



St. Mark's Messenger

March 2015

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

601 Washington Avenue ~ Hagerstown, MD

301-733-7550 ~ Website: lutheranchurchhagerstown.co

The Reverend G. Stanley Steele, Senior Pastor

Our Vision:

With God's Love

Inspire...

Serve...

Grow...

Disciples of Christ

We affirm the love of God in the life, death and resurrection of His Son and our Lord Jesus Christ. The love of Jesus flows to us from the Holy Spirit and empowers us to be messengers of the good news of this love to all people.

So we seek to *Inspire and be Inspired* in our worship and study and fellowship as a community of believers who find God's inspiration in the Scriptures, in our relationship with each other and God's relationship with us.

We *Serve* by supporting each other and our neighbors in the journey of faith and life we all are undertaking. We offer our prayers, our hospitality, and our care to each other within a community where you are known and valued.

We *Grow* by offering opportunities to share in our faith through small groups, Bible studies, children's programs, youth programs, and leadership development. As Disciples of Christ, we share our gifts in the wider community, caring and supporting all of God's people.

St. Mark's is not a destination but a community where we identify God's presence in each other's lives. Together we challenge and strengthen one another in creating a celebration of God - active in the world.

The piece above is what is stated on our new website under "What We Believe". I wanted to share it here so everyone can see it, and comment if you like. The website and new brochure are very close to being finalized and I believe they will be strong tools for our outreach to the community as well as for our members. The three words, "...*inspire, serve, grow*" are strong words that speak to our call to be inspired by God's Word and to in turn inspire each other in our life of faith, to serve God and our neighbor, and to constantly grow in our faith. Let us all commit to come together around these words so St. Mark's continues to be the missional church where we offer a community which strives to be faithful to who God calls us to be as disciples of Jesus.

*With the Blessings of Jesus,
Pastor Stan*

Let it snow, let it snow...Just not on Sunday

For three weeks we did not exactly cancelled services but the weather did heavily impact the ability of folks to get to church. And yes we did receive about half of what we would usually receive in offerings. First, I hope everyone is safe and warm and will remain that way, second you were missed and it will be good to see you soon and third would you please try to help St. Mark's by making up your contributions if you were not able to attend services. It is uncomfortable to speak of money yet in this world it is an important factor in our ability as a church to do the ministry God has called us to follow. If you can help thanks and even if not please keep St. Mark's in your prayers and all those during this cold and snowy winter.

Farewell

Dear Christian Friends,

As of January 2015, I will no longer be serving St Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church as visitation pastor. I thank you for the opportunity I have had to serve Jesus Christ and you for the year and a half I was with you, and I pray God's continued blessings on your ministry going forward.

In Christ, Reverend Stephanie Steele

Does God care if you give up chocolates?

Lent began this month. If you're like me, you're running into the familiar wall of thinking about what Lent means and how to properly approach the season.



Even in some Christian circles, Lent gets a bad rap. It's a time associated with giving up candy or coffee or any number of everyday indulgences, habits, or vices. Nobody likes to give up things they enjoy. We're all creatures of habit, and because Lent is seen as the time to deny ourselves of those habits to focus on God, Lent gets an unfortunate reputation. But is Lent really about not eating candy for a few weeks? Does cutting out coffee help you win at Lent? Is that what God is calling us to do?

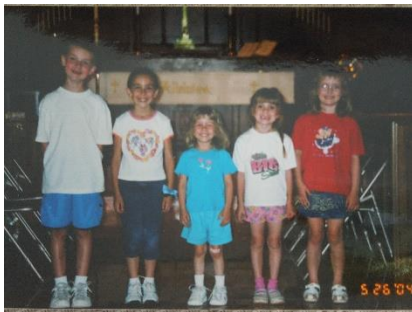
Maybe. A big problem with Lent is that people get hung up on the symbol of the religious action instead of connecting more with the season itself. Giving up something isn't all about the thing itself. If you give up chocolate for Lent and then you have a piece of chocolate, you don't "lose the game." Instead, you should look at the "why". Why do you desire certain things, why do you find it difficult to refrain from those things and how do you live your life in light of that information?

The gesture of self-denial is a spiritual practice. We give something up in order to see something else more clearly. Think of it like cleaning out your garage: only when you clear it out can you see the space for what it is. We're emptying ourselves before God to be more than we could be with all the clutter.

The ironic truth is, Lent can provide a remarkable sense of wholeness in the emptying out. The Lenten season offers us an opportunity to focus more on God than ourselves. It's not about giving up something you like; it's about seeing that God is more important than those things in the first place.

So does God care if you give up chocolate for Lent? Only if it helps you remember that the chocolate never mattered to begin with.

Julie Fiery
Council President



Remember When.....

I started here as organist / choir director in January of 2003. It hardly seems possible; but that was 12 (!) years ago. In **the** fall of that year we started a Cherub Choir. That's them in this photo taken at the end of their first season (May 2004). Aren't they cute - and so tiny Not only are these cute, tiny children in *high school* now ; but the two on the left already have their driver's license, and the other three recently got (or are about to get) their learner's permits!! Oh my, how time does fly! In the last couple newsletters

I've been talking about hymns. There are a few that actually tell complete stories - in sort of a "Reader's Digest condensed version" style. ELW # 322 ("Oh Love, How Deep") is basically the story of Jesus' life. In 7 stanzas we sing of His birth, baptism, ministry, betrayal, death, and resurrection. Hymns #340 ("A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth") and #343 ("My Song Is Love Unknown") both tell the Passion story. Then, going on to Easter; ELW #386 ("O, Sons and Daughters...") is essentially the entire 20th chapter of John's gospel. It tells the story of the women going to the tomb on that first Easter morning, Christ appearing to the disciples that evening, and Thomas' doubt of the disciples' story. Hymn #387 is a shorter, somewhat altered version of that same hymn, where the story focuses specifically on Mary and her encounter with Jesus in the garden after His result.

Blessed Lent, Kathy Barr

The
Season
of
Lent



Lenten Services

Lenten mid-week services continue on Wednesdays during March with dinner at 6 pm followed by a presentation beginning around 6:45 pm and concluding with a brief worship at 7:30 pm in the Parish Hall. We will be doing something different this year with invited presenters talking to us about various life stage changes that necessitate changes for us or our loved ones. We are inviting Hospice of Washington County who will discuss retirement planning and estate planning, Doug Fiery to discuss end of life pre-arrangements, and Fred Barrett who is a professional in the Nursing Home industry will discuss choosing a place for a loved one or yourself and how to ensure you are receiving the care you expect and deserve, and Reverend Jason Chestnut. We will conclude with a discussion of spiritual needs of care givers and of those being cared for along with accepting the changes that occur with changes in life stages. Please join us for what we may all wish to dismiss but that which is a part of all of our lives.

Guest Speakers for Mid-Week Lenten Services

March 4	Michael G. Day	Long term care planning, estate planning
March 11	Cheryl Brown/Neil Glessner	Hospice care, Doey's House – respite care
	Hospice of Washington County	
March 18	Douglas A. Fiery	Prearrangements, funeral planning
March 25	Fred Barrett	Nursing Home care, patient rights
April 1	Pastor Stan Steele	Spiritual needs of caregivers and people needing Care

Holy Week Services

We will gather on Wednesday night April 1st for our last dinner. We will have study and worship which includes the stripping of the altar. The study topic will be "Spirituality for the Caregiver and the Their Love One" by Pastor Stan. We will gather at 6:00 pm.

Thursday April 2nd, we will gather at 6:30 pm for Maundy Thursday. We will begin with a dinner of "Slippery Pot Pie" and then celebrate communion together.

Friday April 3rd, we will gather at 7:00 pm for Good Friday Services of Tenebrae.

This year, we will celebrate Easter Sunday with a sunrise service at Rose Hill Cemetery at 6:30 am. There will be two services at the church the first at 8:15 am and 10:45 am with Breakfast between the services.

Please join us for this special week of reflection and worship as the family of faith here at St. Mark's.



Maundy Thursday Table Communion

Maundy Thursday commemorates the Last Supper when Jesus shared the Passover meal with his disciples on the night before he was crucified. In contrast to joyful Easter celebrations when we worship our resurrected Savior, Maundy Thursday is a more solemn occasion, marked by the shadow of Jesus' betrayal. Derived from the Latin word *mandatum*, meaning "commandment," *Maundy* refers to the commands

Jesus gave his disciples at the Last Supper: to love with humility by serving one another and to remember his sacrifice. We will once again serve table communion during the Maundy Thursday service on April 2, 2015. Please watch upcoming bulletins for more details and reservation forms.

Let's Welcome Our New Members

Welcome Francis and Jobie Jones who were baptized on February 24th. Jobie unfortunately passed away two days later on February 26th and is now with the saints in the Kingdom of Heaven. Francis and Jobie are the parents of Debbie Bartles and in-laws of Gary.

Welcome Linda Curtis of Falling Waters, West Virginia. She will be joining on St. Mark's on March 22nd. Linda comes from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and works at Sam's Club.

Welcome Tony, Mandy, Braydon Obitts and Corryne Jones. They will be joining in St. Mark's in March or April. Tony and Braydon will be baptized and Mandy and Corryne by affirmation of faith, they have been members of Trinity Lutheran in Smithsburg. They live in Clear Spring and have been attending St. Mark's over the last several years.

Please reach out and make them feel welcome to our family of faith.

Goodbye, Welcome

Our current Building Maintenance person, Bill Richards, will be vacating his position. No need to worry, you will still see him but in a much different capacity! He will be worshipping and volunteering at St. Mark's. We wish him Godspeed in his new endeavors.

Our new Building Maintenance person will be Thomas "Tom" Banzhoff. He has some super shoes to fill but I am sure he will rise to the occasion. When you see him let us all give him a huge St. Mark's welcome!



From The Tool Box

Spring has almost sprung. Christ's Death and Resurrection will be remembered and celebrated. I too am passing from one path of life to another. Though I will no longer be "working" for the church, I will be worshipping and helping at the church. There will be another Soul that will be maintaining the Building and helping. The tower is done! Other work is being readied for warmer weather. As always, help is always appreciated. I will be seeing you in the Pews and along the halls. God Bless each and every one of you. Bill Richards



From Friendship Mission Team

IT'S AN AIR AFFAIR!

Our annual March Madness volleyball/ basketball night at Girls' Inc. will be held on Sunday, March 15th from 6:00-8:00 pm. Everyone is invited...players, cheerleaders and spectators. Come out and enjoy an evening of fun. We are seeking donations of bottled water and Gatorade, which can be placed in the kitchen. See you on the court!



Bible Study

Bible Study will continue on Tuesday nights at 6:30 pm and Wednesday at 10:30 am. We will conclude our study of Acts and decide on our next book of the Bible to discuss. Please come even if you have not been attending. It is never too late!

Youth ASP Fundraiser

The youth will be having a pancake breakfast ASP fundraiser on Saturday March 7th from 6 – 10 am. Tickets will go on sale beginning February 8th-March 1st. They will be available after each church service as well as from any youth!



Altar Flowers

For 2015, the open dates are May 10, and May 31. If you would like one of these dates, please contact Judy Munday at 301-739-4669.



Thank You

Thanks to the congregation for prayers, cards, gifts, and flowers. A special thanks to the Christmas carolers. I have a long recuperation so visitors are always welcome. I miss my friends in Christ. Millie Wilson

We wish to thank the members of St. Mark's for all the cards and kind words of sympathy during our mothers passing. Thanks to the ladies for preparing the luncheon after the service and Pastor Stan for he very good service.
The family of *Kathryn Leedy*

Dear St. Mark's Lutheran Church, We sincerely appreciate the beautiful quilts that were made for our center. The babies love them and so do we! We belong to an amazing community and we THANK YOU for being part of it! Washington County Family Center

January Attendance and Income/Expenses

	<u>Worship</u>
January 4:	112
January 11:	101
January 18:	131
January 25:	140
February 1:	125
February 8:	115
February 15:	63
Ash Wed.:	65
February 22:	41
Income for the month of January	\$21,335.06**
Expenses for the month of January	\$20,065.76
Net Income for month of January	\$ 1,269.30
Income for the month of February	\$18,918.37**
Expenses for the month of February	\$20,730.91
Net Income for month of February	\$(1,812.54)

** In January this total includes \$9,000 from Endowment and in February this total includes \$6,000 from Endowment.

Happy March Birthday to...

2	Conner Spessard	15	Vivian Morris
3	Mary Nelson	16	Kaitlin Suter
	Suzann Hovermale	19	Virginia Altman
7	Tom Hoover		Shaun White
	Michelle Leatherman	20	Breanna Myers
	Jennifer Morris	25	Amanda Fiery
8	Alanis Graham		Marian Wiebel
9	Dennis Kendle	26	Bethany Hovermale
10	Gary Doub	30	Sandie Williard
14	Michael Huntsbury II	31	Barbara Myers
	Ethel Schmidt		

If you would like to become a sponsor for the newsletter, the cost is \$50. Please contact the church office 301-733-7550.

What to Give Up...

Give up complaining ...	focus on Gratitude
Give up pessimism ...	become an Optimist
Give up worry ...	trust Divine Providence
Give up bitterness ...	turn to Forgiveness
Give up hatred ...	return Good for evil
Give up negativism ...	be Positive
Give up anger ...	be More Patient
Give up pettiness ...	become Mature
Give up gloom ...	enjoy the Beauty all around you
Give up jealousy ...	pray for Trust
Give up gossiping ...	control your Tongue
Give up sin ...	turn to Virtue
Give up giving up ...	Hang in there!

The Altar Guild will be collecting donations for Easter memorials on **March 8, 15, 22, 29**.
Please complete the form below.

PLEASE ***PRINT LEGIBLY!***

Altar Guild Donations 2015

In honor/memory of: _____

Given by: _____

Are these individuals the same as those you listed for Christmas 2014? Yes No

