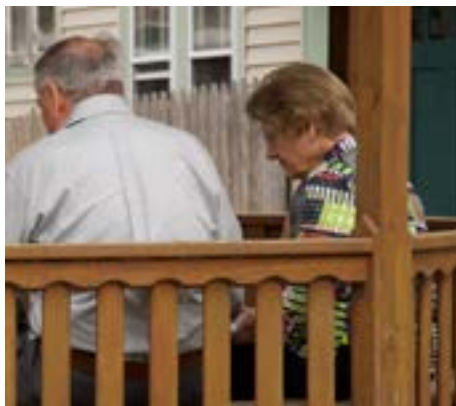


Lent Begins February 14

On Ash Wednesday, February 14 we will begin the forty-day season of Lent with a twelve-hour prayer vigil. You are invited to take part by coming to the Sanctuary to pray for 30 minutes.

This prayer vigil is becoming a regular part of our Lenten journey. Last year many found this helpful to their spiritual growth as they felt at one with God's plan for our church and their individual lives.



The prayer vigil begins at 7:00 am and concludes at the beginning of worship at 7:00 pm. Consider being part of our prayer vigil. A prayer guide will be available for persons who wish to pray at home. The prayer guide and the sign-up sheet can be found in the Welcome Center.

Ash Wednesday

Our Ash Wednesday worship service begins at 7:00 p.m. and will include the imposition of ashes and Holy Communion.

Lenten Bible Study

Everyone is invited to participate in our Wednesday evening Lenten Bible study beginning on February 21. We will meet each Wednesday through March 28 from 7 - 8:30 pm. Each session includes a video, teaching, and discussion.

Our six-week study will be Adam Hamilton's ***Final Words from the Cross***. Jesus' final words teach us much about him, God and ourselves. Each week will begin with the biblical account followed by a first person story from the point of view of one of the characters at the cross. Together we will explore the meaning of Jesus' words for our lives today. This study is designed for people at any point in their faith journey, from first steps of faith to well-seasoned believers. Consider being part of our study as we join together to grow spiritually this Lenten season.

Sign-up on the Connection Card or in the Welcome Center and indicate if you would like a ***Final Words from the Cross*** book (suggested donation \$10).

Congregational Dinner and Meeting

Join us in celebrating the end of 2017 and the beginning of a New Year under the presence of God as we share plans and objectives for 2018. The meeting will be held in Fellowship Hall prior to our breaking bread together with a hot meal prepared by our kitchen team and served by your church leaders.

There is much to share: Pastor Tim's State of the Church Report, 2017 year-end finances, presentation of the 2018 Budget, endowments opportunities, etc. You won't want to miss this.

Please RSVP on the Connection Card or call the church office at (717) 653-5493 by January 4.

Gifted

Start the year by discovering your spiritual gifts and how God has equipped you to be involved in His ministry. God has a plan for your Life on Mission! Join us for this journey of interaction and reflection as God unveils that plan at 10:30 am in Room 104 each Sunday in January. Please RSVP to [Jill MacKenzie](#) at (717) 413-3547 by January 2.



Thrilled by Hope

As I type this update for “The Thrill of Hope” performances, I’m watching the snow come down outside my window, reminded of the lyrics to one of the Trans-Siberian Orchestra songs we performed during the show, entitled, The Snow Came Down:

**“And on this night of our salvation
Where dreams that have been lost can there be found
They walked away together on that Christmas Eve
While all that night, all that night
The snow came down.”**

God has certainly showered His blessings on this production which has been such an honor to perform. Through the powerful story, brought to life by the live music, video, dance, and special effects, God touched a chord in people’s hearts and it has been the greatest Christmas gift to watch it firsthand.

Perhaps the greatest evidence of God’s blessing is the openness and overwhelming positive response from a huge variety of people – young and old, Christian and pre-Christian, loving Christmas or jaded about Christmas. God has touched such a wide variety of people. And, with a conservative count of 988 people in attendance after the third and final performance for the season, God’s reach was far and wide. And \$2597.98 was collected for the Mount Joy Food Bank!



2 A friend of my wife’s who came to the show approached Beryl just after the performance, tears streaming down her face, barely able to speak the words of how deeply she was touched. We’ve heard stories of how individuals who attended one show brought back friends, family, and neighbors to subsequent performances because “they just have to experience this.” It is a powerful illustration of the power of invitation to change the life of another. Perhaps the best part is to hear about the people who, despite their mistrust of the church due to bad experiences or misperceptions, are still drawn to Jesus and are encountering the warmth and challenge of His Presence in this story.

Thanks to the many, many people from St. Mark’s and elsewhere who poured their energies into this endeavor which, amazingly, has been one year in the making. Through your efforts and support, God gave a small part of our “weary world” a vivid image of the Hope that Jesus brought to us – the same Hope He now offers through us. Happy New Year!

Pastor Sean

See more Thrill of Hope pictures on the back cover.

STAFF

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Director of Children’s Ministry - Laura Ligo
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Faith Factory Learning Center Director - Patti Shearer (717) 653-8201
faithfactory@connectstmarks.com

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jillmckn@comcast.net

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Lay Pastor Coordinator - Sylvia Stark
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sylviagrace44@gmail.com

Director of Contemporary Worship & Assistant Custodian - Bobby Wehner
(717) 742-8461
bobbywehner@gmail.com

Custodian - Sherrie Gilbert
(717) 669-1931
sherrisacredspace@hotmail.com

Part-time Custodian - Jim White
(717) 682-4182
bikerdancerjim@comcast.net

Part-time Custodian - Mark Laukhuff

Organist - Lois Stites
loisstites@gmail.com

Chancel Choir Director - Michael Kohler
bwaynut@comcast.net

Sunday Custodial Coordinator - Bob Miller

Beef Pot Roast Dinner

January's Sunday Dinner will feature a mouth-watering beef pot roast, potatoes and carrots dinner. Cost of the dinner is \$10 for adults, \$3 for children 4 - 11, and children 3 and younger are free. The profit from January's dinner will be divided between St. Mark's Emergency Fund and the Kitchen Fund. Make plans to join us on Sunday, January 14 between 11 am - 12:30 pm for dinner and good fellowship. If you would like to volunteer to help cook/serve/wash dishes or donate a dessert for the dinner, please contact Janet Lehman at (717) 653-4189.



Free Turkey and Stuffing Casserole Dinner

A free turkey and stuffing casserole dinner will be served at St. Mark's Church on Sunday, January 21 from 4 - 5 pm. A vegetable, dessert, and beverage will also be included. Please call the church office at (717) 653-5493 by 4 pm on January 18 to make your reservations. If you would like to volunteer to help or donate a dessert, please contact [Janet Lehman](mailto:Janet.Lehman@connectstmarks.com) at (717) 653-4189.

Soup Sale

St. Mark's Family/Fellowship/Outreach team will be having a soup sale to raise funds to help support their 2018 events. The team will be selling quarts of chicken corn noodle soup, potato soup, and vegetable beef soup. All soups are \$5 per quart. The soups will be available for pickup on Saturday, January 20 and Sunday, January 21 from 9 am - noon in St. Mark's Welcome Center. Soup orders may be placed in the Welcome Center on Sundays, January 7 and January 14 or by contacting [Janet Lehman](mailto:Janet.Lehman@connectstmarks.com) at (717) 653-4189.

St. Mark's Cafe

St. Mark's cafe is open most Sundays from 8:30 - 11:00 am to offer our members and friends a place to meet and fellowship with one another while enjoying a snack. Donuts, bagels, coffee, orange juice, and water are provided. Donations are accepted to help cover these expenses.

Volunteers are needed to help set-up and clean-up, as well as donate items such as baked goods, fruit, cheese and crackers. Please consider volunteering in the cafe. You may volunteer to help once a year, twice a year, once a quarter, or each month. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Judy Libhart at (717) 725-9250.

Senior Ministry Luncheon

All seniors are invited to a "Soup and Sandwich Luncheon" on Wednesday, January 10, in St. Mark's fellowship hall. Chicken corn noodle soup and potato soup, as well as fixings for sandwiches, will be provided. Donations will be received to help cover the costs of the meal. Please arrive at 11 am for the luncheon at 11:30 am.

Following the luncheon, the movie "Facing the Giants" will be shown. Make plans to join us on Jan. 10 for lunch and a movie. Please make your reservation by contacting Janet at (717) 653-4189 by Monday, January 8.



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Thursday Morning Bible Study

A new Bible study is starting on Thursday, January 4 from 9:30 - 11:30 am in Room 102. In **The "Red Letter" Words** participants will study the words spoken by Jesus to believers as written in the four gospels. Contact Jean Ann Harter at (717) 892-3003 or Sylvia Stark at (717) 341-2654 for more information.

FAITH FACTORY NEWS

Winter blessings to all of you! Our children at Faith Factory enjoyed a fun Christmas season celebrating the birth of Jesus! It was a busy time, but it's great to work in a faith-filled setting! The teachers have shared that they feel lucky to be able to share their faith and God's love at Christmas and all throughout the year. Hearing Jingle Bells around the church was so much fun; Jingle bells is Pastor Tim's favorite!

Our children's worship Sunday in December was a wonderful time of blending children from our weekday program and our Sunday program; they enjoyed leading worship, making new friends and getting to meet the residents at Juniper Village after performing for them.



We want to thank you for supporting Faith Factory through the vendor show and our book fair! We were able to raise funds for our financial aid assistance and for additional supplies. January will be a time of snow-related themes and activities! Summer and next school year's registration will open in January as well.

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We wish for you the Peace, Love, Grace and Joy that our Lord, Jesus, has brought to us with his birth. We are so loved by Him! Let's spread that love to each person we meet! For information about Faith Factory Learning Center, contact [Patti Shearer](#) at (717) 653-8201.

January's Mission of the Month

Faith Factory is the mission of the month. Your financial support goes toward helping a number of families receive financial aid, enabling them to send their children to the preschool. When a family shares their financial childcare struggles, it is our goal to help keep their family in good standing with their accounts as well as to keep life/school consistent for their children. Your support helps us help them. The advisory board, Kathy Bower, Marge Rineer, Marilyn Graybill, Janice Schell and Patti Shearer, devote much of their fundraising efforts to financial aid since this is so vital. They are committed to reaching each child possible. Faith Factory is so blessed to be an outreach of St. Mark's! You can support Faith Factory by using a specially-marked giving envelope, texting 'faithfactory' to 30131 or visiting www.connectstmarks.com/online-giving.

Children's Ministry

Children's Ministry was busy in December celebrating the birth of Jesus! Our Advent Night was particularly meaningful for families to come and make their own Advent Wreath for the season. Families enjoyed snacks, a craft, and a story.

On the 10th, the children amazed us by leading the congregation in worship through singing, dancing, and other musical offerings. Then on the 24th, we celebrated Christmas with Mr. Dave at our Christmas Eve PJ Party!

We are so grateful to be able to support our families at St. Mark's, and we thank them for all they do to help their children connect in serving our church. Many thanks to all of the volunteers who helped create the vision for our holiday season and assisted in various capacities. Please pray that St. Mark's will reach even more families in our community as we continue to produce meaningful programming to support our children and their families.





JAN BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Margaret Kramer
- 3 Ken Gainer
Yvonne Depoe
Christine McDonald
- 4 Helen Erb
Edward Kassab
Scott Bower
Nicholas Wee
Graycen McDonald
- 5 Freida Brenes
- 6 Charles Drace
Emily Haines
Bradley Kramer
Chris Ruch
Thomas Wimmer
- 7 Liz Sarbaugh
- 9 Randy Rissing
- 10 Kim Reese
- 11 Wanda Richie
Brittany Walmer
- 12 Mike Fritz
Colleen Eshleman
Brian Miller
- 13 James Hill
Tahnya Lambie
- 14 Jim Carr
- 16 Lois Stites
- 17 Sandy Urmey
- 18 Jenni Kohler
Collin Arntz
- 20 Lori Houser
Cara Boring
- 21 Kristine Rost
- 22 Phyllis Stone
- 25 Cameron Arntz
- 26 Mary Ann Rupp
Mark Laukhuff
Jacqui Eschbach
Dee Gibson
- 28 Ruth Thome
Carol Gockley
Lori Wimmer

- 29 Craig Depoe
- 30 Linda Ream
Joel Sherk
David Meck
- 31 Jack Garner

SPECIAL BIRTHDAYS

Mary Ann Rupp - 75



JAN ANNIVERSARIES

- 7 Robert & Doris Bardell
- 17 Ray & Betty Rinehart
- 31 John & Kathy Morrison

ALTAR FLOWERS

The following dates are available to sponsor altar flowers:

January 14, 21, and 28
February 4, 18, and 25

The cost is \$35. Contact [Marge Yeich](#) at (717) 492-0606 to sign-up.

Prayer Community of Mount Joy

You are invited to join community members in lifting up prayer concerns on Wednesday, Jan. 3 at 6:30 pm at Aspire.

Prayer Meeting

Gather with others spending time in prayer on Tuesday, Jan. 9 at 9 am in the Prayer Room.

Prayer Shawl Meeting

St. Mark's Prayer Shawl Ministry invites you to join them on Thursday, Jan. 18 at 6:30 pm to knit or crochet a prayer shawl. For more information, contact [Myrl Sherk](#) at (717) 653-5133.

Office Closed

The church office will be closed on Monday, January 1 for New Year's Day and Monday, January 15 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.



Jan Schedule

- 7 Coffee and donuts
- 14 Coffee and donuts
- 21 Carol Gockley, Jenni Kohler
- 28 Lois Stites, Dottie Allen

Donuts - Ken Gephart

Setup

- Judy Libhart
- Judy Libhart
- Mary Ann Rupp
- Scott Libhart

THANK YOU NOTES

Dear Friends,
I would like to thank all of you for phone calls, visits and cards following my surgery and for my birthday. Sincerely,
Jestena Yeagley

Dear Friends,
Thank you so much for your donation of cleaning buckets to the Hub. I think I heard that you also took buckets to Mission Central. Know that your generosity helped someone impacted by the recent hurricanes and they know that someone cares! Blessings,
Liz Helm, Coordinator

Thank you for all your hard work and labor of love. It was my first time there (St. Mark's free Thanksgiving Day Dinner) and it was an enjoyable time and delicious food. God bless you all in this ministry.
Gail

To Thanksgiving Day Workers,
We want to express our "thanks" for the delicious meal you offered the community to attend on Thanksgiving Day. It was our first time attending a meal at your church and we were so impressed with the organization and friendliness of everyone. Thank you so much for this opportunity.

Lee & Joyce Stauffer

Thank you so very much for preparing Thanksgiving Dinners that are available to the public, for whatever reasons. I appreciate it very much.
Ann Reuter

The Staff would like to thank the congregation for your Christmas gift. Your love, prayers and support throughout the year continues to touch us. Thank you!

Pastors Tim, Sean, and Dave; Rob, Jimmy, Laura, Sarah, Kim, Jill, Sherrie, Mark and Jim, Patti, Lois and Mike, and Doug

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Men's Ministry

All men are invited to attend Men's Ministry on Tuesday, January 2 at 6:30 pm at Aspire. The current study is **The Good Book**. The guys will also meet at Gus's Restaurant on Saturday, January 20 at 8 am for breakfast and fellowship. Contact Jeff Selph at (717) 928-4545 for more information.

Art Sundays

Aspire will be open on January 14 and 28 for all types of artists from 6 - 9 pm. Painters, knitters, poets, musicians, etc. are encouraged to bring your project and supplies. Contact [Sherrie Gilbert](#) at (717) 669-1931 with any questions.

Toasty Tootsies Total

254 pairs of socks were collected for homeless veterans. Thank you for your generosity!

Church Library

The church library still has Christmas books and videos for all ages. Read or view and return as soon as possible so that other families may enjoy them.

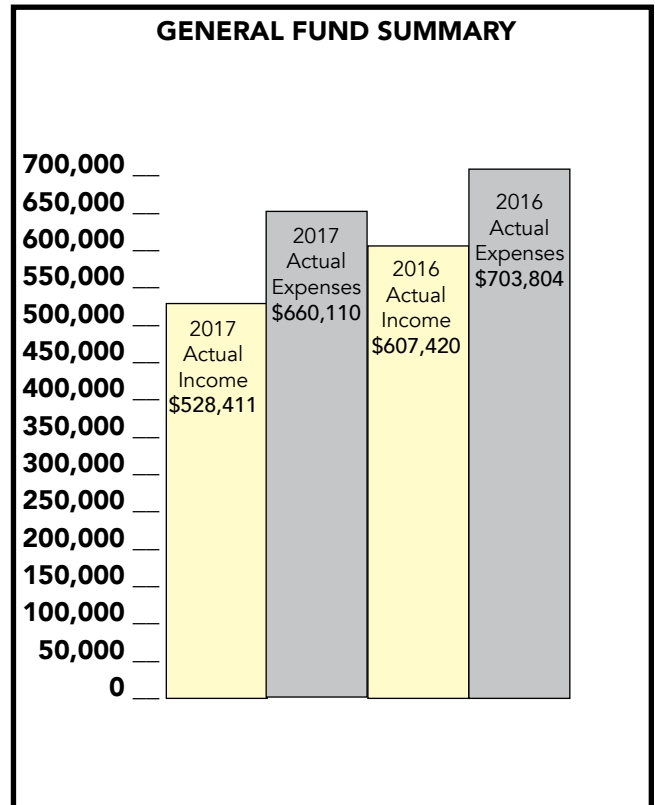
Global Aid Network

A group from St. Mark's worked at GAiN on Oct. 18 as part of a 4-day mission packing project which included a total of 2,715 volunteers. Clothing, shoes, blankets, salvation bracelets, medical supplies and school supplies were packed. GAiN estimates this project will serve \$126,570 needy persons overseas. Consider volunteering at GAiN for the next packing project in June.



GIVING REPORT

YEAR 2017 GIVING REPORT		
	January 1 - November 30, 2017	Last Year
	Y.T.D.	Y.T.D.
General Fund		
Actual Income	\$ 528,411	\$ 607,420
Budget Needed	\$ 713,326	\$ 738,314
Actual Expenses	\$ 660,110	\$ 703,804
Building Fund (45 E Main/Trustee Projects Loan)		
Actual Income	\$ 12,325	\$ 18,152
Budget Needed	\$ 12,966	\$ 12,966
<i>Loan Balance = 97,394</i>		
Capital Campaign		
Actual Giving	\$ 72,878	\$ 138,806
Capital Campaign (Deferred to General Fund)		
Actual Deferred	\$ 69,536	
Mission Giving		
Nov. Mission of the Month -		
Fellowship/Outreach	\$ 311	\$ 0
Total Mission Giving	\$ 26,988	\$ 23,449
St. Mark's Emergency Fund		
Actual Income	\$ 11,451	\$ 17,022
Actual Expenses	\$ 13,220	\$ 12,952
Special Offerings		
Actual Income	\$ 25,562	\$ 18,739
TOTAL GIVING	\$747,151	\$823,588



Consider Online Giving in 2018

Online Giving is available by Credit Card, Debit Card, or Automatic Withdrawal from a bank account. Visit www.connectstmarks.com, click on About Us, Giving, then Online Giving. Log in or Give as a Guest. If you have any questions, contact [Janice Schell](mailto:Janice.Schell@connectstmarks.com) at (717) 653-5493 ext. 225.

Giving Statements

Statements can be printed anytime at www.connectstmarks.com. Log in to My St. Mark's Connection. (If you don't have a password, click on Are You New, Create an Account and a password will be emailed to you.) Once you are logged in, scroll down the page to your personal information and click on Giving. Choose a date range. Click Print.

Trustees Corner

The bids for the Bell Tower and rear Stair Tower restoration projects have been received and the Trustees are working with the contractors in a process of value engineering to finalize the contracts. The current plan would have physical work begin in the beginning of the 2nd quarter of this year.

Administrative Staff Job Descriptions

In response to a request made during the Nov. 19 finance update, copies of our administrative job descriptions are available in the Library, as well as a master marked "Not to be removed" and minutes from the meeting.

www.connectstmarks.com

**St. Mark's
United Methodist Church**
37 East Main Street
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(717) 653-5493

www.connectstmarks.com
info@connectstmarks.com

For questions or to submit information contact:

Sarah Clarke

sclarke@connectstmarks.com

or Kim Wargo

kwargo@connectstmarks.com

The deadline for the next newsletter is

JANUARY 15

The deadline for the E-note, weekly bulletin and video announcements is two weeks before the publication date. Announcements normally run no more than two/three weeks.

info@connectstmarks.com



37 East Main Street, Mount Joy, PA 17552

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