



# St. Mark's Messenger

August 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 Reflections ... *Member, Consumer, Disciple***

I have been reflecting lately on the changing descriptions being used to describe our relationship to the Church. For many years, we referred to those within the church as 'members' implying that as a member there was certain built in understandings of what we were to expect. Similar to joining other organizations we were expected to pay our dues (offering in the church), attend meetings or events (worship), volunteer for events, and the like. As a member of the church, we would commit ourselves to be involved at some level with our time and resources and in return we could expect a place to worship, be prayed for, to have ourselves and family members trained in the faith, have the Pastor visit us when needed, celebrate life milestones like a birth (baptism), wedding and death (funeral service). In return we would publically associate with this particular church and continue our association indefinitely. This is how I would define the relationship, you may have a somewhat different take.

I now think there is a trend to not see ourselves as a member of a certain church, but rather as a consumer of whatever setting meets our needs or desires. This plays to the overall character of our culture today which operates in this fashion. We have more choices today than ever before. We have more stores, malls, and yes, the internet where we search for the right choice that fits our immediate need and value. Today we also have many more options of different types of churches and styles. It also seems we tend to look for what meets our needs in the moment, what excites us today. This trend leads to more mobility of folks in where they attend depending on how their needs in life change and finding the faith community that speaks to us now. I am not trying to critique this trend or any others; but only offer reflections on what I hear and observe as people state that their needs are not being met at a certain place. The emphasis here is on what I receive and how it meets my expectations or need at this time which has led to the term being used across faith communities of 'consumer Christianity'.

This leads me to what I believe the church needs at this time is to see ourselves as 'disciples' rather than as members or consumers. As disciples we follow, we dedicate ourselves to someone or something beyond ourselves, we make a commitment to a community of believers accepting that the journey will not always be pleasant or easy, but trusting in the goodness of the community and in the one we follow. For us as Christians we state we are disciples of Jesus so why not describe ourselves as disciples within the church as the church is Jesus' body now on earth. As disciples we would see that we need to listen before speaking, be bold in our faith, and care for each other in a deep and abiding way while following where the Spirit of God leads us. This relationship is deeper and in ways more challenging than the other two I have mentioned, but it is also the relationship that will deepen our faith in Jesus and affection for each other and all others as we see in them the presence of Christ.

I will be asking the Church Council to join me in a reading of the book, [From Members to Disciples](#), this fall. I will also be offering an opportunity for you to join us with a group that will meet to discuss the book for six weeks. I hope you will join me in this exploration. Please understand I am not judging or criticizing anyone with these reflections. I am only hoping to offer an opportunity for reflection and discussion. Please feel free to speak with me to share your insights.

With God's Blessing, *Pastor Stan*



## It's vacation time...or is it?

While it's the big decisions that can change the course of our lives, it's the small choices that can define a life. We often make these choices without thinking much about them. "Maybe they're just a part of our routine or a response to people in our lives. Maybe we're in a hurry and just don't take time to consider the implications of our everyday actions. If we did, we would see that behind every to-do list, calendar appointment and shopping list is an opportunity to live what we believe."

— *Live What You Believe, The Lutheran Community Foundation*

It's summer. You're in vacation mode. The to-do lists are shorter, your calendar (breathe a sigh of relief here...) has large blocks of open time, and maybe, just maybe, you can sleep in until 8:00 a.m. Perhaps you've had time to read that book that has been lying on your bedside table for two months or maybe you were able to slip away for a trip to the beach. You're just "being," not "doing." Ahhh!

So, while the lazy days of summer may not seem like the time to think about your plans for the fall, there may be no better time for you to carve out a plan for how you are going to live a life of significance. God calls us to lives of action; lives that show who we are through Him, and yet, I would hazard a guess that some of us put less thought into how our lives appear to God than we do into our food choices for the day or our clothing choices for that special event. Today is the day to change that. Tomorrow may be too late, or at least, too busy.

Have you considered whether the things you filled your calendar with last year were actions that created a "God Moment" in someone's life or made an impact on your church? If not, it's time to sit down with family or friends and commit to godly actions this fall. Have you thought about sharing your time and talents with God? Are you honoring the King first? How can you make God a greater priority?

We actively demonstrate our generosity of the heart by living what we believe every day, but we also need to search for ways to enthusiastically share that generosity with others. As fall approaches, visit our church website, read the church newsletter, talk to members of the congregation – find an area of ministry at our church that interests you and consider sharing your generosity now!

*"Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."* (2 Corinthians 9:7)

*Julie Fiery, Council President*

Why does summer always seem to fly by so fast? Didn't it just start? It's soon to be that time again - when choirs will be starting up. We always have room - and a need - for more singers (Hint...Hint!) **Please** consider joining us. Tentative (but pretty firm) starting dates and times for choirs are:

**Chancel Choir** - Thursday, September 3 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm  
**Chapel Choir** - Wednesday, September 2 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm  
**Cherub Choir** - Thursday, September 10 5:15 pm - 6:00 pm



Watch the bulletins later in August for definite dates/times. If you have any questions, please contact Kathy Barr @ 301-733-4090. Hope to see you in September!!

Your co-worker in Christ, Kathy Barr



### Praise Team – Youth and Adults

The Praise Team consists of any interested youth (high school and up) as well as adults that are interested in leading worship for the alternate services at the 10:45am service on the second and last Sunday of the month. Rehearsals are usually held on two or three Thursdays each month. Rehearsals will begin on Thursday, August 27 at 7:00 p.m. in the choir room.

*The young man said to Him, “All these commands I have kept; what am I still lacking?” Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven. Come, follow Me.” Matthew 19:20*

Have you ever seen the joy and excitement on children’s faces when they receive a gift? Their eyes light up and a grin spreads across their face. I am blessed to experience this each week at school when children bustle down the hall to pick up a backpack filled with food for the weekend. Words cannot begin to describe the emotions that fill my heart when I see how delighted these children are.



St. Mark’s has been proud to be involved with the Micah’s Backpack program for several years, serving students at Hickory, Marshall Street, and Potomac Heights schools. This year, our outreach will focus on approximately 40 students at Winter Street Elementary.

Each week, bags are filled with nutritious meals for the weekend: two breakfasts, two lunches, two dinners, and snacks. These bags are then taken to the school and sent home with children each Friday. These children don’t need to worry if there will be food for the weekend- we have taken that worry away.

Thank you for the support that you have given to the Micah’s Backpack program at our church. Your monetary donations are greatly appreciated. If you would like to be involved with filling and/or delivering the backpacks, please let me know.

Thank you for being disciples of God! Julie Stouffer



### New Office Hours

The Parish Administrator will be in the office Tuesday and Thursday from 8:00 am until 2:00 pm. You can leave a message for any of the staff on the other days. Pastor Stan will be in the office on Wednesday as well as available on the other days.

### Bible Study

Bible Study meets Tuesday evenings at 6:30 pm we will reading and studying the gospel of St. Mark. T Mark is the first written gospel and the basis of our readings this year. We have a time of prayer, reflection, sharing, and discussion. Please join us!



### Small Group- For High School Youth

Our group has been very busy this year meeting twice monthly for the past several months. We meet 2 Sundays a month directly after church to have lunch and share in fellowship while encouraging growing in our faith. Topics covered thus far have been God’s plans for you now and in the future, fears, challenges, your faith journey and having a personal relationship with God. High School Youth are creating lessons and guiding each other. In addition to Sunday meetings the group has had a lock in, gone bowling, ice skating, and is planning to participate in the Block Party, Up Rise Festival, Habitat for Humanity, Crop Walk and many more fun and charitable activities.

If you want to push yourself out of your comfort zone come join us Sunday meetings are scheduled for **August 16th and the 30th**. Check the bulletin for monthly meeting dates and times. For further questions, please contact Tiffany Shaw at 240-520-8712 or [Tiffers524@gmail.com](mailto:Tiffers524@gmail.com) or Elaine Rose at 301-730-0750 or [gerose@verizon.net](mailto:gerose@verizon.net)



### **Lunch Bunch**

The Lunch Bunch will be meeting on Tuesday, August 18<sup>th</sup> at Western Sizzler Steak House at 1:00 pm. Please join us for good fun, food, and fellowship. All are welcomed.

### **Block Party**

Please Be “SHOPPING” for School Supplies for the Back to School Block Party to be held this year on August 1, 9am - 1pm. Items needed are: Crayons, yellow #2 Pencils, Markers, Spiral Notebooks, Glue Sticks (ONLY), Pens, Lined Paper Wide and College Rule, Tissues, Scissors, Pencil Cases, 1” Notebooks / Binders, Ziploc Bags, Colored Pencils, Pink Erasers, Folders with Pockets / Clips, 70-Page Notebooks, Notebook Dividers, Folders With 3 Hole Brads, Composition Notebooks, Book Covers, 3x5 Lined Notecards,. Other miscellaneous supplies needed for classrooms when students have accidents are Clorox Wipes, Hand Wipes, (No Hand Sanitizer Spray/Gel), White Tube Socks, Underwear, T-Shirts, Sneakers, Sweat Pants, Monetary donations will also be appreciated. Backpacks are needed, and cost \$82.80 a case or individual donations of backpacks will be appreciated.



St. Mark's will again man the hot dog / drink trailer and games for the children. The Salvation Army will donate the hot dogs and buns. Please put the date on your calendar, as your help will be needed on the date of the event. If you have any questions or would like to donate, please see Elaine Rose. Thank you!!



### ***St Mark's Got Talent Dinner and Show***

Save the date – Saturday, October 17, 2015



### **Silent Auction**

It has been a long time coming, but it is back. This is event is going to be our kickoff of fun and fundraising activities for the much needed proposed renovations of our church. It is going to be an evening of good food, lots of fun, great entertainment, and the chance to bid on some nice items in the silent auction. Ralph Bartles has agreed to head the committee overseeing the event and the Got Talent Show.

What/who do we need from the congregation?

Talent – and we are blessed with lots of it:

- Singers – soloists, duets and groups
- Musicians – soloists, duets and groups
- Dancer(s)
- Magicians
- Comedians (G/PG rated)
- Skit/short play performers
- Readers of writings (original or not)
- Other types of performances

Help:

- Food/kitchen committee
- Talent/stage committee
- Silent auction committee

If you have talent, and want to give it your all, contact Ralph Bartles at [ralphbartles@yahoo.com](mailto:ralphbartles@yahoo.com) or call his cellphone at 301-667-5727. Leave a message and he will return your call.

If you wish to help (and we will require plenty) please contact Ralph at the above email or cell phone number. If you are able to volunteer your assistance, please do so; or some of you will receive a call requesting your assistance. It is better to *give* a call to help, than it is to *receive* a call for you to volunteer.

For the possible faint of heart, this event will be open to the public.



### Thank You

Thank You from Befrienders,

Our befrienders thank Julie Stouffer for her energy, enthusiasm, and compassion in putting together the gifts for our shut in folks. The mini-clay pots of ivy and mini-sun flowers were charming; the inspiring verse attached to the pots read "God if you're the gardener and I'm the seed, let your will flow like water through the soil around me, cause your love to complete me until I am ready to bloom into your most beautiful flower."

Our adult and children Sunday school classes created a hand-crafted lovely card for each person. Our befrienders reach out to our shut-in members with a telephone call, card, or visit each month. The 2015-2016 befrienders are Alma Bowers, Sally Fiery, Pat Henry, Sherrie Henson, Connie Hook, Millie Hluchy, Doris Leasure, Priscilla Matheny, Judy Munday, Linda Perry, Tom Perry, Lois Rodeffer, Ethel Schmidt, Elaine Shank, Jeanne Small, Gladys Spessard, and Patty Taylor.

The beautifully expressed card to each shut-in read:

We've been thinking about you and wanted to bless your day  
and let you know you're special to us in so many different ways  
and that you'll feel Him near. Knowing God is by your side  
and knowing that we care.

I give thanks for our befrienders that express Jesus' love each month. We are blessed to have this group of caring folks that care about others. And, again, a special thanks to Julie Stouffer for organizing and making this project a reality.

Linda Perry,  
Befrienders Chair

Many thanks to the wonderful church family of St. Mark's for the phone calls, prayers, and beautiful cards during my recent accident and hospitalization. Your concerns have all helped with my recovery and I am so grateful. Thanks so much again! Sally Fiery

Pastor Stan and St. Mark's Family,

I would like to thank everyone for the lovely altar flowers, cards, and delicious fruit basket that was given to me for my 99<sup>th</sup> birthday. It is comforting to know so many people care.

May God Bless, Mary Stouffer

Many thanks for the cards, telephone calls, visits, and prayers during the recovery from surgery.  
God Bless, Priscilla Matheny

We received a thank you letter from the Community Free Clinic thanking us for our donation of \$100. This letter will be posted on the bulletin board across from the Sacristy.



### Save the Date!

St. Mark's will be hosting the annual church picnic on September 21<sup>st</sup> at Doub's Woods. Details will be announced soon!



### Mark Your Calendars

St. Mark's will be participating in God's Work our Hands again this year. Please reserve a space on your calendar for this event. It will be held Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>. Please contact John Lewis or Tom Perry for more information.

Their smiles. Their laughter. Their joy. I am surrounded by 100 little Zimbabwean school children. I find myself wondering why God has chosen me to be the one who is caught up in this experience, but I am so thankful that He has. My team is hosting a Vacation Bible School program and we are about to play Duck Duck Goose. I have just told the children to form a big circle. But instead of spreading out and sitting beside each other, they all run towards me and circle around me. Little arms are wrapped around my waist and small hands are latching onto my arms. I am literally being pulled in a dozen different directions and I am beginning to lose my balance as I am being tugged on from all sides. However, what I find funny about this is that never have I felt more stable, grounded, and at peace than I am in this moment.

God displayed His power and plans to me in big ways during my two weeks in Zimbabwe and I would like to share my experience with you as best I can. My team, made up of 11 students from Liberty University, had the opportunity to see God at work in Zimbabwe in ways we will never be able to adequately describe. We visited orphanages, schools, and churches to share our personal faith stories, tell of Jesus' love, provide workbooks for school children, fellowship with one another, and pray over hundreds of children and adults. With each day, I caught new glimpses of how great our Father's love is for all of His children. However, I believe the most impactful part of our ministry came while holding the VBS program at one of the local schools. For about two hours a day for three days, 200 children gathered together to hear Bible stories, make crafts, sing praises to the Lord, and play games. A pastor at one of the local churches partnered with us for this time of ministry. After finishing the VBS program one day, the headmaster of the school invited my team and the pastor into his office and asked us to pray over the students and teachers who attended and taught at the school. After our prayer, he went on to tell us that because he had seen the excitement and desire of the students to learn more about Jesus, he had decided he would like the pastor to teach Bible classes to the students on a weekly basis! My team was thrilled to hear of this great news and we thanked God for allowing us to witness the fruit of our ministry. This is only one of the many times we experienced how fervently God is at work in a place that is often overlooked and forgotten.



Our time in Zimbabwe came to an end too soon, but I know that ministry will continue and the sharing of the gospel will be faithfully preached by the local believers. Since arriving home, I have been able to reflect on my experience and the things that God has been teaching me:

- We must be faithful in the little things, even those that seem insignificant (Matthew 25:14-29). This includes our personal lives as well as our role as the body of the Church. We as Christians must take care of what God has entrusted us with. Money, resources, time, talents, and prayer are all things that we must use wisely and in ways that will be beneficial not only to the already existing body of believers, but also to those who have not yet heard or responded to the gospel.
- "Missions" is a mindset. Missions can be done overseas in a different continent, in the States, in the workplace, and even at home! Bringing the gospel to all people groups is a great task, but there are so many different cultures and peoples represented in America that we have the chance to live out the Great Commission here at home on a daily basis! The mission field surrounds us everywhere we go and while this is so easy to forget, we must help each other as we practice having a "mission's mindset" every day! (Acts 1:8)
- It is not our job to change lives. We do not have the power to do so. We are commanded to share the gospel and live out our faith in Christ, or as Paul says in 1 Corinthians, plant and water seeds, and trust that God will do the harvesting and transforming of lives (1 Corinthians 3:5-11).
- We may not always see the fruit of our labors instantly, in a few months or years, or even in our lifetime. However, it is still extremely important to remain faithful in fulfilling our task of advancing the Kingdom of God. And when we do get to see the fruit of our work, rejoice! (Hebrews 11:13-16)
- Pray intentionally and constantly. Be grateful...for everything!

Keeping these points in mind each day is quite the task itself! Living them out is very challenging and even seems daunting at times! I fail and make mistakes as much as anyone but still God's grace and mercy remain. As God has revealed these new precepts to me, I know He has not done so without giving me the strength and the ability to work on them and grow closer to Him as I do.

Their smiles. Their laughter. Their joy. The people of Zimbabwe will always have a special place in my heart and I will never forget the smiles, laughter, and joy that they brought me! I am so thankful that God has given me such caring and supportive people in my life who so generously made donations and devoted themselves to prayer to make my time in Zimbabwe possible. Please know that you brought truth, love, and so much joy to hundreds of people and that God has used your gifts and prayers in ways that are unexplainable! Let us all continue to faithfully serve the Lord and work together to make His name known among the nations! With a thankful and joyful heart, Mikahla Stouffer

### **June and July Attendance and Income/Expenses**

		<u>Worship</u>
June 7:		105
June 14:		101
June 21:		101
June 28:		86
July 5:		126
July 12:		103
July 19:		110
July 26:		100
Income for the month of June	\$12,917.77	
Expenses for the month of June	\$20,341.93	
Net Income	(\$7,424.16)	

## Happy July Birthday to...

1	Lewis Blenard	22	Alma Bowers
5	Linda Perry		Vernon Hancock
10	Barbara Myers	23	Mary Myers
11	Sherri Lewis		Eric Sprecher
12	Paul Schlotterbeck	25	Lauren Barrett
14	Caroline Morris		Steve McAbee
15	Bailey Hovermale		Donna Miner
	Patrick Myers	26	Lester Bowers
	Timothy Myers	27	Becky Myers
16	Julie Fiery	28	Carl Spessard IV
18	Nicholas Lewis	29	Richard Myers
19	Sherrie Henson		Braedon Stouffer
	Kim Jones		Shyanne Tarman
21	Thomas Moser, Jr.	31	Michael Zaffaroni

## Happy August Birthday to...

1	Conrad Beard	12	Jean Stonestreet
2	Linda Kauffman	13	Tyler Harshman
	Charlie Munday		Alexandra Elsen
5	Joseph Smith	16	Stan Stouffer
6	John Gundling	18	Nelson Hartman
8	Dustin Vogel	20	Margaret Rishell
9	Robin Twigg	22	David Ridenour
11	Angela Mogensen	24	Dave Kessler
	Jason Morris	27	Paulina Danner Mills
	Tara Sprecher	28	Devin Kelley
		29	Robert Myers

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