

### DID YOU MARK YOUR CALENDARS?

On New Year's Eve St. Mark's will again host First Night East Longmeadow. This fun and free event begins at 7:00pm and lasting until 11:00pm. First night will run at three distinct venues here in town for different groups of people.

- At St. Mark's there will be live music, dancing, and food for adults.
- At East Longmeadow United Methodist Church there will be a family friendly, alcohol-free event with food and entertainment.
- At St. Paul Lutheran Church there will be an event for children and families with special needs.



For more information contact Anne Strickert at 860-478-5756 or Kelly at 413-262-1709

## Notice of Annual Meeting

**St. Mark's Episcopal Church**

**Sunday, January 27**

**11:00 am until 12:30 pm**



**Have your voice heard**

**Have coffee in church (and treats too)**

**Find out what all the ministry teams have up their sleeves**

**Be "In the know"**

**\*Attendance at this meeting will NOT automatically sign you up for ANYTHING...but you may want to sign up after you hear what's going on**



**Elections will be held for the following positions:**

**Executive Committee**

**Vestry**

**Diocesan Convention Delegates**

**MISSION STATEMENT:**

St. Mark's is called to serve all people in greater Springfield, MA. as a guiding light and a spiritual home where Jesus' spirit is known through inclusive, joyful worship, spirited formation, thriving ministries of service, and powerful outreach. Christ welcomed all, we welcome you.

**St. Mark's Episcopal Church**

One Porter Road

East Longmeadow, MA 01028

413.525.6341

Email: [office@stmarksma.org](mailto:office@stmarksma.org)

Web: [www.stmarksma.org](http://www.stmarksma.org)

Office Hours: Mon-Thurs 9am-3pm

**Sunday Worship: 8am & 10am,  
6:30pm**

**Wednesday Worship:  
12:00pm Eucharist**

Rector- Rev. Peter Swarr  
Sr. Warden - Sue Schneider  
Jr. Warden - Peter Fairman  
Director of Music - Susan Matsui  
Parish Administrator - Diane Chandler  
Good News Editor - Diane Chandler  
I.T./Webmaster - Ryan Schneider

The *Good News* is published monthly by St. Mark's Church. The deadline is usually the **3rd Tuesday of every month** unless otherwise noted.

**Next deadline is  
Tuesday, Jan 15, 2019**



Submit articles to:  
Diane Chandler, Good News Editor  
[office@stmarksma.org](mailto:office@stmarksma.org)

**THANK YOU FOR A JOYFUL CELEBRATION OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST!**

Christmas Eve was a glorious celebration of the Nativity of Christ. And it was only possible because of the people of St. Mark's. You made the Great Hall shine with lights, and decked it with trees. You made our entry areas festive with garlands and wreaths. The Sanctuary was spectacular, with greens and crèches and Poinsettias. Services were beautiful with children's smiling faces, beautiful music, and members of the congregation welcoming others in the name of the newborn Christ-child. Children and youth

dressed their parts as angels, the Holy Family, shepherds, sheep and stars all while helping to tell the joyful story of Bethlehem and the birth of Jesus. Visitors and regulars alike were greeted with Holy Grounds hospitality, ushers, greeters and our ever popular annual Christmas ornament gift.

Each and every one of these acts of kindness, of faith, and of worship speaks to the power of Christ working in and through this congregation. For that I give you my deep thanks. Merry Christmas to you all and may these final days of Christmas-tide (lasting until Epiphany—January 6) continue to be filled with wonder and joy for you. Christ is with us, God has made his home among us. Let us rejoice and be glad.

**EPIPHANY 2019: A SEASON OF JOURNEYING CLOSER TO JESUS**

On Epiphany Sunday (January 6) we remember Wise Men from the East who went on a journey and followed a star. They went on a journey, leaving behind everyday life on a quest to look for something. Honestly they weren't even sure what they were looking for. They simply knew that something wonderful had happened, and they needed to experience it, and see it with their own eyes.

So they got up and started to journey, and the star they followed (no GPS as of yet...) led them to Jesus.

Think about it, their road trip lead them to **God**. To the creator of all, to the author of peace, to the very source of life, love, and joy. Their journey led them to that for which all of us long.

And once the Wise Men left Jesus, their world is changed. They have seen God with their own eyes and even as they leave his side, they hear from God through dreams and visions. They know that God is with them.

Epiphany isn't just for wise men. It is for us too.

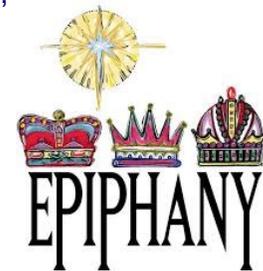
So, come, come and worship.

Come and pray.

Come and seek the light of Christ.

Together we will begin this Epiphany journey on Sunday, January 6.

Chris welcomed all, we welcome you!



## RIPPLES TO WAVES UPDATE



This past fall the Vestry and the Stewardship Ministry Team worked to present the "Ripples to Waves" Stewardship Program. The program involved the telling stories by many of the church's ministry teams of the ways their work has furthered our mission here at St. Mark's Church and ways that each of us can support these ministries. From comments and conversation, the program was well received and the message heard.

Now that the program has completed and a majority of the parish pledges have been received, the Vestry and Finance Ministry Team are diligently working to compile the numbers and determine the budget and financial outlook for 2019. At this point it appears that, although many members heard and responded to the call to support our church and ministries, we will still be faced with significant financial challenges in the year to come. Please plan to attend the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 27, 2019 after the 10 AM service when the final details will be discussed.

Thank you to each person who participated in the Ripples to Waves program: those who envisioned and created it, those who participated in the presentation and those who listened and responded to the call. May God continue to bless and prosper our ministry here at St. Mark's Church.

## MISSION TRIP TO THE ROSEBUD INDIAN RESERVATION IN SOUTH DAKOTA: JULY 2019

You may have heard about mission trips in the past at St. Mark's. Trips of faithful members of our church who head to a location in need, and give their time and ability to help others in the name of Christ. Well, in 2019 St. Mark's is considering offering a trip to Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota.

Rosebud is a place with incredible history, amazing culture, and shocking need. It is also a place where the Episcopal church has a strong and long presence of support and engagement. (learn more by visiting <https://rosebudepiscopalmission.org/>)

Are you interested in taking part in a trip like this?

Consider coming to an informational meeting to be held on Sunday, January 13 following the 10am church service.

We will discuss additional details of what is involved in a mission like this, what sort of work we would be doing, and other details. Come, and discover if God is calling you to be part of this mission.

## CELEBRATING OUR WORSHIP MINISTRIES AT ST. MARKS.

On January 6, we will be celebrating our Lectors with a brief statement about what it means to serve God by reading Scripture in worship and helping to lead our prayers. After the service we will have cake in the Great Hall. Please feel free to approach any of our Lectors if you have any questions on how to become a Lector or what is involved in joining this ministry. Please take a moment to thank them for their time and talents which make Sunday services possible.

Blessings,  
Christine Whitehead  
and Father Peter +



## OUTREACH

A hearty thank you goes out to everyone who brought in items during our Advent giving season.

We delivered the Christmas gifts to the two families, brought the household items to Jewish Family Services for newly arriving refugees, took the warm hats, gloves, blankets, sleeping bags and coats with us on the Big Blue ministry to the homeless in Springfield and Fr. Peter has funds in his discretionary fund to help those in our own congregation who will need it this winter. God is working in us and charges us in this coming new year to remember that we are his hands and feet in the world.



Items collected for the Big Blue Ministry



Items for Jewish Family Services

## STEWARDSHIP & THE BIG BLUE HOMELESS MINISTRY

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Mt 22:39 KJV)

You may think it a foregone conclusion that going out on a cold winter night to find and provide our region’s homeless with critical supplies to survive (and/or pray as they are open) is an act of loving thy neighbor. You would be right. It is an act of stewardship of God’s creation. But...I want to share another dimension.

In my times with Big Blue (the LARGE Cathedral van we use that is a deep blue color) I’ve witnessed love that gives me pause when I contemplate my own love of neighbor. I’m not using actual names of those we encounter but the situations are real. What I’ve learned is that some people “get it” despite their own circumstances. When we ask John what he needs, he tells us only what he really NEEDS, frequently saying no thank you to something he already has. This may be followed immediately by “but I know Kurt who stays in a tent just down that path needs that”. Wow – this neighbor knows his neighbor well enough to know his needs.

The community who live outdoors show us a true community. They know each other. They know each other’s stories. They know each other’s needs. They watch out for each other – “They aren’t here right now but should be back about 9”. “I sent my girl to a friend’s tonight because it’s too cold”. “I know a guy who needs a tent.” “Bob and Sue got into the shelter!” These comments are heard over and over. They’re loving their neighbor.

What gives me pause is that I don’t live with housing or food insecurity and yet I don’t know my neighbors as well as these folks know theirs. I know three families immediately next to me but after 14 years in this same house, I still don’t know a family right next door. Of the three I do know, I don’t know them well enough to know when they’re in need. That gives me pause. God wants us to be good stewards of all our relationships. That could be the ones right next door, whether in the next house or the next tent.

~Meg Schoenemann  
Stewardship Ministry Team

**NEWS FROM THE FAMILIES OF FAITH LIBRARY OR CALLING THE LOST BOOKS HOME**

There are big things happening in our library!

Thanks to Deacon Linda Taupier, and many others, we will be getting many new (to us) books on our shelves. Many, many thanks everyone! Our collection will be almost completely revamped. In order to keep things organized during the transformation I will be conducting a library-wide inventory during the month of January. If you have any library books at home please return them soon. This way I can assess what might need replacing. You can put them in the basket in the Library or give them to me.

Also, beginning in the New Year, each month I will review one, new to us, title and give it my honest assessment. Is there a book you would like reviewed? A book you'd like to read but just aren't sure it's for you? Please let me know and I would be glad to review it. I would love to have guest reviewers too! Just a few sentences is enough. Let's talk books.

Thank you!

Your friendly Church Librarian – Meg Galbreath [meg.galbreath56@gmail.com](mailto:meg.galbreath56@gmail.com)

**SAVE THE DATES FOR A DAY AT THE LAKE!**

Enjoy a day of fellowship, retreat and worship at Cathy and Rick Steven's home on Lake Metacomet in Belchertown. There will be conversation, quiet time, Eucharist and a delicious shared pot luck lunch. The day runs from 9-3, approximately. Upcoming dates are:

February 27<sup>th</sup> - Ways of Spiritual Practice.

May 17<sup>th</sup> – God in Nature.

October 10<sup>th</sup> – Finding God in Unexpected Places.

We hope to see you there. For more information please contact Meg Galbreath ([meg.galbreath56@gmail.com](mailto:meg.galbreath56@gmail.com)) or Cathy Stevens ([rcmstvns@verizon.net](mailto:rcmstvns@verizon.net)).



## Personal Cybersecurity & Data Protection Seminar

Nervous about your online presence?

With all of the dangers online, it can be difficult to keep things safe. Recent developments in technology have spurred issues never before imagined. Cyber threats now include not just hacking, but ransomware attacks, social engineering, and other schemes. Criminals are going after personal accounts and information in addition to businesses.

Join IT expert Scott Conrad for a free seminar on keeping your personal information safe.

### Who Should Attend?

Anyone with a phone number and/or an email address and questions on how to keep personal information safe.

### What You Will Learn

- How to recognize and mitigate cyber threats
- Password Management
- Social Engineering techniques
- Best Practices in privacy and security

### When Is It?

First seminar:

Sunday, January 6, 2019 at 11:30 AM in the Williams Media Room.

Bring your smartphone, laptop and questions.

Custom help available after the seminar.

Send questions to [scott.conrad@stmarksma.org](mailto:scott.conrad@stmarksma.org)



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