



The Grapevine

St. Mark's Episcopal Church



October 2025

A Note from Nancy – October 2025

On returning from clergy conference last week, I saw a bill board with the following message: “Autumn is God’s way of showing us that change can be beautiful.” I had to really think about that for a while. Yes, the colorful leaves on the trees and the late blooming flowers are beautiful. For me, the lower temperatures are a welcome change because I do not tolerate heat well. But, I know, for many, the opposite is true, because they do not tolerate cold.

Change is a constant that is part of our everyday lives. We cannot get away from it even if we wanted to. Some changes are beautiful and we welcome them. Other changes, we may not appreciate as much. But change is not the only constant we encounter every day. The other constant is God. It is God who helps us in our response to change. God is who gives us strength, blessing and guidance. God is who gets us through the chances and changes of our lives. God is our crag, our rock and our stronghold. God is constant and God is faithful.

One of my favorite collects comes from *Compline*. “Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*” (*BCP p. 133*).

That is my prayer for all of us in the days and nights ahead.

Peace, In Christ,
Mother Nancy

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

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Johnstown, PA 15901
814-535-6797
stmarks@atlanticbbn.net

Website
www.saintmarksjohnstown.com

Our Staff:

Priest: Rev. Nancy L. Threadgill
Verger: Cindy Leap
Organist: Dolly Lopresti
Treasurer: Pam Hysong
Secretary: Joanne McKinley
Sexton: Nikki Forsythe

The Vestry:

Senior Warden:
Junior Warden:
Secretary:
Treasurer: Pam Hysong

2026

Lisa Bell-Loncella
Richard Burket
Tina Grata

2027

Donovan Pendell
Doug Zawiskie
Colleen Curry

2028

Melissa Babalonis
Louise Mead
Valarie Schultz

*Please remember
St. Mark's Church in your will.*

Prayers for our Search

Prayer for Guidance during our Discernment Process

Gracious and loving God, you teach us that things happen in your time. As we continue to wait for clergy candidates, encourage us, the people of St. Francis in the Fields and St. Mark's Episcopal Churches, to grow steadfastly in our ministries to love and serve our neighbors by sharing the Good News in Jesus Christ.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, we open our hearts and minds to new opportunities and ideas, following where you lead — knowing that Jesus Christ walks with us each step of the way. As this discernment period evolves, empower the members of our Vestries and Discernment Committees to share their thoughts openly and honestly; to respect the opinions of others; and to encourage humility, patience, and joy.

Finally, instill in us a glorious vision of the future: one where we are united in love and ministry in fulfilling the mission of our baptismal vows; through our savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Prayer for a New Priest

Almighty God, the giver of all good gifts, we humbly ask you to supply your grace to all priests who are called to the ministry of your peoples. Fill them with the Holy Spirit, the truth of your doctrine, and clothe them with piety so that they may faithfully serve where they are called. Open their hearts to the possibility and consideration of a new path whereby they may serve you. We beseech you to guide to us, the pastor you would have shepherd your people at St. Mark's and St. Francis in the Fields. Open the hearts of these parish families to acceptance of your choice for us, so that together, we may increase our faith, devotion, and obedience, and be prepared to readily do the good works you have planned for us to do. We ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. *Amen.*

News of Note

Important Change to Service Times

Beginning Sunday, October 5th services will begin at 10 AM!

Holy Eucharist first and third Sunday

Morning Prayer led by Lay Ministers second and fourth Sunday

Mark your calendars for Saturday, October 4th

In celebration of the **Feast of St. Francis** we will hold our annual Blessing of the Animals with a bake sale in the Courtyard from 10 AM to 1 PM.

Bishop Ketlen Solak's visit to St. Mark's — October 5th

The Bishop's visit will be Sunday, October 5th. Two parishioners will be received into the Episcopal church by the Bishop.

Diocesan Convention

The 160th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Pittsburgh will be held Saturday, November 15 at Trinity Cathedral from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. You can find more information about Convention is on the next page. Prayerfully consider this opportunity to participate in the life of the Diocese. Deputies from St. Mark's are Colleen Curry and Mike Teore. More information about Convention can be found on the next page.

Fall 2025 Anti-Racism Training

Seeing the Face of God in Each Other, our diocesan anti-racism workshop, is taking place online via Zoom **Friday, October 10, and Saturday, October 11, 2025.**

These two days offer a few hours to focus on the beauty and the scope of humanity in the Church and in our world, helping us to go beyond the biases we have that make us push people away, ignore them, or exert power over them—sometimes unwittingly—based only on their appearance. All Vestry members and other Lay Leaders are encouraged to attend.

**Sharing Christ's love unconditionally
through transformational worship and service.**

**The 160th Annual Convention
of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh
Diocesan Convention Registration Now Open**



Saturday, November 15, 2024, 8:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, 328 6th Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Registration for all deputies and guests will be available soon.

**Nominations for Diocesan Leadership Positions
Still Open**

Recommendations are now being taken by the Nominating Committee for the following positions to be elected at the 159th Diocesan Convention of the Diocese of Pittsburgh on November 9, 2024, at Trinity Cathedral:

- Standing Committee
- Board of Trustees
- Committee on Constitution and Canons
- Commission on Ministry
- Cathedral Chapter
- Growth Fund

Full details about the positions are available here. The 2025 Nomination Form with submission instructions is [available here](#) in [PDF](#) or Word.



More information about convention is available at <https://www.episcopalpgh.org/resources/2024-diocesan-convention/>.

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Why would you want to take this workshop, at this time? Here are a few (but by no means all) reasons:

- God calls each one of us to love our neighbors as ourselves.
- Our nation is struggling with the impact of generations of systemic racism that affect everyone for the worse.
- We, as a diocese, have committed ourselves to a journey toward healing the wounds of racism in our region through the Beloved Community Initiative.
- As a diocese, we have also committed, by vote at diocesan convention, that all in leadership positions, in parishes or at the diocesan level, take the workshop as part of our responsibilities.
- There is always more to learn!

The Commission on Race and Reconciliation has significantly updated and reshaped the workshop for a virtual-reality online experience. If you have taken it in the past and think you could use a brush-up, it would be worth your time.

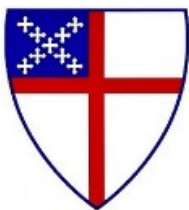
Our ministry in Christ is to love, to teach and to heal. This workshop will further equip us to be healers.

[Click here to Register](#)

Additional information including an agenda for the workshop is available at

<https://www.episcopalpggh.org/fall-2025-anti-racism-workshop/>

The last day to register is Friday, October 3



CONGRATULATIONS
TO THE NEW VESTRY MEMBERS

Melisa Babalonis
Louise Mead
Valarie Schultz

In busy times such as these, you have come forward and taken an important role in helping to make decisions that matter to our Church. Thank you!

Our sincere gratitude to the retiring members of the Vestry who have worked so hard these past years:

Michael Teore
Susan Kelly
Cindy Leap

All of you truly exemplify what it means to be a member of St. Mark's.

Missions

The Extra Collection on the Third Sunday of the month is set aside for our MISSIONS, but you can make a donation at any time. We have selected Heifer International as the recipient and already have funds to purchase a goat which is key to a family's survival. Goat's milk can be used to make cheese and butter to be sold for income.



PLEASE BE GENEROUS.

Blessing of the Animals & Bake Sale



**Saturday, October 4, 2025
10:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.
In the Church Courtyard
Rain or Shine**

Bring your pet for a special blessing. All types of pets are welcome. Please keep dogs on leashes and other species gently restrained. Baked goods will be for sale.

Note: We need volunteers to provide homemade items for our bake sale and to staff the bake sale table during the event. Please contact the church office if you can help.

Calendar and Hospitality Committee Tentative Plans for the Coming Months

October:

- Blessing of the Animals & Bake Sale (10/4)
- Bishop's Visitation (10/5)
- Anti-Racism Workshop (10/10, 10/11)

November

- Diocesan Convention (11/15)
- Calendar Committee Meeting (11/18)
- Halupki Harvest Dinner (11/22)
- Thanksgiving (11/27)

December

- Advent Quiet Day (12/6)
- Greening of the Church (12/21)
- Blue Christmas (12/21)
- Christmas Eve Services (12/24, 6PM)

January

- Lessons & Carols (1/4)
- Feast of Epiphany (1/6)
- MLK holiday (1/19)
- Parish Finance Meeting (1/25)

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL COURTYARD AND EXTERIOR!

We would like to extend our special thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make the courtyard and exterior gardens so beautiful.

During the week of September 9th and especially on Saturday September 13 the Church was a busy hum of weed eaters, grass cutters, electric shears, hand clippers, and the aches of our volunteers when they were done.

The Church Courtyard and exterior Gardens are now beautifully manicured – just in time for the Bishop's visit!

Thank you!!

Kitty Batrus	Joann Lacko
Mother Nancy	Joanne McKinley
Valarie Schultz	Mike Teore



Readers and Greeters – October – early December 2025

Sunday	Readers	Greeters & Ushers
October 5	Lisa Bell-Loncella & Colleen Curry	Melisa Babalonis & Aiden
October 12	Donovan Pendell & Doug Zawiskie	Jane & Gerry Strittmatter
October 19	Richard Burkert & Tina Grata	Amy & Penn Whitlow
October 26	Lisa Bell-Loncella & Pam Hysong	Melisa Babalonis & Aiden
November 2	Joann Lacko & Doug Zawiskie	Tina Grata & Joann Lacko
November 9	Dona Corosi & Colleen Curry	Amy & Penn Whitlow
November 16	Richard Burkert & Tina Grata	Sam & Heidi Buchan
November 23	Donovan Pendell & Pam Hysong	Melisa Babalonis & Aiden
November 30	Dona Corosi & Lisa Bell-Loncella	Tina Grata & Joann Lacko
December 7	Joann Lacko & Doug Zawiskie	Amy & Penn Whitlow
December 14	Richard Burkert & Tina Grata	Sam & Heidi Buchan

If you are unable to read or usher on the day you are scheduled, please find a substitute or let Mother Nancy know so a sub can be found in a timely manner. Thank you. For a listing of the readings see <https://www.lectionarypage.net/> We are using Track 1 for the Old Testament lesson & the Psalm.



Christmas Stocking Stuffer Project 2025

For many years we have joined with parishioners from other churches to provide stuffed Christmas stockings to the 335 patients of Torrance State Hospital. These patients are persons who require long-term in-hospital care for behavioral health disorders (mental illness). For many patients, this is the only gift they receive and is the highlight of their holiday season. The staff and patients greatly appreciate your efforts in making their Christmas a happy and memorable moment.

This year we have been asked to provide stuffed stockings for 15 men. To ensure that one patient does not receive substantially more than the patient sitting beside him, ***all participating churches have been given guidelines regarding the minimum number and types of items to be included in each stocking.*** Please select from the required items or additional suggested donation items lists below for your donations. A box for your donations will be in the Parish Hall. ***Please make your donations on or before Sunday, November 23, 2025.***

Gift Items for One Stocking

- (1) pair of ankle OR crew socks—any color (No High TUBE socks due to strangulation issues)
- (1) bottle of shampoo OR stick deodorant OR bottle of body wash
- (1) activity, word search, or cross word book, OR coloring book (no staples) OR playing cards
- (1) bag of chips OR (1) pack of crackers OR (1) pack of cookies OR (1) snack cake
- (1) big candy bar OR small handful of mini candy bars OR (1) box of individual powdered drink mix packets

Additional Suggested Donation Items

M & M's—small bags	Small bags of cheese curls or Doritos
Chap Stick	Crayons
Body wash	Paperback books (<i>No romances</i>)
Deodorant (<i>No cans</i>)	Blank Greeting Cards
Lotion (<i>No pumps</i>)	Non-refrigerated pudding cups, apple sauce or fruit cups
Card games, such as Uno, Skip-bo, Phase 10 or even card games for children	Individually wrapped peppermint puffs
	Sudoku books

In order to protect the residents, please do not donate glass or breakable items, aerosol cans, alcohol-based products, sharp objects, or notebooks with wire bindings. No batteries. No items with staples. Due to choking and swallowing issues, no nuts, hard candy or gum.

Thank you for your generosity.
Louise Mead



BOSCOV'S ANNUAL CHURCH FUND RAISER

OCTOBER 25, 2025

St. Mark's is selling Boscov Fund Raiser Tickets.
One Ticket will give you an all day shopping Pass
for \$5.00 and 25% off.

A great Way to start your Christmas Shopping!

Proceeds will go towards our Mission Project.
Tickets will be available thru October.
Thank you for generosity!

St. Michael's of the Valley, Ligonier and St. Francis in the Fields, Somerset have partnered to launch an official chapter of [Holy Hikes](#) in the Diocese, known as Holy Hikes of Southwest Pennsylvania. We piloted a series of hikes in 2024, as a way to test how the ministry would go and to understand how congregations might collaborate .



Saturday, October 18, 2025 - 10:00 am

Ohiopyle State Park - [Meadow Run Trail](#) - 2.9 miles - easy

[Read more about Holy Hikes Southwest Pennsylvania here.](#)



For those who are not aware, our diocese produces a monthly e-letter titled *Grace Happens*. If you are not already a subscriber go to <https://www.episcopalpgh.org/resources/grace-happens/> and you will be redirected to the sign up page.



St. Mark's Episcopal Church
335 Locust St.
Johnstown, Pa. 15901
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ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL

Many thanks for the generous contributions from Carol Harp, Cathy & Bill Sampson, Jim & Carol Bezek, Chris & Delbert Hess, Valerie Kasper, Linda Cordes, John & Betty Gritzer, Dennis & Carol Loushe, Tim Cicotello, Mrs. Yvonne Lucas, Theresa Kosaber, Annett Kristofco, Helen Mishler, Somerset Trust Co. Helen Petrunak, Wendy Arcurio, John & Sharon Flick, Carol & Lou Schaffer, Marion Gaydos (In Memory of Louise Kristofco), Donnas Rzasas, Dolores Sebastian and Elizabeth Pavlosky. Thank you for your continued support!

There were 118 people who came through our doors in September. We had 7 emergency walk in families after September 11th.

We helped 135 Dogs 32 Puppies 435 Cats and 138 Kittens

Totals for the month of September were:

Dogs and Puppies :	Dry food	678 lbs
Cats and Kittens:	Dry food	820 lbs

Thanks to our many donors, we were fortunate in receiving canned cat food this month.

Grand Total From January through September:

6,875 lbs	Dry Dog and Puppy Food
11,702 lbs	Dry Cat & Kitten Food

During the Month of October we will be open on October 9th from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm.

Cynthia Greig and Joanne McKinley



2025 Weekly Altar Flowers & Monthly Altar Candles

Donation price is \$30 a Sunday for flowers and \$8 a month for candles.
Please contact Joanne in the Parish Office with your requests.

We have openings for the following dates:

10/5 (1), 10/19 (1), 10/26 (2)
11/2(1), 11/09 (2), 11/16 (2)
12/7 (1), 12/21 (1), 12/28 (1)



Animal Pet Food Ministry

The First Collection of the month will be for our Animal Pet Food Ministry.



BUILDING FUND CAMPAIGN

Your extra collection on the second Sunday of the month goes towards replacing the front retaining wall in front of the Courtyard. Milkie has already started the work.



Missions

All families of the church are encouraged to donate \$1.00 or more on the **3rd Sunday** of each month for our Mission needs.

Outreach/Pastoral Care

All families of the church are encouraged to donate \$1.00 or more on the **4th Sunday** of each month for our Pastoral Care needs.

Vestry Meeting

**Thursday, October 16th
6:30 PM**

In person & by Zoom

DONATE ONLINE

Pay your pledge or donate to our special collections online using PayPal or a Credit Card.

Go to the Donate page of our website

<https://saintmarksjohnstown.com/give-to-support-st-marks-and-its-ministries/> to make your donation.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
October			1	2	3	4 Blessing of Animals 10:00 am to 1:00pm BAKE SALE
5 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist Rt II Church & Zoom Bishop's Visitation	6	7	8	9 PET FOOD PANTRY 10:00 am - 2:00 pm	10	11
12 10:00 AM Morning Prayer Rt II Church & Zoom	13 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY	14	15	16 Vestry Meeting	17	18
19 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist Rt II Church & Zoom	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 10:00 AM Morning Prayer Rt I Church & Zoom	27	28	29	30	31  HAPPY HALLOWEEN	
				10-4 Blessing of the Animals Bake Sale 10:00 am to 1:00 pm Special Coffee Hour for Bishop's Visitation		

