

Saint Mark United Methodist Church

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Markings

Volume 19, Issue 2

March, 2010

From the Pastor's Desk:

As we enter the month of March this year, we find ourselves in the heart of the Lenten season, slowly gaining momentum, as we journey toward the cross. This season, indeed our lives, are lived in the cross' shadow. Yet the Christ who bore the cross turned an instrument of torture into a sign of peace.

England suffered a bitter blow on November 14, 1940, when German bombers attacked the industrial city of Coventry. In addition to weapons and aircraft assembly facilities, the Cathedral Church of Saint Mary (Coventry Cathedral) was bombed. In retaliation, the English unleashed a similar attack on the German city of Dresden. During the first stage of damage assessment at Coventry, the cathedral's provost, Richard Howard, came across two roof timbers that had been welded together in the shape of a cross during the bombing and ensuing fire. These timbers were set aside and became a moving work of art with the words, "Father, forgive" inscribed on them. After WWII, the Community of the Cross of Nails was founded to promote the ministry of reconciliation, at first between Coventry and Dresden, but in time between any nations and peoples who are at war or enmity. For more information on Coventry, see www.coventrycathedral.org.uk.

How is it this season that Christ is calling us through the cross to experience peace in our lives? How are we being called to the ministry of peace-making and peace-keeping? The time-honored story of Coventry Cathedral reminds us of the power of God to transform hatred into love, violence into peace and even transform us into children of God.

Bob

BREAD & SOUP DEVOTIONALS

Midweek Bread and Soup Devotionals entitled *Voices of Lent* will be held Wednesdays, February 24 to March 24, from 6:00-7:30PM. Soup makers, bread bakers, kitchen assistants, and thespians are needed. Please sign up in Fellowship Hall indicating what weeks you will be attending and when you can offer soup/bread for the community

MAUNDY THURSDAY

No, it is not an April Fool's joke! Maundy Thursday worship is April 1 at 7:00PM. We will commemorate the Last Supper by receiving the Lord's Supper.

GOOD FRIDAY

Mark the date on your calendar. Good Friday worship sponsored by the Hamilton Ecumenical Fellowship will be held at Hamilton Square Baptist Church on April 2. Time and details will follow. Good Friday Taize Service will be held at Saint Mark at 7:00PM on Good Friday evening. This meditative service of music and scripture will inspire you and help you connect with the story of Jesus' Passion.

PRAYER LABYRINTH

On Friday and Saturday, April 2/3, Fellowship Hall will be transformed into a Prayer Labyrinth. A labyrinth is a path that leads to the center of an intricate design and back out again. As you walk through the labyrinth you will listen to a spiritual recording and encounter stations where you can quiet your mind, find spiritual growth, healing and a deeper relationship with God. Come celebrate the Easter season by experiencing sacred space in the prayer labyrinth. Sign up in Fellowship Hall or contact Mary Novak (609) 396-1649.

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Church Staff:

Robert L. Marks	Senior Pastor	Linda Ann Ross	Associate Pastor	Lorraine Wilson	Children's Ministry Coordinator	Bob Sharp, Brian Keck	Custodians
Bill Wieszczek	Director of Music	Bill Garrett	Organist	Frank Planas	Praise 2000 Director	Rob Signora, Gary Fuller, Tim Marks	
Linda D'Errico	Office Manager	Judy Smith	Secretary	Meg Hansen	Praise 2000 Pianist		

JOIN WITH OUR TASK TEAM

If you've never been to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, why not come with our team on Wednesday, March 3 to prep and serve lunch "on the line?" We meet at 9:30AM in the narthex of the church to carpool to Trenton, returning by about 1:15PM. It is a great time of fellowship and hands on ministry that really makes a difference in the lives of those we serve. Hope to see you on the first Wednesday of the month!

FINANCE

The Finance Team is now offering electronic giving as an opportunity to set up a one-time offering or scheduled giving at regular intervals (weekly, monthly or quarterly). Click on the church website www.saintmarkhamilton.org and select the stewardship button to connect through a secure server to your bank and then follow the directions on the website. For additional instructions, contact Paul Goldstein (pgoldste29@optonline.net). The Finance Team continues to thank everyone for supporting the ministries and missions of Saint Mark, whether through envelope or electronic giving.

2009 FINANCIAL PLEDGE CAMPAIGN

The Stewardship Team and Finance Committee want to thank all of those who prayerfully reflect on giving of their "treasures" in support of the ministries and missions of Saint Mark Church. Our fall pledge campaign resulted in 166 giving units pledging \$364,636 for calendar year 2010. In this current economic climate, when some churches are struggling to survive, it is a blessing that Saint Mark was not only able to meet it's financial obligations for 2009, but also make one of our largest contributions to our missions apportionment - offering significant support to the world-wide ministries of our connectional church. Unfortunately, in anticipation of depressed levels

of giving in this economy, some "belt-tightening" efforts were taken when crafting our 2010 budget to address the church's growing financial obligations, e.g., eliminating our Minister of Visitation position and freezing staff salaries.

However, the significant increase in giving during the last two months of 2009 provides hope that the maintenance, and even the expansion, of the important ministries at Saint Mark will continue in 2010 through the selfless offering of the God-given "treasures" of our church family.

As a reminder, if you would like to try the convenience of "e-giving" your offerings to Saint Mark, access this website: <https://www.myowngiving.com/default.aspx?cid=51>

REHOBOTH CAPITAL FUNDS CAMPAIGN

It's probably hard to believe, but this June officially ends the three-year, Rehoboth Capital Funds Campaign.

Expectedly, the weak economy has had an adverse impact on our efforts to reach our pledge goal of \$920,000.

Even as late as two-thirds of the way into the program, monthly giving levels would have suggested we would reach our goal. But, current levels of giving now indicate we may be short of our goal by more than \$200,000 by the time the campaign ends in June. The Follow-Up Committee is proud of the commitment of the church membership for the level of funds we have been able to amass to date. In light of the difficult economic times we face, the committee sincerely appreciates the faith-based personal struggles that are behind this generous giving.

However, with full understanding and appreciation of our economic hardships, the Rehoboth Follow-Up Committee would boldly like to encourage those who can, to rally during the final months of our capital funds campaign, so we can collect as much "up front" money as possible in support of the building and ministry expansion efforts here at Saint Mark.

www.KidsChat@SaintMark.God

Many thanks to Cathy Bell for coming to the Sunday School gathering to tell the students about her volunteer work at the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen. We hope to have other members of the congregation share with us the many ways the church is the PEOPLE and not a building. In March, Diane Wance will come teach us a song in sign language.

Thanks to all who ordered the Pretzels for *Super Pretzel Sunday*. We sold 400 pretzels; the Children's Ministries team made \$255 to help off set some expenses for the spring retreat. In addition, we earned \$59 from the 5 Below event held in December.

Coming on March 21, the Christian Education Celebration Dinner - teachers and education leaders mark this date for a wonderful evening of fellowship. More info to follow.

Well, snow is on the ground - can Easter be far behind? Coming on March 27 - Easter Games. There is a box in the narthex for donations to the games. We are looking for prizes (games, books, small toys etc) and small wrapped candy to fill the eggs. In addition this year we need to replace some of the plastic eggs. Anything you are able to donate is much appreciated. Just leave in the "Easter Box." Thanks.



The Music Corner

OPEN MIC ON FRIDAY, MARCH 5 AT 7:30PM

All talents, abilities and ages are welcome to come out for the next Open Mic at Saint Mark. We've got a great sound system and an appreciative audience that looks forward every month to hearing new folks share their gifts as well as the "regulars." Every performer gets three pieces/12 minutes. The sign-up list starts at 7:15PM. Please bring a snack to share - hot and cold beverages are provided.

SUMMER DATES FOR CAMPS AND PROGRAMS

Mark these dates and watch for more information about Saint Mark's summer activities for kids and youth!

June 21-25, Choir Camp I for kids and youth in grades 1-8; 9:00AM-1:00PM. Concert on Friday, June 25 at 7:00PM

July 26-31, Vacation Bible School for kids 4 years old to grade 5, youth guides from grade 6 and an up - watch for upcoming training dates; 9:00AM-Noon. Adult leaders and helpers wanted, too!

August 9-13, Choir Camp II for kids and youth in grades 1-8; 9:00AM-1:00PM Concert on Friday, August 13, 7:00PM

August 23-27, **NEW!** Guitar & Bass Camp for youth, grades 6 and up; 9:00AM-Noon. Concert on August 17, 7:00PM

ASP FUNDRAISER

Don't throw anything out! An ASP fundraiser will be held on Friday, April 23, 7:00-8:00PM, Saturday, April 24, 9:00-11:00AM and 4:00-5:00PM, and Sunday, April 25, during all church services. Save your old usable and wearable clothing, shoes, belts, handbags, hats, linens, stuffed animals and any household items made of fabric in good condition and bring to Saint Mark in well-tied plastic garbage bags. Shoes should be separate from fabric items. Small hard toys may also be collected and should fit in a box no larger than 24x24x21. These items will be sold by the pound to raise money for ASP. The more we collect, the more money we raise. Start cleaning and organizing those closets! Please call Cindy Lewis (581-3519) for additional information.

HIGHTSTOWN EVENT FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION WORKERS

There still may be room for you if you wish to attend Christian Education workshops on Saturday, March 6, from 8:30AM-12:30PM. A wide variety of classes are available (you choose two) for a low registration fee of \$15 which includes a light snack and all materials. Forms are available on the narthex literature rack or see Bill Wieszczyk. A limited number of walk-in registrations will be taken.

SCHOLARSHIP

Do you know someone who is graduating high school this year and will be furthering their education by attending an institution of higher education or a technical school? Be on the look-out for the Saint Mark Scholarship applications. They will be available in the Literature Rack soon.

LENTEN SOUP COOKBOOK

Recipes from last year's Lenten suppers have been published into a cookbook. The recipes were contributed by congregation members, tested for their delicious goodness and are now being offered to you. As a mission to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, the cookbooks are available for \$5 in Fellowship Hall on Sundays or by contacting Marion Zajac (mnzajac@verizon.net).

DISCIPLE BIBLE STUDY

An 11 week Bible study, *Invitation to Psalms* is forming on Tuesday mornings. It is an ideal experience for adults interested in the practice of prayer and worship and who would like to connect prayer practice with scripture. Please join us for a time of gathering around God's Word at the orientation class on March 2 at 9:00am. For information, contact Denny Cox (dhcstreetrod@aol.com) or Cindy Jackson (NSpireM@aol.com).

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

The UMW is gathering Health Kits for UMCOR that will be sent to Haiti. You may pick up a gallon plastic zip lock bag with a list of items needed to complete the kit after service the weekend of March 6/7. Please do not add anything else to the kit or substitute anything different than what's on the list. You're also asked to include \$1.00 that will be used by UMCOR to purchase toothpaste immediately prior to shipping. What a great way to do mission! Most items can be purchased at the Dollar Store. You could even get children involved! Return the completed Health Kit by March 21. The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is the not-for-profit global humanitarian aid organization of the United Methodist Church. UMCOR is working in more than 80 countries worldwide, including the United States. Their mission, grounded in the teachings of Jesus, is to alleviate human suffering-whether caused by war, conflict or natural disaster, with open hearts and minds to all people.

Have you ever needed a helping hand? Saint Mark United Methodist Church established a Caring Fund to help someone who is experiencing a crisis. This confidential fund is managed by Pastor Bob. On Palm Sunday weekend, March 27/28, the UMW will be distributing plastic eggs. Please bring them back Easter weekend with your donation to the Caring Fund. A basket will be in the narthex as you enter/exit services.

Thanks!

I am writing on behalf of the MSF Parenting & Adult Services Division staff and our young families to convey our heartfelt thanks for the kind blessing of toys and useful items donated by your organization this year at Christmas time. This wonderful expression of holiday spirit was greatly appreciated by staff and parents alike. As a result of the generosity of yourselves and others, we were able to bless over three hundred children this year with fun and interesting items; an amazing accomplishment in today's challenging economic times. In our work to reduce child maltreatment through education/support of overall health and family wellness, it is vital for us to receive such timely and appropriate support from the community. Again, thank you.

Karen Hoppock, MSW, LCS, Director, Parenting & Adult Services Division, Mercer Street Friends

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Thank you for the beautiful Christmas flower delivered by Jack & Cathy Bell. It's still in good shape as I take care of it.

Margaret Stark

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Thanks to all my sisters and brothers at Saint Mark that prayed, encouraged, and supported me through December and January. Your prayers were answered and I am thankful to you

all. Your encouragement and supported lifted me and I appreciate you all.

Tom

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We just wanted to thank you for your time and generous gifts and donations. You have made the holidays so special for the children.

The Butterfly Room at Mercer Street Friends

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The Infant Room staff would like to thank each and every one of you who made this Christmas so special for the children at Mercer Street Friends. Your thoughtfulness, kindness, dedication, and generosity put a smile on their faces and excitement in their eyes. Your good deed for humanity is what holidays are all about.

The Infant Room Staff

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The Teddy Bear class would like to thank everyone who played a part in making our holiday brighter. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Teddy Bear Staff and Children

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Thank you, Saint Mark UMC for the gloves and hats. We stay nice and warm when we go outside to play!

SHAYLYN'S SWEETS FOR ASP!

The Novak family will be helping raise funds for the 2010 ASP trip by selling chocolates through Shaylyn's Sweets for the upcoming Easter and Mother's Day holidays. This is a "sweet" way to help support the ASP program. Please consider helping support the ASP team by purchasing a basket of homemade chocolates for your family and friends. Easter orders will be taken in Fellowship Hall on March 14 and March 21 and baskets will be available on Sunday, March 28. Mother's Day orders will be taken on April 18 and April 25 and baskets will be available on Sunday, May 2. All proceeds will go directly to the ASP fund. Any questions please contact the Novak family (609-396-1649).

TUPPERWARE FUNDRAISER

There's always room for TUPPERWARE! Help support the Confirmation Retreat to the Pinelands Center by purchasing some TUPPERWARE during their fundraiser. The "Party" will be March 6, from 10:00AM-NOON in the lounge. If you cannot attend, you may place an order in advance. Contact Pastor Linda for a catalog.

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

Youth Group will meet each Sunday in March from 6:00-8:00PM except for March 28. Parents: Please sign up on the bulletin board to help with snacks.

DID SOMEONE SAY, "KIDS' RETREAT?"

Parents of elementary aged children, mark your calendars for April 30-May 1 as we get ready for the annual Kids' Retreat at the Pinelands Center at Mount Misery. Parents are welcome and encouraged to participate in this fun and spiritual over-night retreat. This year's theme centers on the mystery of the Holy Trinity (1+1=God). See Bill Wieszczyk or check on the narthex literature rack for more information. The cost is \$35 per attendee (adults, too). Some scholarships are available for families who may wish to participate but are affected by the current economic downturn. See Bill Wieszczyk or one of the pastors for more information.

MISSING COAT

A coat is missing! By mistake, someone took another member's coat after a service in mid-December. It is a dark grey (black) men's overcoat. Car keys and gloves were in the pocket. Please check your closet. Your coat may be hanging in the coatroom here at Saint Mark!

Welcome to the Family of God little ones baptized in February

Aiden James Simonelli
son of Michael and Tracy

Roman Claudia Lacy-Cancel
daughter of Jaime and Shannon

Kristopher George Simonka
Son of George and Andrea

PRAYER CHAIN

Prayer is an important part of your walk and relationship with God. A prayer chain is available for support of any prayer concerns or needs. Requests are confidential. To use the prayer chain, call the church (587-1286) and at anytime during the message, press 50 and follow the procedures as given. If you have any questions, call Janet Gerhardt (587-7820).

WEBSITE

Ministry team chairs should notify the office (stmarkum@optonline.net) of any additions or changes needed on their ministry pages on our website, (www.saintmarkhamilton.org).

KEEP INFORMED—STAY CONNECTED!

Please forward any Saint Mark email additions/changes/deletions directly to Carol Andrejczik (andrejcc@mcc.edu) so we can update our list. This is a great instrument to get information out to our church family quickly. As a reminder, it's also important to keep the church office current with changes of address and phone. Thank you.

ANCHOR HOUSE AND ANGEL'S WINGS

Volunteers are needed! Anchor House is a shelter located in Trenton for homeless, runaway, and abused youth ages 10-17. Angel's Wings provides emergency respite care to children from birth-12 years of age. If interested in volunteering or preparing a meal, collecting gently used clothing, or doing a service project, please contact Marianne Funk (609-392-6100 x100).

WEEKLY EMAIL UPDATE

Have you heard? Saint Mark has a weekly email update! If you haven't already received an issue, please email the office (stmarkum@optonline.net) to have your name/email address added to our mailing list.