



# St. Mark's Messenger

May 2015

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

601 Washington Avenue ~ Hagerstown, MD

301-733-7550 ~ Website: [lutheranchurchhagerstown.co](http://lutheranchurchhagerstown.co)

The Reverend G. Stanley Steele, Senior Pastor

## *Pastoral Thoughts...*

*'While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering...You are witnesses of these things' Luke 24: 41a; 48*

So the disciples now see the risen Jesus with their own eyes and they still cannot believe he is alive. What will it take? Jesus simply asks for something to eat to show he is real and alive. I believe Jesus wanted the disciples then and us now to know he was risen, alive and present. To show life he ate. Such a simple act but one that shows he is not a ghost or something imagined. He is real and present with them and I believe with us as well. During this Easter season we sing the great hymns, listen to the passages of scripture, admire the beauty of the spring and yet in our joy and hope are we too disbelieving? As good as life can be it can also present challenges, disappointments, anxiety and fear. As we read the news or reflect on our own lives what stands out? Life or death? Joy or sadness? You see death is still a powerful force in our world and even though death has been defeated by Jesus it still has its grip on us. The war so to speak is over but the battle continues. We constantly need to be reminded that life does triumph death. We need to be refreshed with the assurance that Jesus is very much real and alive in our world and in our lives.

There are several ways to keep ourselves in the belief of the resurrection. We gather on the first day of the week, Sunday, the resurrection day to worship and be reminded that Jesus is alive and active around us. We can give life as we support each other with a visit, card, or call. We also celebrate life when we allow others to care for us and show their support. This journey we are on is a long and uncertain one, but the one thing that is certain is that Jesus is alive and standing with us. We may sometimes be uncertain, but that's the beauty of God's grace for the presence of Jesus and life is not dependent on us. It is a gift from God through the resurrection of Jesus and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Like the disciples of old we too are the witnesses. We too are called to tell the story and remind each other of the victory that is ours. Life and love and joy have been given to us by God. Like the disciples of old we only need to believe what our heart and spirit is telling us as well as our eyes. Death has been defeated. Jesus is alive. We are alive. Let's declare our intention to believe this in a powerful way and to tell others who so desperately need to hear the word of life, the word of faith, the word of love from God in Jesus. It's our call and our blessing to be the messengers of such marvelous good news. Why hesitate? Start today to live and share life with others in the name of Jesus.

Your fellow witness,

*Pastor Stan*



## Jesus Vision

*“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith...”*

--Hebrews 12:2

A quote that I recently read said, *“Don’t minor in the majors and major in the minors.”* I think we would all agree that this is a good principle; the problem is we often disagree on what is major and what is minor. So the real question is how do we decipher between the minor and the major? The answer of course is, look to Jesus. When I look at the ministry of Jesus I see someone who exemplified this principle.

While the religious leaders of the day were spending hours upon hours arguing about what was or was not allowed on the Sabbath, Jesus was busy engaging with people and bringing healing and wholeness into their lives. He was majoring in the majors, while they were majoring in the minors. Thankfully, Jesus did not just live it out, but He also gave us some very simple directions in Mark 12 for how we can live this out, *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”*

This simple principle of Jesus is at the heart of our vision: Inspire, Serve, Grow Disciples. We want to be a church that continues to major in the majors, but this takes constant work and most of all it takes a constant focus on Jesus. From Jesus we learn what the majors are, we learn that the most important thing is to love God and to love one another; this is how we major in the majors.

The most important things are not paint colors or worship styles. The most important things are not carpet styles or coffee flavors. The most important things are not getting our own way or always being right. The most important things are not having to be recognized for service or being a leader. The most important thing is to love God and to love one another.

Sounds simple enough, but we all know how hard it is, so if this will continue to be a reality for our church we must have eyes that are fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. He alone can show us what it means to major in the majors as we see how He has gone to the cross and defeated death so that we might receive His righteousness.

Friends, may we always have eyes that are fixed on Jesus.

Julie Fiery

Council President



### **Renovation Update**

We have met with several banks who are interested in working with us. At this point we are waiting for a report from the general contractor, Callas, so we have a more certain number to base our decisions. Once this report is given to us the Task Force will meet and make suggestions to the Church Council and then the Congregation. It may very well be the fall before a Congregational Meeting is called as will want to have time to discuss any plans with you the members and hear your ideas as well.

### **Financial Status**

Thanks to everyone who has been faithful in your giving as we are slightly ahead of last year in our envelope offerings. This is good news considering the three Sundays we were hit with severe weather this winter and had reduce attendance. Our Lenten and Holy Week offerings were not on par with last year so we are basically at the same giving level through April. Our expenses are below the budget. We have had to rely on the Endowment Fund interest to support the budget. Again we ask that you prayerfully consider what you can give for the ministry of St. Mark's. Whatever you are led to give you have our heartfelt thanks.



### **Fundraisers to Benefit Two Groups**

A Coach Bingo fundraiser will be held on May 3, 2015 at the newly remodeled Williamsport Moose Lodge public hall to benefit the Quinn Alec Hoover Legacy Scholarship Fund. The doors will open at Noon with bingo starting at 2 PM. There will be a total of 25 games. The final game will be for up to \$1,000 cash and the other 24 games will be for valuable Coach purses. There will also be three special games available. The cost is \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door, if any tickets are available. There are only 150 tickets available for this event. Tickets are available from Tom and Sonja Hoover and Ralph and Penny Bartles.

The Youth Group will be selling food at this bingo event to raise funds for their ASP trip in June.

Come out and help make this event a huge success for everyone. *Ralph Bartles*

### **2015 High School and College Graduates**

If you have someone that will be graduating this year from High School or College, please notify the Church office by email at [pblenard@stmarkslc.org](mailto:pblenard@stmarkslc.org), by telephone at 301-733-7550, or by mail before the end of May. We will be recognizing our young people that have accomplished this stepping stone in their life in the June newsletter and also in one of our Sunday bulletins.



### **ELCA Good Gifts**

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is a church that is freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. With our hands, we do God's work of restoring and reconciling communities in Jesus Christ's name throughout the world. ELCA Good Gifts go beyond your regular congregational offering to support the ministries of the ELCA that mean the most to you and your loved ones. Together, we do more than we could ever do alone: grow the church, fight hunger and transform lives. Your gift carries God's love to others, making a difference in their lives and in the world. Your donations support long-term, sustainable solutions that ensure that these good gifts last for more than a couple of days or weeks. They keep on giving for years to come. Visit [www.goodgiftselca.org](http://www.goodgiftselca.org) to find out more.

## Coming Soon - St. Mark's ASP trip (June 14-20)



This will be our fourth trip with the St. Mark's Youth Group and we are hoping to head to Kentucky this year to offer our services. We anticipate sending 24 people to work which is a cost of \$7,535 plus the additional cost of supplies that we take, which include work gloves, safety goggles, respirators, other work related equipment as well as lunch supplies, healthy snacks and water for all our volunteers. We have held several fundraisers throughout this school year including a spaghetti dinner, a pancake breakfast as well as our current sandwich sale. Unfortunately, we are still short of reaching our financial goal and are hoping that the members of St. Mark's are willing to make financial donations to our trip. You may do this through your regular offering envelopes, please include your extra donation and mark on the front of the envelope the amount and write 'ASP' in the blank space provided.

### A few quick facts about Appalachia Service Project

- ASP was founded in 1969 by Rev. Tex Evans to make homes warmer, safer and drier for impoverished families living in Central Appalachia.
- Since ASP's founding, 358,216 volunteers have repaired 16,693 homes.
- 17,188 volunteers from more than 30 states volunteered with ASP in 2014.
- In 2015, ASP will serve in 30 impoverished communities in Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

### ASP changes lives

Just a few days at ASP transforms the lives of those who come to serve. Home repair strengthens us physically while also deepening our relationship with God. After serving with ASP in the past, we've returned home with a passion for putting our faith into action, a renewed compassion for other people, and a fresh appreciation for our place and purpose in this world.

### ASP strengthens churches

Once our group completed their first ASP project, it's become an integral part of our church's calendar each year.

### ASP immerses volunteers in the lives of Appalachian families

ASP is more than a building program—it's a relationship-building ministry. And the bonds formed among volunteers and the Appalachian families are some of the most important aspects of the ASP experience. We spend a lot of time interacting with the families we are helping, learning about their lives, their struggles, and their faith. We go to give hope and help, to lift spirits and remind the families of God's love and provision. But we come away with so much more. Through their gratitude, we've gained a newfound appreciation for our own blessings. Through their down-to-earth faith, our own faith has grown stronger. Best of all, we've discovered that regardless of geography, education, or economics, all are equal members of the family of God.

We truly appreciate your prayers as well as your financial support. This trip means so much to our youth as well as the families we serve.

Thank you! Doug Fiery



### Bible Study

Bible Study meets Tuesday evenings at 6:30 pm and Wednesday at 10:00 am we will reading and studying First and Second Corinthians. These are fascinating looks at the issues of faith and practice facing the early church and the way St. Paul dealt with them. We will be discussing Baptism, Holy Communion, how to treat fellow believers, sharing our gifts with God and other areas of faith that still apply today. Please join us for a lively and thoughtful discussion led by Pastor Stan.

### Small Group for Youth

The Small Group fellowship and bible study for high school youth is well underway and going strong. We are adding a few more dates to the calendar so feel free to come join in the fun. Small group will meet following the late service and will end around 2 pm. Lunch will be served during this time. The following are the new dates May 17th and 31st. We will explore new topics like the story of Jonah and also explore your own personal relationship with God.



### Health & Wellness

#### Let's Get Heathy!!

*Personal Workout* - We are taught to take care of our spiritual needs as well as our physical needs by Jesus. He feeds the crowds as well as the disciples on the beach after the resurrection. He heals people of their spiritual needs and their physical needs so we are called to be attentive to our spiritual wellbeing as well as our physical. So I am seeking three

folks who will join me for one or two sessions a week of exercising together under a personal trainer at Ruff Fitness on Pennsylvania Avenue. I have been going on my own for the last several months and would enjoy the company of others. The cost would be \$25.00 for an hour. I promise it won't be too difficult and it will give you energy and a brighter outlook. I am flexible with time although I prefer not exercising before 9 am, I need to be awake to do this! Let me know if you are interested. **Pastor Stan**

*Wellness Class* – St. Mark's will be offering a wellness class beginning in July. The class will be led by personnel of the Washington County Health Department. We will begin with six weekly sessions and then monthly for six months. Speak to Elaine Rose or Pastor Stan for details. Elaine has completed the program and Pastor Stan will be a participant. As Pastor Rick Warren has said, it is the call of the church to care about the physical wellbeing of the members of the congregation as well as their spiritual health. We will make this fun and worthwhile for each other. We need at least six and no more than 12 for a class.

### Lunch Bunch

The Lunch Bunch will be meeting on Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at the Colonial Restaurant which is located on Route 11 at 1:00 pm. Please join us for good fun, food, and fellowship. All are welcomed.



### 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.



### Learning Parties

St. Mark's will again be hosting the Learning Parties, a program to help prepare three- to five-year olds to be ready to enter kindergarten. The Learning Parties will be held on four consecutive Tuesdays in May (5, 12, 19, and 26) from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. All members of the families are invited to attend, and a meal is served prior to the learning activities. Volunteers are needed to help with preparing and serving the meals, cleanup, and providing nursery and activities for the siblings of the children in the program. Please contact either Elaine Rose or Kim Gandee if you are willing to help any, or all, of the Tuesday evenings. Thank you.

### **More Brass Music?**

We are glad to know that so many in the congregation enjoyed the special brass music on Easter Sunday, as well as on Anniversary Sunday this past October. Quite a few of you have encouraged us to bring back the brass quintet more often. This can be arranged if we are able to secure supplementary funding for the musicians and for the purchase of new music.



As many of you know, our Endowment Committee has been very gracious in providing annual financial support to hire the wonderful outside musicians who play for us at Easter and on many other occasions with the choirs and praise team. This funding also permits us to hire a few musicians over the summer to serve as soloists while the choirs are on break. Any additional full brass event, however, would not be covered by the Endowment stipend.

So if you appreciate the special music ministry provided by the brass quintet and would like to contribute specifically for this purpose, please see Kathy Barr, Mike Mogensen or Rick Mogensen. If we receive enough complimentary funding during the coming months, we will plan to schedule the brass again for the fall of 2015. Thank you in advance for your support!



### **Attention! Attention!**

With spring upon us, I am sure that many are doing some spring house cleaning. The Quilters of St. Marks are in need of material. If you have any old drapes, old dresses, or any material with a nice print they will welcome all donations. Thank you for your consideration and have a wonderful spring!

The following was sent to me by a St. Mark's member and I thought it had a good message:

### **Why Go To Church?**

A Church goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday. "I've gone for 30 years now," he wrote, "and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons, but for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time and the pastors are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all." This started a real controversy in the 'Letters to the Editor' column. Much to the delight of the editor, it went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher:

"I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this: They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today. Here's a few reminders that have helped me:

"When you are DOWN to nothing, God is UP to something!"

"Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible and receives the impossible!"

"Thank God for our physical and our spiritual nourishment!"

B. I. B. L. E. It simply means: Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth!

*When Satan is knocking at your door, simply say, "Jesus, could you get that for me, while I forward this message to your children?"*

**Enjoy!!**



**Have some FUN!**

This fully supported hike features 5 mile, 10 mile, and 20 mile routes. You can look forward to snacks and drink refills along with lunch for the 10 and 20 mile hikers. All hikes will be along the Maryland section of the Appalachian Trail and will end at the Washington

Monument State Park, where we'll enjoy food, fun and friendship. This event will be Saturday June 13, 2015.

**Help feed the Hungry and Promote Literacy**

Proceeds will benefit **Micah's Backpack** (a program to feed hungry elementary school students) and **HARC** (whose initiatives include Parent Learning Parties – a proven curriculum to help parents prepare their children to enter school “ready to learn,” an annual book drive to get books into the hands of at-risk children, Food Pantry & Soup Kitchen Collaboration, and other faith community collaborations).

**Register!**

Obtain a registration form from your church or visit [www.harccoalition.org/hike](http://www.harccoalition.org/hike) for a form or to register online. For more info, visit the website above or contact HARC at 301-842-4272 or [kathy.harc@gmail.com](mailto:kathy.harc@gmail.com)



**Thank You**

To our wonderful St. Mark's family, The Kelley and Richards families would like to thank everyone for the outpouring of prayers, calls, cards, food and visits during the time leading up to Mom's passing. It is comforting to know that we have loving and caring friends. We will have a memorial service for her on May 16th at 2:00 pm to celebrate her 90 years of life. While we miss her every day, she is now in the arms of our Lord and Savior. Thanks be to God.

**April Attendance and Income/Expenses**

Worship

April 5:	311
April 12:	99
April 19:	116
April 26:	115

Income for the month of April	\$29,735.70**
Expenses for the month of April	\$16,205.23

\*\*This includes \$9,000 from Endowment.

## Happy May Birthday to...

- |    |                      |    |                        |
|----|----------------------|----|------------------------|
| 4  | Mackenzie Gandee     | 19 | Shana Ringer           |
| 5  | Cody Bitner          | 21 | Hunter Hartman         |
| 9  | Sally Fiery          |    | Paul Miner Sr.         |
| 11 | Mikahla Stouffer     | 23 | Laura Danner           |
| 12 | Benjamin Gilbert     | 24 | Tiffany Shaw           |
| 13 | Kimberly Bitner      | 25 | Hunter Baker           |
|    | Jamie Bryan          |    | Richard Gilbert        |
| 14 | Tiffany Stottlemeyer |    | Max Mogensen Jr.       |
| 15 | Ryan Barrett         |    | Paula Munday           |
|    | Robert Horn          | 26 | Petra Elsen            |
|    | Mary Mullenix        | 27 | Gary Bartles           |
|    | Angel Pearson        | 30 | Phebean Kargbo-Reffell |
| 16 | Marissa Ridgely      |    | Carl Spessard III      |

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