

The Grapevine

St. Mark's Episcopal Church



August 2026

A Note from the Wardens – August 2026

As the season begins to shift and we enter a new program year, we are grateful for the renewed rhythm of parish life taking shape around us. In the months since Mother Nancy's retirement, our attendance has been steady and Rev. Kim Karashin has done a wonderful job supplying clergy to lead Holy Eucharist at least two Sundays a month. This month Rev Kim will officiate at St. Mark's on August 9 and 30, and Fr. Regis Smolko will be with us on August 23rd. Our Lay Worship Ministers will lead the service of Morning Prayer on August 2 and August 16.

In September, the choir will once again be offering anthems in worship, bringing beauty and depth to our services. You may have noticed small changes to our Sunday worship: we have a procession on the Sundays when we have Holy Eucharist. We are also delighted to welcome several new acolytes who will soon be assisting at the altar. A training and refresher session will be scheduled in the coming weeks — please watch for announcements.

Our annual parish meeting when we elect new members to the Vestry is fast approaching. We would normally elect three new members to replace Lisa Bell-Loncella, Richard Burkert, and Tina Grata whose terms are ending. However in our current time of transition, the Vestry has deliberated on the best course of action. After prayerful discussion, the Vestry has decided to suspend the bylaws for the coming year so that all current members may continue serving for an additional year. Continuity is essential right now, especially as the Vestry is actively engaged in several significant projects — including required upgrades to our sewer lines to meet city mandates, and repairs to the stonework on both the church building and the parish house. These efforts are vital to the long-term care of our campus and the ministries it supports.

Even with this temporary extension, we do have two Vestry positions that must be filled. One already has a replacement identified. The other is the role of Senior Warden. Lisa Bell-Loncella will be stepping down at the end of the year as she plans to relocate to North Carolina. While she has graciously agreed to remain until her departure, it would be extremely helpful for her successor to come on board soon and begin shadowing. In a season of transition, steady leadership matters.

We ask each of you to give **prayerful consideration** to whether you may be called to serve in this essential role. Your gifts, your presence, and your willingness to support the life of this parish make a profound difference.

Thank you for all the ways you continue to sustain our community — through your service, your generosity, and your prayers.

God's Blessings,

Lisa and Colleen

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

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

335 Locust Street
Johnstown, PA 15901
814-535-6797
stmarks@breezelinebiz.net

Web site

www.saintmarksjohnstown.com

Our Staff:

Priest:

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 Zawiskie

Treasurer: Pam Hysong

2026

Lisa Bell-Loncella

Richard Burkert

Tina Grata

2027

Donovan Pendell

Doug Zawiskie

Colleen Curry

2028

Louise Mead

Valarie Schultz

Cynthia Frank

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.

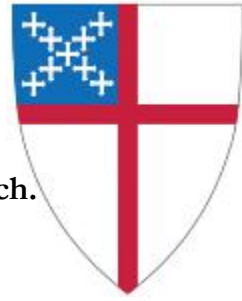
Guided by the Holy Spirit, we open our hearts and minds to new opportunities and ideas, following where you lead — knowing that Jesus Christ walks with us each step of the way. As this discernment period evolves, empower the members of our Vestries and Discernment Committees to share their thoughts openly 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. Francis in the Fields and St. Mark's. 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.*

Called to Leadership



At St. Mark's we are going through changes that affect our church.

Everyone's voice is needed. Everyone's voice counts.

How can you make your voice heard?

Consider attending a Vestry Meeting. Consider running for Vestry.

What is the Vestry?

The vestry is the legal representative of the parish with regard to all matters pertaining to its corporate property. At St. Mark's there are 9 members on the Vestry. Members are elected at the Annual Parish Meeting held the 4th Sunday in September. Three members are elected each year for a term of three years.

When does the vestry meet?

The vestry meets monthly on the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 PM (Zoom is an option). These **meetings are open to ALL members of the parish**, except when vestry goes into a closed session for confidential matters (e.g. personnel matters).

Who can serve on a vestry?

The Bylaws state that members of the Vestry shall be baptized Communicants of the Parish 16 years of age or older who participate in the services of the Church, are recognized as supporters of the Parish for at least the six months immediately preceding the Annual Meeting and who recognize the authority of and meet the requirements of the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Who makes up the Vestry?

The Rector/Priest in Charge is the presiding officer of the vestry. The senior warden leads the parish between rectors and is a support person for the rector. The junior warden often has responsibility for church property and buildings. The Rector/Priest in Charge selects the senior warden; the Vestry elects the junior warden and a secretary. The Vestry elects a treasurer who may or may not be a member of the Vestry.

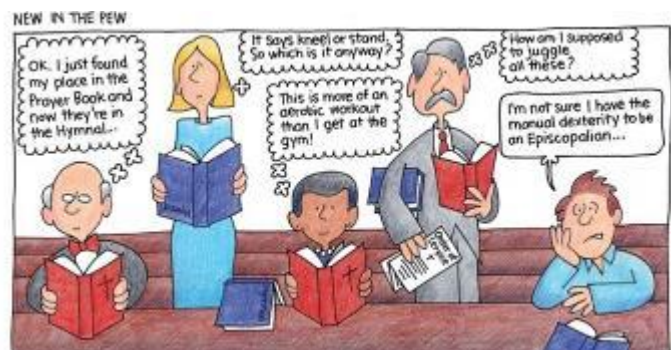
What are the Responsibilities of the Vestry?

The basic responsibilities of the vestry are to help define and articulate the mission of the congregation; to support the church's mission by word and deed, to select the rector, to ensure effective organization and planning, and to manage resources and finances.

Who is on the Vestry?

You can find a list of the Vestry members on the first page of this issue of the *Grapevine*.

- This information comes from <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/library/glossary/vestry> and the Bylaws of St. Mark's Episcopal church.
- Cartoon from <https://www.cpg.org/global/online-resources/cartoons/>



Readers and Greeters – August & September 2026

Sunday		Readers	Greeters & Ushers
August 2	MP	Tina Grata & Doug Zawiskie	Tina Grata & Joann Lacko
August 9	HE	Donna Carosi & Donovan Pendell	Melissa Babalonis & Aiden Barlow
August 16	MP	Lisa Bell-Loncella & Richard Burkert	Amy & Penn Whitlow
August 23	HE	Colleen Curry & Joann Lacko	Sam & Heid Buchan
August 30	HE	Tina Grata & Doug Zawiskie	Amy & Penn Whitlow
September 6	MP	Donna Carosi & Donovan Pendell	Tina Grata & Richard Burkert
September 13	MP	Pam Hysong & Joann Lacko	Joann Lacko & Colleen Curry
September 20	MP	Colleen Curry & Richard Burkert	Melissa Babalonis & Aiden Barlow
September 27	MP	Tina Grata & Doug Zawiskie	Sam & Heid 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/#august> We are using Track 1 for the Old Testament lesson & the Psalm.

Worship Schedule August 2026

Sunday, August 2,	Morning Prayer with Lisa Bell-Loncella
Sunday, August 9,	Holy Eucharist with Rev. Kim Karashin
Sunday, August 16,	Morning Prayer with Colleen Curry
Sunday, August 23,	Holy Eucharist with Fr. Regis Smolko
Sunday, August 31	Holy Eucharist with Rev. Kim Karashin



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.

Pulled Pork Picnic Lunch

Saturday, August 15th

11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Menu

Barbeque pulled pork sandwich*

Coleslaw, Macaroni & Cheese

Homemade Cookie

* Vegetarian Option

\$12.00

To order, call (814) 535-6797 or email stmarks@atlanticbbn.net

Volunteers & Donations Needed

- Help prepare the meal—Friday
- Help pack take-out bags—Saturday

Watch your email for more information.

If you can help:

- Call the church office (814)535-6797
- Contact Heidi Buchan
hbuchan8@gmail.com



Calendar and Hospitality Committee Tentative Plans for the Coming Months

August

- Sips, Savories & Sweets at St. Francis (7/31)
- Pulled Pork Picnic Lunch (8/15)

September:

- Saturday's Kitchen (9/19)
- Annual Parish Meeting (9/27)
- Fall Cleanup (9/26, rain date 10/10)

October:

- Blessing of the Animals & Bake Sale (10/4)
- Bishop's Visitation (10/11)

November

- Diocesan Convention (11/14)
- Calendar Committee Meeting (11/17)
- Halupki Harvest Dinner (11/21)
- Thanksgiving (11/26)

December

- Greening of the Church (12/20)
- Blue Christmas (12/21)
- Christmas Eve Services (12/24, 6PM)
- Lessons & Carols (12/27)

News from the Diocese



Diocesan Convention:

The 161st Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh will be held on Saturday, November 14, 2026, 8:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, 328 6th Avenue, Pittsburgh.

Nominations for Diocesan Leadership Positions:

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh is now welcoming nominations of clergy and lay persons for election to membership on various governing bodies and committees of the Diocese. The Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for elections to be held at the Diocesan Convention on November 14, 2026.

This year we will be electing:

- 1 Lay Person and 1 Clergy Person on the **Standing Committee** for a 4 year term.
- 1 Lay Person for the **Board of Trustees** for a 3 year term.
- 1 Lay Person and 1 Clergy Person for the **Committee on Constitution and Canons** for a 3 year term.
- 1 Lay Person and 1 Clergy Person for the **Cathedral Chapter** for a 3 year term.
- 1 Clergy Person for the **Regional Disciplinary Board** for a 3 year term.

For more information on the work of the Boards and Committees, please [click here](#).

Multiple candidates for open positions are accepted and encouraged. All positions carry a term of three years (ending in 2029) except for the Standing Committee which has a four-year term (ending in 2030).

The 2026 Nomination Form with submission instructions is available here in [PDF](#) or [Word](#).

More details about our 161st Annual Convention, as they become available, are available at <https://www.episcopalpgh.org/resources/2026-diocesan-convention/>



St. Michael's of the Valley, Ligonier and St. Francis in the Fields, Somerset, are partnering again to host Holy Hikes of Southwestern Pennsylvania, an official chapter of [Holy Hikes](#). Last year representatives of other congregations in the Diocese joined them for a number of hikes. St. Thomas Memorial, Oakmont is organizing some hikes near that end of the Diocese this year.

The hiking season runs from May to October on the third Saturday of each month starting at 10 AM. This gives folks from farther away in the Diocese time to get to the trailheads. Look for announcement with details about each hike on the [Diocese](#) Facebook page a week or two before each hike. The hiking schedule for 2026 is:

The hiking schedule for 2026 is:

Saturday, August 15, 2025 - 10:00 am — [Mount Davis Natural Area](#) (Meyersdale)

- High Point Trail - 2 miles (out and back) ; easy
- optional climb up the observation tower

Saturday, September 19, 2026 - 10:00 am - [Kimberly Run Natural Area](#) (Somerset)

- South East trails off South parking lot - 2.5 miles ; easy

Saturday, October 17, 2026 - 10:00 am - [Laurel Hill State Park](#) (near Somerset; Pump House Trailhead)

- to Jones Mill Dam - Pumphouse Trail to Martz Trail to Water Line Trail - about 3 miles
- easy (except Water Line trail which is more difficult but downhill)

During the hike, we hold a service of Holy Communion, stopping along the trail to read the scripture and say the prayers, while sharing the Eucharist at the end of the hike or at another appropriate setting along the trail. It's a lovely way to have a worship service!

In addition, we believe this is an important opportunity for members of the Diocese to invite friends, family, and neighbors—especially those who might not want to attend a Sunday morning service—to something a bit different. We have found it's a wonderful way to build community beyond our four walls.

If you are interested in participating this year, please contact our ministry team member [Katie Ong](#). You can also look for information about upcoming hikes in the "Events" section of the [St. Francis web-site](#) and on its [Facebook page](#), as well as on [St. Michael's Holy Hikes webpage](#) and its [Facebook page](#).





St. Mark's Episcopal Church
335 Locust St.
Johnstown, Pa. 15901
814-535-6797



ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL

July proved to be a very busy month. We are having a "Kitten and Cat" explosion here at St. Mark's.. We cannot stress enough to our families that they must have their cats spayed/neutered.

Many thanks to our generous contributors: Mr. & Mrs. Robert Portante, Mr. & Mrs. Delbert Hess, Bill & Cathy Sampson, Barry & Karen Orner, Marion Gaydos, Tim Cicotello, Dennis & Carol Loushe, Valerie Kasper, John & Sharon Flick, John & Betty Gritzer, Annett Kristofco, Carol Harp, Linda Cordes, Joann Lacko, Theresa Kosaber, Carol & Lou Schaffer, Helen Petruska, Donna Rzasa. We are forever grateful for their continued support.

There were 95 people who came through our doors in July, including 4 emergency Walk-ins.

Totals for the month of July were:

Dogs:	Dry food	349 lbs.	Puppies:	120 lbs.
Cats:	Dry food	510 lbs.	Kittens:	268 lbs.

Grand Total From January through July:

5271 lbs. of Dry Dog Food and 10,032 lbs. of Dry Cat Food

During the Month of August the Pet Food Pantry will be open Thursday, August 13th from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

Cynthia Greig and Joanne McKinley



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:

August: 8/2 (1), 8/31 (1)
September: 9/6 (1), 9/20 (1)
October: 10/4 (1), 10/18 (1), 10/25 (2)
November: 11/1 (1), 11/8 (1), 11/15 (2), 11/22 (1), 11/29 (1)
December: 12/6 (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 the Narthex renovations.



A special “thank you “ to everyone who has supported our many projects!

Missions

All families of the church are encouraged to donate \$1.00 on the **3rd Sunday** of each month for Missions.

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, August 20^{rst}
6:30 PM
In Person (or 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 to make your donation:

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

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
AUGUST						1
2 10:00 AM Morning Prayer II Church & Zoom	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist II Church & Zoom	10	11	12	13 PET FOOD PANTRY 10:00 am - 1:00 pm	14 Prep Work Pulled Pork 9:00 am	15 Pulled Pork Lunch 11:00 - 1:00
16 10:00 AM Morning Prayer II Church & Zoom	17	18	19	20 Vestry Meeting 6:30 Church & Zoom	21	22
23 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist II Church & Zoom	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist II Church & Zoom	31					