

Saint Mark United Methodist Church

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Markings

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From the Pastor's Desk:

I have recently been reading a book entitled *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for The Two Halves of Life*, by Richard Rohr. One of the many statements that caught my imagination in this book was this statement, "you learn how to recover from falling by falling."

My mind went back to those days when my children learned to ride a bike without safety wheels. It was probably harder for me to let go of the bike, than it was for them to have me let go. Aware that children will never learn balance until you let go, you do so, even knowing that what follows might be a painful fall. Yet most of the time, the child gets up from the fall, brushes themselves off, cries a tear or two, and gets right back on the bike. We learn to recover from a fall by falling.

How much of life do we miss because we are so afraid of falling (or failing) that we never "get on the bike?" We avoid intimacy, run from friendship, and many times refuse to try anything that we are not absolutely sure we will be successful at. We fail to experience joy because we are so afraid of failure, we isolate ourselves because we have been hurt by relationships.

God challenges us to step out in faith, to dare believe in the one who is able to keep us from falling or who can help pick us up and brush us off when we do fall. Only as we trust such a God can we hope to experience abundant life in the present and eternal life in the future. Remember, we only "learn to recover from falling by falling."

Peace, *Bob*

PASTOR LINDA RETURNS

On Saturday, February 4, Pastor Linda Ross will return to Saint Mark UMC to preach at the 5:00PM service. Put this date aside and plan to be at worship that evening to greet her and hear her message for us. WOOO-HOOO.

DIDN'T WE JUST GET THROUGH ADVENT?

Yes, but February 22 marks the beginning of Lent. An Ash Wednesday service will be held at 7:30PM that evening. Plan to begin your season of Lent in worship.

MID WEEK SOUP AND DEVOTIONS

Our annual series of Lenten Soup and Bread Devotions will begin on Wednesday night, February 29, and continue through Wednesday evening, March 28. Dinner begins at 6:00PM and includes some of the tastiest soup you will ever experience. Devotions will follow each night, and we will conclude before 7:30PM, in case you have another meeting that evening.

LENTEN COIN FOLDERS

As Lent begins on February 22, we encourage you to mark the Lenten season by filling one of the quarter coin folders during the Lenten season. By placing a quarter in the folder each day of Lent (40 days not counting Sundays) you will not only be keeping spiritual discipline, but also supporting the ministry of Saint Mark UMC.

LENTEN PRAYER PALS

Remember to sign up to participate in the Lenten Prayer Pal Program. You will be asked to anonymously pray for another participant during Lent and have another participant pray for you. Please place your prayer slip in the box in the narthex. Prayer Pal assignments will be made by February 19.

Church Staff:	Senior Pastor	Ross Moret	Director of Youth Ministries	Lorraine Wilson	Children's Ministry Coordinator	Lynn Wilson	Director of Visitation			
Robert L. Marks	Bill Wieszczyk	Linda D'Errico	Director of Music Office Manager	Bill Garrett	Judy Smith	Organist Secretary	Sharon Clarke Meg Hansen	Praise Director Praise Pianist	Bob Sharp, Rob Signora, Tim Marks	Custodians

**WHAT IS 20 YEARS OLD &
HANGING OUT IN A CHURCH CLOSET?**

No, it is not an old broom – but the choir and acolyte robes at Saint Mark! The Worship Team is spearheading a fund drive to buy new robes for the Saint Mark Singers and our youth acolytes. All gifts will be noted in our Memorial book – make a donation in honor or memory of a choir member or acolyte. The average cost per robe is about \$200 and we looking to purchase 40 choir robes and 10 acolyte robes. Please use the *Robe Fund* envelope and clearly mark “Saint Mark Robe Fund” in the memo line of your check. All gifts will be noted on your 2012 financial statement. Thanks for your support!

FAITH X-CHANGE EVENT IN HIGHTSTOWN ON MARCH 3

The Christian Education Associates are offering Ecumenical workshops for Church School Teachers, Pastors and Church Leaders – many good classes to choose from (including one taught by Ross Moret). See Bill Wieszczyk for moiré details or pick up a registration form on the literature rack in the narthex. The Event will be held on Saturday, March 3, 2012 from 8:30AM to 12:45PM at the First Presbyterian Church, 320 North Main Street in Hightstown. Cost is \$15 per person and includes two classes and light refreshments. A Cokesbury Bookstore is on site!

SAVE THE DATE – KIDS’ RETREAT, MAY 27–28

Our annual Kids’ Retreat to the Pinelands Center at Mount Misery is Friday, April 27 (leaving at 4:00PM) through Saturday, April 28 (coming home by 4:30PM). The retreat is open to all kids in grades 1-5; and their parent(s). Watch the weekly bulletin and Markings for updated information and registration forms.

JOY 4 ALL SEASONS

Saint Mark annually receives the names of several family units from the Hamilton Township Division of Health. Please consider adopting a local family for Easter. Perhaps a circle, music or study group would join together to adopt a family? Please contact Linda D’Er-rico (587-1286) for information. Names will be available soon!

*Welcome to the Family of God little ones baptized
in December & January*

Ayden Brian Sullivan
son of Donald & Crystal

Tyler Donald Sullivan
son of Donald & Nicol

Derrick Ethan Towne
son of Ronald & Danielle

www.KidsChat@SaintMark.God

Thanks to all the people who helped the Sunday School children with the Live Nativity. It takes many people to come together to plan and offer such a meaningful program. Thanks to everyone.

Plan ahead: Can it be Easter Games?? Games will be held Saturday, March 31. Information and sign ups will be available soon.

The annual Super Pretzel Sunday will take place on February 5 with proceeds going towards children’s ministries. Pretzels will be sold for \$1 each or 6 for \$5. Order forms are available on the narthex literature rack.

Would you like to help with our Sunday School program? With two sessions of Sunday School and keeping with the Safe Sanctuary Policy, we are always in need of helpers. If you can help just one or two weeks each month, great! Contact Lorraine (609-291-9102) if you would like more information.

COFFEE HOUR

Coffee hour is from 9:00-11:00AM on Sundays. Hosts are needed for this time of fellowship. You can bring all sorts of good stuff, such as juice, cream cheese, pastries of all kinds. Sign up sheets are in Fellowship Hall.

TASTES OF THE WORLD AROUND US

Save the date and your appetite for the *Tastes of the World Around Us* event scheduled for Saturday, March 31, from 4:00–6:00PM. Tickets are \$10 per person, \$12 at the door. Tickets will go on sale Sunday, February 19 in Fellowship Hall during coffee hours. A wonderful array of delicious foods from community restaurants and other businesses will be presented as well as door prizes. Proceeds of the event will be committed to the missions and ministries of Saint Mark United Methodist Church. The 2010 event was well attended and enjoyed by all, so we are hopeful you will be able to join us this year.

STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship and Finance Teams want to thank all of those “pillars” who prayerfully reflect on giving which will continue to strengthen the foundation of Saint Mark Church throughout 2012. Our fall pledge campaign resulted in 159 giving units pledging \$359,987 for calendar year 2012, with 29% of those pledges indicating an increase over last year. Even as these difficult economic conditions continue in our community, our “living stones” financial generosity will assist to underwrite the Lord’s work at our church.



The Music Corner

OPEN MIC AT SAINT MARK - FEBRUARY 3 AT 7:30PM

Come out to hear a great variety of talent at our next Open Mic session. All acts, talents, abilities and ages are welcome. Sign-up list starts at 7:15PM - every act gets three songs/12 minutes (unless the list is full). Bring a snack to share; hot and cold drinks are provided. New performers and listeners are always welcome!

MAKE TIME TO MAKE MUSIC AT SAINT MARK!

Saint Mark congregation is blessed to have many opportunities to ring, sing, and play music to, and for the glory of God. Check out the listing of rehearsals in the bulletin calendar or call Bill Wieszczyk (587-1286) to see where you might wish to use and cultivate your musical abilities. All of our groups are open to new members and we hope to expand the level of participation this calendar year. If you have an idea for a new group and want to be a part of it, we are always looking for new ideas and new ways to praise!

QUALITY CD RECORDINGS AVAILABLE FOR \$5

Every Sunday service is recorded and available for purchase. Want to hear that moving sermon again or enjoy the special music? Fill out the yellow "Tape Ministry" request form on the literature rack in the narthex and leave in the Director of Music mailbox. CDs are provided free of charge to any homebound member!

PRAISE!

Join us for Praise rehearsals on February 7, 19, 28 and March 4. We sing each first and fifth Sunday of the month at 9:30AM and on Easter Sunday. Sunday rehearsals are from 5:00-6:00PM. Tuesdays are from 7:30-8:30PM. All are welcome (age 16 to 86) to join us in singing contemporary Christian music. For more information contact Sharon Clarke (584-9413).

YOUTH PRAISE!

Youth Praise!, ages 10-20, rehearses on February 12, 26, and March 11 at 5:00PM. We will be singing at the 9:30AM service on March 18. If you love music and have trouble standing still when you hear a drum set or guitar, check us out! Singers of all abilities are welcome! For more information, contact Sharon Clarke (584-9413).

APPALACHIAN SERVICE PROJECT FUNDRAISER

Save the date: Saturday, March 24 at 7:00PM for an evening of illusion with Pastor Gary Filson at Saint Mark to benefit the Appalachia Service Project. Gary is a Pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Jamesburg, a member of the World Clown Association, Fools for Christ, the International Brotherhood of Magicians, and the Fellowship of Christian Magicians. Be prepared for a fun evening full of illusions with a message. Refreshments are included. More details will follow. Any questions, call Cindy Lewis (581-3519).

LAY VISITATION MINISTRY

Become part of the Lay Visitation Ministry Team by visiting home bound parishioners. Lay people will visit for approximately one hour at least once or twice a month. Full training will be provided in February. Please call Lynn Wilson (609-291-9102) to become a part of this interesting ministry of Saint Mark.

TASK Team on the First Wednesday of the Month

Saint Mark volunteers prep and serve lunch at the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen every first Wednesday of the month. On February 1, we will gather in the narthex of the church at 9:30AM to carpool to Trenton, returning by about 1:15PM. New and returning volunteers are most welcome! Call Bill Wieszczyk (587-1286) if this is your first time serving.

NEW MEMBERS

We will receive new members into the Saint Mark fellowship on the weekend of February 4 and 5. Take time to greet these persons and welcome them to the church family.

SAINT MARK UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

The United Methodist Women's annual Pledge Drive 2012 is in progress. Pledges help the mission work of UMW and help fulfill their pledge to the Capitol District. Your tax deductible donation can be made as a one-time, monthly, quarterly, or annual pledge. Pledge forms can be found on the narthex literature rack.

Saint Mark UMW Oldies Dance

Featuring Jerry Blavat, *the Geator with the Heator*

Tickets are available in the church office or during coffee hours in Fellowship Hall!

They'll make fantastic Valentine's Day gifts!!

Saturday, February 25, 2012

7:00PM-MIDNIGHT
Nottingham Ballroom
200 Mercer St.

Hamilton Square, NJ

Light Refreshments, tea, coffee, desserts provided

Admission \$30.00

Thanks!

The canned and dried goodies at Thanksgiving are much appreciated! May the Lord grant you Ephesians 3:20, blessings throughout the holiday season.

Elizabeth Ficklin

You have been such a blessing over the years at Saint Mark. May God's presence, love and grace hold you all very close. Wishing you a Blessed Thanksgiving. "A faithful man will be richly blessed" Proverbs 28:20 Thinking of all of you. Miss ya. Love and Prayers,

George and Phyllis Roberts

Just a note of thanks on behalf of the four families who were able to have a delicious Thanksgiving meal because of your generosity. Thanks again,

Nursing staff of Hamilton Twp. Health Dept.

Because you cared I want you to know how grateful I am. I have been given a wonderful gift of cancer free days. I am beyond thankful but do not know the words. You are a powerful group. Keep praying. Everyone needs you. Love and my prayers are for you.

Janet Gerhardt

On behalf of the church staff, thank you for all of your kindness and generosity represented by the Love Gift extended to us this Christmas Season. It is a blessing to work with all of you.

From Saint Mark Staff

Thank you to the Saint Mark family for all of your expressions of sympathy for the loss of my sister, Paula.

Shirley Larkins

Many, many thanks to my Christmas elves who helped decorate the church for the Advent and Christmas season. Janet Ford, Sue Ford, Mary Merrick, Gary Michaud, Howard Nielsen, Brit Osborne, Nancy Saul, and Bob Sharp - you are all the best! God Bless You.

Pam Rooney

I would like to thank everyone who helped set up, break down and reset the Sanctuary for Sunday worship after the Winter Songs V concert on December 10. So many of you volunteered your time and energy to help make a very large job run smoothly. I'm very honored to be a part of such a wonderful family here at Saint Mark. Thank you ever so much for your help. May God bless you and your families!!

Mary Fuller

Many heartfelt thanks for every thought and prayer that was said, for every beautiful card and note that was sent, and for every call I received from our Saint Mark angels. These very special gifts brightened every painful day and brought joy to my heart. Please too, always remember to thank God for caretakers. They are truly special.

Joyce K. Elliott

We hope that the holiday season finds you well and in very good spirits. Our children and families here at Mercer Street Friends West State were blessed by your giving spirit once again this year. We would like to thank you for the donations of money, food, clothing, coats, books, hats, gloves, scarves, and the very many toys. Our families and children were very happy you brought so much joy into their lives in one way or another. May you have a merry Christmas and happy, healthy, safe and prosperous New Year.

Lisa Banks, staff, children & parents of Mercer Street Friends

The Missions Team would like to thank everyone who purchased gifts for Mercer Street Friends Daycare and the Vineland Veterans Home this Christmas. Your generosity is overwhelming and appreciated by those who received your gifts.

On behalf of the residents of the New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home at Vineland, we thank you for your donation of Christmas gifts for our residents. Your support helps us enrich the lives of those who have fought to defend our freedoms. We are most grateful for your friendship and support.

Mary Macho, Therapy Room Assistant

NJ Veterans Memorial Home at Vineland

Thanks for the beautiful poinsettia the church gave to me and to Lynn Wilson who delivered it. I enjoy taking care of it.

Doris Rockel

To the congregation of Saint Mark, a sincere thank you on behalf of the eight families who had a wonderful Christmas because of your generosity.

#1: Family of six, father has kidney disease and mother undergoing chemotherapy for breast cancer, four children

#2: Single mother, sole support of two children, struggles to make ends meet

#3: Single mother, two young children, recently had to move out of her home.

#4: Single mother, two young children, one with special needs

#5: Single mother, son is brittle diabetic, recently lost her house

#6: Family of four, father out of work for two years, mother just returned to work after one year, two children

#7: Family of six, father often unemployed due to seasonal work, four children and now helping to provide for two grandchildren

#8: Single mother, works two jobs, one child recently diagnosed with autism.

Thanks for allowing us to be Santa's helpers year after year.

Nursing section-Hamilton Twp. Health Dept.

The Confirmation group would like to thank everyone for supporting our shoe collection for Soles 4 Souls. We collected 120 pairs of shoes. If anyone would like to continue supporting this cause, Foot Solutions at 549 Route 130 North in Hamilton accepts smaller donations of used shoes.

Debi Zoltanski