark	3/6
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Sundays, March 2- May 25 during the traditional Sunday School time (9:15-10:10 am) we will study the Book of Revelation. Come and join Pastor Vasey as, together, we rejoice in the promise of God's hope in Jesus Christ through study of this book of New Testament prophecy. We will be

meeting in Fellowship Hall. All are welcome!

FAMILY PROMISE hosting dates for 2025:

March 2-9, all meals are covered ... Thank you!

June 15-22

Oct 5-12

Nov. 16-23



Please note these on your calendar. If you have not participated in providing meals for Family Promise in the past, please consider participating in this ministry.



We are in desperate need of items for both North Carolina and California to respond to the natural disasters in that area. If you would like to contribute items for personal care kits, please place them in the bin in the Narthex. These include cotton towels (20 x 40 to 27 x 52, no bath sheets), bars of soap, toothbrushes, combs and nail clippers. Kits will be

assembled beginning in April.

You can donate money either directly to LWR at PO Box 17061, Baltimore, MD 21298-9832 or with a check made out to St. Mark's with LWR in the memo line.

Thank you for your generosity in helping people who have lost everything!



Become Part of Our Church Family

WANT TO EXPLORE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A LUTHERAN CHRISTIAN?

Adults wishing to unite with St. Mark's in church membership are invited to contact PASTOR VASEY at 570-323-4619 or email

stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org..

The Secret of the Howling Cave

By

Lee Roddy



Lee Roddy is a bestselling author and motivational speaker. He has written over 48 books including “Jesus” and “The Life and Times of Grizzly Adams.” All his books support traditional moral, spiritual, and family values.

This book is about 12 year old Hildy and her raccoon, Mischief, her cousin, Ruby, and Hildy’s boyfriend, Spud. One day, she bumped into a man who turns out to be involved in a mysterious pawnshop robbery. Hildy is accused of the theft and must clear her name. She finds a watch in the pawnshop with a strange handwritten map with an “x” on it. She is on her way to pay for the watch when a man bumps into her and she drops it. He grabs the watch and runs out of the store. But he drops the watch. Hildy finds it and takes it home. Her raccoon steals the watch that night which opens up many adventures including going into the howling cave to find the treasure. But the cave has a secret! You’ll have to read the book to find out what the “secret” is!

I chose this book because I love mysteries. And by thumbing through the book I saw one part about her uncle and his “calling.” He was a cowboy but then he turned into a shepherd. Just like David! And his “calling” is that he’ll become a pastor and give a sermon. However, the Church he chooses is so divided that only 11 people go to it! I had to read this book to see how it all worked out. Also, Ruby, her cousin, is from the Ozarks. So the author writes the way Ruby would speak. It’s very interesting! If you like mysteries like me, you will love this book!

Sally Bjornstad

Faith Formation Committee Member



February 2025

Minutes

St. Mark's Council meeting– February 17, 2025

Gary Weber took the annual photo of council members

Call to Order: 6:05 pm

Council recited the Defining Mission Statement

Ray Huff opened the meeting with a Valentine message to Billy Graham

Secretary's roll call:

Members present: Debra Buckman, Cathy Fenderson, Vicki Haussmann, Ray Huff, Nikki Jackson, Richard Miller, Cindy Todd, Lou Ann Zeigler, Donna Clark, Wanda Fortin, Helen Schramm, Pastor Vasey. Richard Reitz- excused.

CC2025.02.01. (Haussmann/Miller) Richard Reitz was nominated to election as Vice-President. Adopted.

Minutes of the January meeting were reviewed and approved as submitted.

Deb Buckman delivered the Treasurer's Report. The report was accepted and filed for audit.

Pastor's Report:

Pastor provided his schedule from January through February. The pastors of Redeemer Lutheran, St. Luke Lutheran, and St. Mark's Lutheran continue to provide pastoral care for the Liberty Parish.

All statistical reports have been completed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Evangelism and Fellowship: Planning for the Fall Bazaar and Fourth of July celebration. Collecting Tasty-Kakes for Redeemer's meal- March 9. Daniel's Closet drop-off February 20.

Council Minutes Continued

Faith Formation: Souper Bowl results: 109 canned goods and \$177.00 cash. The cans in the "Bowl" heavily favored the Eagles. Thirty-one hygiene kits were donated to Shepherd of the Streets.

Sunday classes in the future- A study of Revelation will begin on March 2. The Lenten Bible study will center on "Atonement".

Shrove Tuesday March 4 at 6:00. St Luke's has been invited.

Finance: Deb Buckman presented the report.

Little Lambs: The lease was signed with a change of dates to January 1 for any future rent increase, with an effective date of September 1 of the same year. Next meeting: March 10 at 12:15.

An additional room request (311 and 312) for expansion is still in conversation.

Nominating: No report.

Personnel: No report.

Property: Deb Buckman presented the report.

CC2025.02.02. (Property) Approve the cost of the work for the electrical upgrades related to the fire inspection report. Both the completed work and the proposed work for the Nave. Adopted.

Property: CC2025.02.03. Award contract to Neece Landscaping for \$50.00 per week for the 2025 season. Property committee members and other parishioners will be responsible for the courtyard. Adopted.

Next meeting: April 8, 5:30

Publicity: No report

Safety: No report.

Worship and Music: Ray thanked Wanda for her Altar Guild leadership.

March 5- Ash Wednesday services (12:05- chapel and 7:00- nave)

April 12- Making palm crosses 9:00 a.m.

April 13- Palm Sunday- Vicki will pin crosses at 8:00 and Shelby and Wanda will pin at 10:30 service.

April 17- Maundy Thursday (12:05-C, 7:00-N) Kneel for communion

April 18- Good Friday. 7:30 with dialogue replacing sermon CC2025. 02.04. Adopted.

Council Minutes Continued

Lilies for Easter services must be ordered by March 22. (*changed to March 26*).

New business:

CC2025.02.05. (Clark/Huff) Approve Civic Chorus rehearsals and performance DATES???.
Adopted.

Signup sheets were distributed for devotions and offering collection.

Elections of Synod Assembly lay delegates: Deb Buckman volunteered; we will need a second volunteer by end of March council meeting

Ray Huff led us in closing prayer.

The meeting ended at 7:50.

Next Meeting: March 17, 2025, 6:00 PM



Evangelism and Fellowship Committee Articles for The Lion

March 2025

Valentine's Day Thank You

The Evangelism and Fellowship Committee thanks the congregation for their generous support of our Valentine Day card ministry. With the winter storm of February 9 canceling the 8:00 service and keeping attendance reduced at the 10:30 service, we were concerned we would not be able to send all our cards. We were humbled by the many members who were willing to each take several cards, so our Special Concern Folks would get cheery greetings. We are blessed indeed.

Help Needed for Parish Life

The Center City Pastors, a group of twelve, meet the second Thursday of the month at St. Mark's at 1:00 PM. The Parish Life Committee prepares and serves a light lunch for them. Thank you, Wanda Fortin for providing March's dessert.

The Parish Life and Evangelism and Fellowship Committees make sandwiches for New Covenant UCC's Blessing Boxes on these dates in March; March 5, 10, 19 and 24. Please join us at 9:00 AM if you would like to help assemble sandwiches.

The above committees are always in need of supplies like rolls, bread, meat and cheese. Speak to Becky Miler Pryor if you can donate an item on one of the dates in March.

Monetary donations are also needed to cover expenses related to this outreach. Checks may be made payable to St. Mark's with the memo line indicating Parish Life.

Ongoing Collections at St. Mark's:

Code Blue (Overnight shelter for the homeless): Housed at First Church, this outreach is welcoming 30 individuals each night. In January, we delivered a carload of snacks and supplies along with \$200 in Wegman's gift cards. But obviously with as many people as they host each night, they are once again in need of supplies. Code Blue is requesting individually packaged snacks of all kinds. Donations may be placed in the Narthex.

United Churches Food Pantry: The most needed items are pancake mix and syrup, beef and shrimp ramen noodles, canned fruit (all kinds,) Spam, Vienna sausages, tuna fish and 64 oz. bottles of apple juice.

Shepherd of the Streets: Needed are shampoo, conditioner, bodywash, tooth paste and toothbrushes for adults and children, feminine hygiene products, paper towels, tissues, hand and dish soap.

Blessing Boxes at New Covenant UCC: Easily prepared foods like Cup of Soups, individual packs of crackers and cookies, microwave mac & cheese, ramen noodles and individual boxes of cereal are needed. Travel size hygiene items are also needed.

Sojourner Truth Ministries: Boxes or bags of sugar, brown paper lunch bags , dessert-size paper plates and raspberry or peach ice tea mix.

Donations to the Food Panty, Shepherd of the Streets, the Blessing Boxes or to Sojourner Truth Ministries may be placed on the tables in the Narthex Coat Room.

Ongoing Events at Redeemer Lutheran:

Community Dinner on Thursday, March 13, 2025 beginning at 5:00 PM until all meals are distributed. This is a take-out meal available at the curb. All are welcome.

The Parish Life and Evangelism and Fellowship Committees provide desserts each month to support Redeemer's dinner. This month Jim and Susan Newcomer will provide Valentine brownies for dessert. Thank you, Jim and Susan for your generous help.

For desserts in March, we are requesting boxes of TastyKakes of any kind. Donations are due by Sunday, March 9, 2025.

Daniel's Closet Distribution of winter clothing is **Saturday, March 29, 2025 from 8:30 AM – 11:00 AM.** Warm clothing and sturdier shoes and boots for adults and children are still being accepted, along with blankets, bedding and throws. Children's clothing is in great need.

This month's clothing drop off is Thursday, March 27, 2025 from 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM.

If you have a large quantity of clothing, please call Redeemer's office (leave a message) at 570-322-2333 to make an appointment. Smaller quantities of clothing may be placed on the stage.

Got Stuff?



The Evangelism and Fellowship Committee and the Women of St. Mark's are still in need of donations for our annual Fall Sale which will occur in September 2025.

We are accepting holiday decorations, housewares, linens, toys, small working electronics, gadgets, dishes, jewelry, lamps, art work and the list goes on. **If you don't**

want it, we probably can sell it.

We cannot accept anything broken or in poor condition, VCR tapes, text books, encyclopedias, computers, televisions, large gym equipment, cribs or mattresses.

Please place your donations in boxes small enough for us to lift and move to and from the Bazaar Room. If you cannot get to the basement, leaving them on the second landing in the back stairwell is helpful.

Note from Code Blue Ministry



“...Nights have been brutally cold and we’re thankful we can offer a warm, dry, safe place to rest the night through ...warm comforting meal, snacks to tuck into their pockets to nourish them during daylight hours. We thank you for providing those snacks and for \$200 in gift cards. Our numbers increase as temperatures drop. You’ve helped in so many ways for their relief.”



SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2025 Souper Bowl of Caring! This year our congregation’s “can prediction” for a Philadelphia Eagles win was accurate. Dare I say we even predicted the blowout win with our can totals of KC ~ 14, Eagles ~ 95. Congrats, Eagles fans!

More importantly though, the United Churches Food Pantry came up with a big win! Thanks to your generous donations, 109 cans of food will be delivered to the food pantry to be used in their outreach ministries. In addition, \$177.00 was collected, and this will be used to support several local ministries including the United Churches Food Pantry and Sojourner Truth Ministries.

Thank you, St. Mark’s, for being a blessing to our Williamsport community through the Souper Bowl of Caring. Your generosity continues to know no bounds. Truly a WIN for all involved!



**“I took each item out of my box one by one. I wanted to rejoice for everything.”
~ Andy, shoe box recipient.**

Please consider donating to our shoebox collections this month. The items are small, and yet so meaningful to the child who receives them.

In March, we will be collecting: **Combs/Brushes/Hair Accessories**
Toothbrushes
Toothbrush Holder
Mini Flashlights

Monetary donations are also welcome as we are looking into including “Grow With Me” shoes in this year’s boxes. While these are a bit pricey at \$20.00/pair, they adjust over time and can “grow” 5 sizes as the child’s foot grows. These shoes are often needed for children to attend school so receiving them is a huge blessing indeed! Checks may be made to St. Mark’s with OCC in the memo line.

These items (or any others) can be placed in our red, OCC bin located in the narthex. We thank you for your generosity!

*The age ranges for both boy and girl boxes we fill are 2-4, 5-9, and 10-14



**FOUNDATIONS
FOR THE FUTURE**
CAMP MOUNT LUTHER

RAISE THE REGION

MARCH 12-13, 2025

Camp Mount Luther is once again participating in Raise the Region and we need YOUR support! Your donations made through raisetheregion.org will help Camp Mount Luther continue to provide quality spiritual formation, outdoor adventure, intentional community, and leadership development experiences for people of all ages. The more donors and donations we raise the better our chances of receiving incentives, stretch dollars, and awards!

Please go to raisetheregion.org March 12 at 6 pm through March 13 at 11:55 pm to make your contribution

Thank you for your generosity.

Camp Mount Luther's Summer 2025 registration is now open! Find out more and register at www.campmountluther.org/summer.



IT'S TIME TO ORDER EASTER LILIES

Deadline for orders is March 26, 2025

EASTER LILY ORDER FORM

Name: _____ Envelope#: _____

Telephone: _____

I am ordering:

____ Asiatic Lilies (6" assorted) @ \$9.00 = \$ _____

____ Easter Lilies (6" Easter Lily 1 bulb) @ \$9.00 = \$ _____

____ Easter Lilies (12" Easter Lily 2 bulbs) @ \$17.00 = \$ _____

and/or a *gift for other decorations* = \$ _____

and/or a *donation to Local Hunger* = \$ _____

These are given: (if more room is needed use the back of the card)

In Honor of (living person) _____

In Memory of (deceased) _____

All flower orders *must* be in by March 26, 2025

The flowers will be available for you to take following the late Easter Service.

March 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 8:00AM Holy Communion 9:15AM Sunday School 10:30AM Holy Communion	3	4 6:00PM Fast-nacht Celebration	5 12:05PM Ash Wednesday Holy Communion-Chapel 7:00PM Ash Wednesday Holy Communion-Nave	6	7	8
9 8:00AM Holy Communion 9:15AM Sunday School 10:30AM Holy Communion	10 9:00AM Sandwich Making 12:15PM Little Lambs Liaison	11 9:30AM West Branch Conference (Chapel)	12 12:10PM Bible Study	13 10:45AM Faith Formation 1:00PM City Pastors Lunch	14	15
16 8:00AM Holy Communion 9:15AM Sunday School 10:30AM Holy Communion	17 6PM Council	18	19 9:00AM Sandwich Making 12:10PM Bible Study 2:00PM Holy Communion at Williamsport Home	20	21	22
23 8:00AM Holy Communion 9:15AM Sunday School 10:30AM Holy Communion	24 9:00AM Sandwich Making	25	26 12:10PM Bible Study	27	28	29
30 8:00AM Holy Communion 9:15AM Sunday School 10:30AM Holy Communion	31 9:00AM Sandwich Making					