

# The Grapevine

## St. Mark's Episcopal Church



December 2025

### A Note from Nancy - December 2025

Liturgically, we are once again into a new year. Last Sunday was the first Sunday of Advent, our season leading up to Christmas. We begin to hear readings from the Gospel of Matthew (Year A) interspersed with readings from Luke and John. The Advent wreath is up in the front of the church and one or more candles are lighted each week to signify the growing anticipation of the birth of Christ and, also, of Christ's second coming. It is four weeks of expectation, preparation and hope. We need that right now, more than ever.

My plans for this Advent are to find ways to quiet my mind and quiet my heart in order to hear God and feel God's presence as I go about my day. Preparing for the Quiet Day, Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>, will help. The topic that day is "Quietness in Scrip-ture" and I am finding a number of passages that I can use to remind me to seek quiet when life gets too busy. Remem-ber, Jesus went off alone to pray when he needed solace. It wouldn't hurt for us to do the same.

Christmas will be here before we know it and, if you are like me, you will not get everything on your to do list done in time. That's OK. Give yourself and everyone around you a break.

May you have a quiet Advent and a blessed Christmas.

Love, in Christ, Mother

Nancy

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

**St. Mark's Episcopal Church**  
335 Locust Street Johnstown,  
PA 15901 814-535-6797  
**Email:** stmarks@atlanticbbn.net

**Web site**  
[www.saintmarksjohnstown.com](http://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 Wardens: Lisa Bell-  
Loncella & Colleen Curry  
Junior Warden: Richard  
Burkert  
Secretary: Doug Zawskie

#### **2026**

Lisa Bell-Loncella  
Richard Burkett  
Tina Grata

#### **2027**

Donovan Pendell  
Doug Zawiskie  
Colleen Curry

#### **2028**

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.

### 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.

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

## News of Note

### Advent Quiet Day—Saturday, December 6th 8 AM to 12:00 PM

Join us Saturday morning for a period of respite – time is set aside to be quiet, spend some time with God and refresh your spirit for the days ahead. There will be alternating periods of meditation and quiet time followed by final prayers and a vegetarian lunch. During quiet time there are activities set up in the parish hall for relaxation and books available for learning or you may find a quiet spot in the church or offices to read and/or meditate.

The theme of our 2025 Advent Quiet Day is “Quietness in Scripture.”

### Blue Christmas – December 21 6:00 PM

Held on the longest night of the year, the Blue Christmas liturgy is a quiet meditative service especially for those for whom the Christmas season is a profoundly sad and lonely time. Come for yourself, for someone you love or for those who suffer around the world. More details elsewhere in the *Grapevine*.

### Greening of the Church – Sunday, December 21st

Join us at 11 AM for a Pot-Luck Brunch after the 10:00 service on Sunday, December 21st. Then stick around after the service as we decorate the church for the Nativity.

### Christmas Eve – Wednesday, December 24

Join us Christmas Eve, December 24 at 7:30 PM in the church or over Zoom for a celebration of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### Lessons & Carols — Sunday, December 28

Our service on the first Sunday of Christmas, December 28, will be a celebration of the 12 Lessons and Carols of Christmas.

## Calendar and Hospitality Committee

### Tentative Plans for the Coming Months

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>December:</b> Advent Quiet Day (12/6) | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>February:</b>                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greening of the Church (12/21)           | <input type="checkbox"/> Chicken & Biscuit Take-Out (2/14) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Christmas (12/21)                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Ash Wednesday (2/18)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christmas Eve Services (12/24)           | <input type="checkbox"/> Lenten Quiet Day (2/21)           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lessons & Carols (12/28)                 | <input type="checkbox"/>                                   |
| <b>January 2026</b>   | <b>March:</b>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vestry Retreat (1/17)                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Parish Budget Meeting (1/18)      |  |

## Advent – It's not too late

Advent this year starts right after Thanksgiving, on Sunday, November 30<sup>th</sup>. As we move from the fall into Advent in preparation for the coming of the Christ child, many of us will begin to think about a special Advent practice. Here are some resources you might want to consider. These are all free, but require either having an email address or access to the Internet to download materials.

- AdventWord is a global, online Advent calendar. Join an international community in prayer to explore the mystery and wonder of Advent! In its eighth year, Christians around the world are joined together as each day of Advent invites a focus on a particular word drawn from the lectionary. (<https://adventword.org/en/home/>)
- Journeying the Way of Love is an Advent Curriculum from the Episcopal Church, explores the first two chapters of the Gospel of Luke which offers pattern for understanding how we can live the Way of Love as individuals, as families and friends, as a community, and out in the world. Although designed for small groups it could be adapted for home study with family. (<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/journeying-way-love/>)
- Forward Movement offers several Advent meditation guides. It might be a too late to order the hard copy version, however, most are available in Kindle and Apple Books format. Check here for the Advent and Christmas offerings:  
[https://www.forwardmovement.org/Products/CategoryCenter/FMCHR/Advent\\_Christmas.aspx](https://www.forwardmovement.org/Products/CategoryCenter/FMCHR/Advent_Christmas.aspx)
- The Episcopal Church website offers many resources for advent: (<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/advent-and-christmas-resources/>)
- For more resources check our website: <https://saintmarksjohnstown.com/advent-resources/>



### **2025/2026 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**

12/7 (1), 12/28 (1)

1/4 (1), 1/18 (1), 1/25(1),



## ADVENT & CHRISTMAS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Nov 30th 10:00 am Holy Eucharist Rite II  
Also on ZOOM

Dec. 6th 8:00 am to 12:00 pm Advent Quiet Day  
*"Quietness in Scripture"*  
Also on ZOOM

Dec. 7th 10:00 am Holy Eucharist Rite II  
Also on ZOOM

Dec. 14th 10:00 am Morning Prayer II  
Also on ZOOM

Dec. 21st 10:00 am Holy Eucharist Rite I  
Also on ZOOM

**Potluck Brunch (11 AM)**  
**Greening of the Church following the service**

**Dec. 21st 6:00 pm Blue Christmas Service**  
**Also on ZOOM**

Dec. 24th 7:30 pm Christmas Eve Service  
Holy Eucharist Rite II  
Also on ZOOM

Dec. 28th 10:00 am Christmas Lessons and Carols  
Also on ZOOM

## Readers and Greeters — December 2025 & January 2026

The schedule is tentative and may change. You will receive an email with the updated schedule.

<b>Sunday</b>		<b>Readers</b>	<b>Greeters &amp; Ushers</b>
November 30	HE	Dona Corosi & Lisa Bell-Loncella	Tina Grata & Joann Lacko
December 7	HE	Joann Lacko & Doug Zawiskie	Amy & Penn Whitlow
December 14	MP	Richard Burkert & Tina Grata	Sam & Heidi Buchan
December 21	HE	Joann Lacko & Lisa Bell-Loncella	Jane & Gerry Strittmatter
December 24	HE	Pam Hysong & Tina Grata	Amy & Penn Whitlow
December 28	MP	Lessons & Carols	Sam & Heidi Buchan
January 4	HE	Richard Burkert and Tina Grata	Jane & Gerry Strittmatter
January 11	MP	Donovan Pendell & Pam Hysong	Tina Grata & Joann Lacko
January 18	HE	Lisa Bell-Loncella & Colleen Curry	Melisa Babalonis & Aiden
January 25	MP	Richard Burkert and Tina Grata	Sam & Heidi Buchan

HE is Holy Eucharist; MP is Morning Prayer. On the Sundays when we do Morning Prayer, one reader will lead the Psalm, read the first (OT) lessons and lead the first canticle. The second reader will read the second (NT) lesson and lead the second canticle.

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/>



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.episcopalpgph.org/resources/grace-happens/> and you will be redirected to the sign up page.

## **Blue Christmas Service**

### **Sunday, December 21 at 6:00 pm**

**In person & via Zoom**

Held on the longest night of the year, the Blue Christmas liturgy is a quiet meditative service especially for those for whom the Christmas season is a profoundly sad and lonely time. The death or impending death of a loved one, loss of health or employment, family crises, separation or divorce, and depression are some of the many reasons that Christmas can be painful and isolating. Our lighting of candles during the service offers an opportunity for remembrance, reflection, prayer and spiritual healing. One can grieve knowing they are not alone and be comforted and strengthened by the love of Christ and those present.

A light shines in the darkness. Come for yourself, for someone you love or for those who suffer around the world.



### **2025 Christmas Stocking Stuffer Project Update**

Thank you to everyone who shared Christ's love by contributing to the 2025 Christmas Stocking Stuffer Project. St. Mark's has worked with other religious organizations in our geographic area to ensure that all 335 Torrance State Hospital patients are remembered during this holiday season.

We have provided twenty-four male patients with Christmas bags filled with socks, shampoo, deodorant, body wash, chap stick, crayons, playing cards, coloring books, word search, crossword puzzle or Sudoku books, candy bars, Doritos, assorted crackers and cookies, and dental items. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Best wishes for a blessed Advent and Merry Christmas.

Louise Mead

### **Cookies Needed for Christmas Eve**

When you are baking during the next few weeks, please set aside a few dozen cookies for Coffee Hour after the service on Christmas Eve.

Many thanks!





## St. Mark's 2026 Annual Pledge Campaign

“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

As we near the end of 2025, we can look back at the past year with gratitude. St. Mark's Episcopal Church is closing out another year of faithful ministry.

Because of your gifts, we have continued to do important work. We have welcomed new people and families to the congregation. We have maintained our ministries – weekly worship, the choir, pet food ministry, and others. We have shared celebrations and sorrows. We have strengthened our bond with St. Francis in the Fields congregation in Somerset, as we jointly seek to discern our shared futures and leadership.

As we work to be good stewards, St. Mark's Church will embody the mission that the Vestry adopted in 2020:

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

During Advent, the Vestry reaches out to each member of St. Mark's Church parish, asking you to make a commitment to support the Annual Pledge Campaign. You will soon receive a letter and pledge card from us.

Please join the Vestry, clergy and the stewardship team in making a commitment to sustaining our beloved St. Mark's Church while we work to discern what God will have us do!

When you receive the 2025 Pledge letter and card, please fill it out and make your commitment to our church, our work, and our community.

Pledge Cards are available through the church office (call (814) 535-6797 or email: [stmarks@atlanticbbn.net](mailto:stmarks@atlanticbbn.net)). A copy will be available on the Church website soon. (<https://saintmarksjohnstown.com/stewardship/>)

**The Vestry and St. Mark's Stewardship Committee**







### **Remembering our Homebound Parishioners during this Holy Season**

Take a few minutes of your time during this hectic holiday season to remember our Homebound. They would enjoy hearing from each of us.

Below is a listing of our Homebound:

Bill and Doris Horner  
1660 Cambridge Ave. # 218  
Davidsville, PA 15928

Mrs. Regina Hoover  
1167 Shaffer St.  
Johnstown, PA 15905

Mr. Greg Karlick  
1270 Saylor St.  
Johnstown, PA 15905

Louis Hoffer  
PA Soldiers and Sailors Home  
560 E 3rd Street  
Erie, PA 16507

Vince and Irene Joyce  
100 Dutch Lane  
Johnstown, PA 15902

Renard and Frances Garman  
3281 William Penn Ave.  
Johnstown, PA 15909

### **Also remember our friends who are miles away this holiday.**

Pam Mayer  
8017 SE Sugar Pine Way  
Hobe Sound, FL 33455

Mrs. Cynthia Greig  
5 Starling Close  
Farndon,  
Cheshire CH3 6 RF  
England



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335 Locust Street  
Johnstown, Pa. 15901  
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stmarks@atlanticbbn.net



### **ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL**

We began our Pet Food Pantry Campaign in early November. We are so thankful for all who gave to help keep our Pantry open. Because of your generosity, we will be able to keep our pantry open for another 5 or 6 months. We are so grateful to those who continue to support our Pet Food Pantry. There are too many to list. Each of you has received a personal Letter from our Pantry thanking you for your generosity.

During November, we assisted **157, which included several new families.**

**Our total distribution** for November was 1545 lbs. of dry cat and dog food.

During the months of January through November we gave out more than 22,00 lbs. of dry dog and cat food

Our Pantry will be open December 11th from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm.

Thank you for your support.

Wishing all of you the Blessings of the Holiday Season.

*Cynthia Greig and Joanne McKinley*

*Christmas Memorial Flowers  
deadline  
Friday, December 19, 2025*



- ✂ Money is due by December 19th
- ✂ The price is \$10.00 for every two names. However, a donation of \$25.00 will cover an unlimited amount of names.
- ✂ Please CLEARLY PRINT your requests.
- ✂ Please contact Joanne in the Parish Office: (814) 535- 6797.
- ✂ To ensure your request is handled properly, please mail your listing request to the Church Office or drop it in the Sunday Collection Plate for the ushers to forward to the office.

**Christmas Flowers Honorarium/Memorial  
LISTING REQUEST FORM**

Please drop this in the offering box to forward to the Parish Office. Or you may mail it to the Parish Office. Please call Joanne in the office at 814-535-6797 or email ([stmarks@atlanticbbn.net](mailto:stmarks@atlanticbbn.net)) with any questions.

Please carefully print the following information:

Donor: \_\_\_\_\_

Please specify “In honor of” or “In memory of” or “In Thanksgiving”

In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_ In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_ In Thanksgiving for \_\_\_\_\_

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Payment Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No





## FUEL AND SNOW REMOVAL

During the next three months, the extra collection for the First Sunday of the month will be for our Snow Removal and Heating Bills.

## BUILDING CAMPAIGN

The Extra Collection for the Second Sunday of the month will be for our Building Campaign to continue our ongoing project renovations.



Vestry Meeting  
Thursday, December 18th  
5:00 PM  
In person & Zoom

## Donate Online to St. Marks

You can pay your pledge or donate to any of our special funds online via PayPal or Credit Card. Just click on the "Donate" button on the church's website:

<https://saintmarksjohnstown.com/>

### ***Missions***

Heifer International will Triple any dollar amount that we donate.

All families of the church are encouraged to donate \$1.00 on the third Sunday of each month (Dec.21st).

Please mark your donation separately for Missions.

### ***Pastoral Care***

All families of the church are encouraged to donate one dollar on the fourth Sunday of each month (Dec.28th) for our Pastoral Care.

Please mark your donation separately for Pastoral Care.

 **Sarris**  
CANDIES  
Christmas 2025

St. Francis in the Fields  
Episcopal Church Women  
(ECW) are hosting a  
contactless Christmas  
Fundraiser.



The ECW is hosting its 6<sup>th</sup> annual Sarris Holiday Candy Fundraiser to support outreach projects for those in need. Orders placed from now through December 14, 2025 provide a 25% of sale benefit to ECW.

- Go to [www.SarrisCandiesFundraising.com](http://www.SarrisCandiesFundraising.com) .
- Scroll down page & click the On-Line Ordering picture.
- Be sure to enter our Group ID: 10-3668.
- No minimum purchase.

There is a \$7 ground shipping fee per order.  
Free shipping on orders over \$100.

Order early to ensure your package is received  
in time for the holidays.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>DECEMBER</b>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6 <b>ADVENT QUIET DAY</b> 8:00 AM TO 12:00 PM
7 10:00 AM <b>Holy Eucharist Rt II</b> Church & Zoom <b>Advent 2</b>	8	9	10	11 <b>PET FOOD PANTRY</b> 10:00 - 1:00 PM	12	13
14 10:00 AM <b>Morning Prayer II</b> Church & Zoom <b>Advent 3</b>	15	16	17	18 <b>Vestry Meeting</b> 5:00 PM	19	20
21 10:00 AM <b>Holy Eucharist Rt II</b> Church & Zoom Greening of the Church <b>Blue Christmas 6 PM</b>	22	23	24 <b>THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST</b> 7:30 pm Service	25 <b>Christmas Day</b>	26	27
28 10:00 AM Lessons & Carols Church & Zoom	29	30	31	12/6 Advent Quiet Day 12/21 Greening of the Church Potluck after the service 12/21 6:00 PM Blue Christmas Service 12/24 7:30 PM Christmas Eve Service		