



St. Mark's Messenger

January 2016

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

601 Washington Avenue ~ Hagerstown, MD

301-733-7550 ~ Website: lutheranchurchhagerstown.com

The Reverend G. Stanley Steele, Senior Pastor

Pastoral Thoughts...

'It is Not Over' is a poem by Ann Weems in her book of poems, [Kneeling in Bethlehem](#).

It is not over,

This birthing.

There are always newer skies into which

God can throw stars.

When we begin to think

That we can predict the Advent of God,

That we box the Christ in a stable in Bethlehem,

That's just the time that God will be born

In a place we can't imagine and won't believe.

Those who wait for God watch with their hearts and not their eyes,

Listening

Always listening

For Angel words.

We come to worship at the manger on Christmas and then proceed with life. We have beheld the song of the angels, the worship of the shepherds, and the homage of the wise men. We have taken down the decorations and put the carols away until next year. Yet it is not over! For you see the birth/manifestation of God or His 'showing forth' is ongoing. God is dynamic and always showing his presence to us and usually in places we least expect. Epiphany is a time when the church celebrates the manifestation of Jesus in His baptism, at the wedding in Cana, in the temple and on the mountain of the Transfiguration. It is also the time to be reminded that God continues to manifest Himself to us and as the poet says, '*...God will be born in a place we can't imagine and won't believe*'. We open our ears and our eyes for the birth of Jesus within us every day. We celebrate His continual birth in our hearts, giving us strength and faith to be disciples of '...the Word made flesh.' '*Listening always listening for Angel words*'.

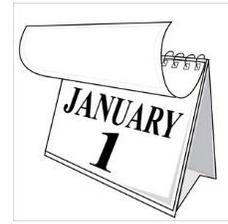
It is not over...it continues every day, listen for the angel words and watch for the spirit of Jesus to appear within you.

The Blessing of Epiphany!

Pastor Stan

Choosing well in the New Year...

The beginning of each New Year always brings talk of making resolutions and starting or stopping some habits. As adults we promise ourselves that this is the year we're going to lose those extra ten pounds, stop smoking, get out of debt, make better choices, or fix a broken relationship. Young people might see the new year as an opportunity to start over in certain areas of their lives, to exercise more, to make straight A's, or to get along better with their parents. With resolution-making on our minds, the beginning of 2016 is a great time to think about the commitments we make and consider whether or not we are choosing well.



Commitments say a lot about who we are. Decisions to add or discard habits speak to things that are important to us—health, wholeness, family, relationships, and so forth. When we choose to make commitments, we test ourselves to see if we can be true to our word.

The first of the year is also a great time to think about the whys and the whens of our commitments. Sometimes we over commit or over promise and find ourselves in over our heads. So maybe, instead of a long list of new resolutions or promises this year, we can just resolve to make the best possible choices in our commitments and learn to let each “yes” be yes and each “no” be no.

Making Good Choices

The starting point for choosing well is to examine our current commitments. Begin by asking: *Are my choices meaningful and worthy of my time and effort, or do they just add pressure and expectations?* We all live with so much pressure and expectation that we don't need the added burden of commitments that steal the joy from our daily lives.

Seek God First

A sure way to choose well is to seek first the kingdom of God. When we are in constant communion with God, we are more in tune with our capacity and are able to say yes or no at the right time. In the coming year we will encounter plenty of opportunities that sound too good to pass up. We need to consider saying yes to commitments that are life-giving and saying no to the things that, although fun, only add busyness and pressure to the daily routine. This year challenge yourself to make just one resolution—to say yes to life-giving things and no to life-draining things.

Wishing everyone a blessed New Year!

Julie Fiery, Council President



Altar Flowers

God Bless you all as you place your flowers on St. Mark's altar in honor/memory of loved ones. They bring beauty to our church and joy to those who receive them. We have open dates for 2016. They are June 12, July 31, October 23, and December 18. If you are interested taking one or more of these dates, please contact Judy Munday at 301-739-4669.



St. Mark's Orchestra and Breakfast

The time has come again to enjoy the wonderful St. Mark's orchestra along with a bite to eat. The next date is January 17th. Come enjoy this great time of fellowship.



**Meet
for
Breakfast**

Lunch Bunch-NEW DATE

The Lunch Bunch will be having their monthly gathering at Maloo's Pub which is located at 325 Virginia Ave. This month the date is January 26th and the time is 1:00 pm. Come and join us and enjoy great food and fellowship.





Julie Fiery will be hosting a 6-week Women's Dinner/Bible study that helps women develop positive self-worth, grow in confidence, and discover their true identity in Christ. The series **will begin on Tuesday, January 12** and continue every Tuesday, ending on February 16. Our first meeting **will be held at Hempen Hill BBQ in The Fountain Head Plaza, beginning at 5:30 p.m.** Dinner venue and style will change

weekly based on the wishes of the group. In order to have enough material for the study, please notify Julie by email JAFiery@hotmail.com or phone 301-791-3644 if you plan to attend.

"Becoming Who You Are In Christ"

Discover your true identity, and know your value.....

Hidden deep within the heart of every woman lies a series of lingering questions:

Am I worthy?

Am I enough?

Do you think I'm beautiful?

Am I of value.....to my friends, to my family, and to the world?

Women of every age and girls have a hard time finding and believing their value. From girlhood to womanhood, we are on a quest to have these questions answered with a resounding "yes!" The desire to be found worthy, loved, beautiful, and valuable is an insatiable search for significance; a hunger in our souls that fuels every dream, decision, and relationship.

Becoming Who You Are in Christ guides girls and women of all ages on a journey to discover their true identity and worth as beloved daughters of God.

Discover the source of their true value and worth.

Cultivate true confidence that comes from God, not self.

- Move from insecurity to radiance and joy.
- Ditch the trap of perfectionism, and thrive in freedom and grace.
- Walk in their true identity, and reflect Christ to a lost and hurting world.

Volunteers Needed

Have you ever considered becoming a **Hospice of Washington County Volunteer?**

Volunteer Training-January 11th, 15th and 20th from 12:00 – 4:00pm.

For more information, or to apply, call Lindsay Anderson at 301-791-6360.



Volunteer Snow Removal

This winter season the City of Hagerstown is working to mobilize volunteers to help seniors and people with disabilities remain safe and keep their sidewalks clear. Through the Snow Angels Program the city acts as a referral entity connecting interested volunteers with elderly and disabled homeowners

within city limits in need of assistance with snow removal on their property.*

Are you interested in volunteering?

Interested volunteers are paired with a homeowner in need of assistance for the 2015-2016 Winter Season. The volunteer and homeowner work together to coordinate snow removal.

Volunteer applications can be obtained by contacting the Department of Community and Economic Development by phone at 301-739-8577 extension 820 or by e-mail at

DCED@hagerstownmd.org.

* The clearing of snow or ice is ultimately the responsibility of the homeowner. The City requirement for snow/ice removal is that all sidewalks be cleared of ice and snow conditions. The clear path must be at least 48" or the entire width of the sidewalk, whichever is less. The code requires that ice and snow accumulations be cleared within 10 hours after the precipitation ends.

GET COOKING IN THE NEW YEAR!



Cooking For One workshop presented by Hospice of Washington County. Choose the date, time and location that works best for you.

Tuesday January 12, 2016 at our Hancock Community Center
126 W. High St. Hancock, MD. 21750 at 2:00 P.M.

Tuesday January 19, 2016 at our Downtown Hagerstown
Community Life Center 20 West Washington St 3rd. Floor at 2:00 P.M.

Tuesday January 26, 2016 at our main office 747 Northern Ave.
Hagerstown, MD at 2:00 P.M.

This presentation is a great way to get some helpful ideas on preparing healthy, quick and balanced meals for one. We will share great shopping tips as well as a few great recipes. Start your new year out with some new ideas on cooking.

**Please call 301-791-6360 or e-mail
dikemmet@hospiceofwc.org to register for any of these great
workshops.**

Financial Wellness Classes

**Presented by Financial Education Partnership, Washington County, In Collaboration with
Washington County Free Library & MD Cash Campaign.**

When: Each Wednesday, January 13-February 10, 2016, 2pm & 6pm

Where: Washington County Free Library, 100 S. Potomac Street, Room 334, Hagerstown MD

Topics Include: Daily money management, spending plans vs budgets, savings strategies, taxes and consumer protection.

To Register, Please Contact: Kelli Tencer, Success Coach, Reach of Washington County, 301-733-2371 x 107 **OR** Sign up at the Library Reference Desk.



Happy January Birthday to...

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|----|-----------------|----|-----------------------|
| 1 | Martha Gossard | 21 | Bonnie Mower |
| 2 | Cheryl Mogensen | 22 | Wayne Henson |
| 3 | Kathy Gundling | | Sandra Myers |
| 4 | Penny Dawson | 24 | Payton Morris |
| 6 | Carol Jones | 25 | Betty College |
| 7 | Robert Kelley | 28 | Charles Clugston |
| 10 | Todd Moser | | Noah Morris |
| 11 | Ryan Jakoby | 29 | Deb Bartles |
| 14 | Scath Zoffaroni | 30 | Robert Leatherman III |
| 20 | Stephen Moser | | |

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



In Loving Memory

January Newsletter Sponsor

In loving memory of *Wilbur Stouffer, Peggy Kendle, Maude Nutter, and Kay Albright* by Doris Leasure.