

A S H

W E D N E S D A Y

Will be observed on March 6. Services will be held at St. Mark's at noon (a spoken service in the church) and 7pm (with hymns and choir). At these services all are welcome to come and begin the holy journey of Lent, reorienting ourselves on God, and seeking to renew and refresh our life as Christians. As a mark of our commitment we have the sign of the cross made upon our forehead with ashes made from the previous year's Palm Sunday palms.

Come and experience this powerful, ancient and moving recommitment to Christian life.

Christ welcomed all, we welcome you.

Please bring in your old palms from Palm Sunday, 2018



Lent is nearly upon us, and one of the traditions of St. Mark's is to invite parishioners to bring their old palms and palm crosses back to the church. On the final Tuesday before Lent begins (3/5...often called Shrove Tuesday or Fat Tuesday—*Mardis Gras*). Fr. Peter takes the old palms and burns them. He then grinds them into a fine ash which is used on the next day—Ash Wednesday—to mark our foreheads with the Sign of the Cross as a symbol of our intention to reorient our lives on the way of Christ.

There is some beautiful meaning in this way of making the ash of Ash Wednesday. The Palms are meant to be symbols of us welcoming Jesus into our lives as our Lord, as our King. It's probably fair to say that most of us try to live in exactly that way...but life, and mistakes, and failure happens.

Ash Wednesday then, is taking the ash...our failings...and letting God infuse it with grace and love so that even our failure (even the dust) becomes a way for us to receive the love and grace of God. The story of God's love is told in this church tradition...even our failure to love God turns into a way for God to love us and welcome us back!

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
 Web: 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, Mar 19, 2019**



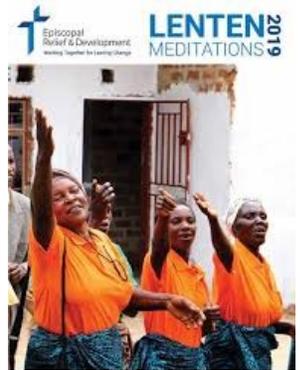
Submit articles to:
 Diane Chandler, Good News Editor
office@stmarksma.org

Lent 2019: Make it Mater This Year

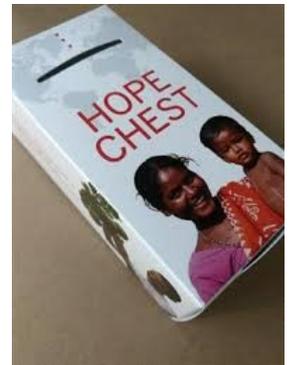
Opportunities for Lenten Growth

- Take part in a Lenten **Way of Love Small Group** which is being offered at multiple times and places throughout the season of Lent. These small groups will help you connect with each other, with faith, and with God. They are meaningful opportunities to share, laugh, learn and grow. Learn more (check out the church website <https://www.stmarksma.org/events/the-way-of-love-small-groups-during-lent>) and sign up today (in the great hall or by emailing Fr. Peter at rector@stmarksma.org)!

- 2019 Episcopal Relief and Development **Lenten Meditation Booklets** These booklets contain daily Bible passages as well as reflections on themes and connections between the readings and daily life, especially in connection with development and disaster recovery work which is made possible by Episcopal Relief and Development. 33 different church leaders, lay and ordained, have contributed to this booklet. So consider picking one up and reading it on a daily basis.



- **Mite Boxes:** For many, a practice of intentional giving and reflection has been a meaningful practice to grow closer to Jesus. One again this year St. Mark's is happy to offer Episcopal Relief and Development Mite Boxes. Take a box home and consider using it to grow in gratitude during Lent. Each day take a moment and reflect on a blessing or gift you may have received over the course of the day. And then consider showing your gratitude by putting a small offering of change or money into your box. The funds will be ingathered on Palm Sunday and given to Episcopal Relief and Development so that others might experience the Grace of God made possibly by your Lenten practice.



- Try **reading the Bible on a daily basis** by using **Forward Day by Day** and a **book mark** to keep your place in a Bible. Bookmarks are available as are Forward Day by Day books (which tell you the daily reading and give a little reflection on it).



- **Read the Bible on a daily basis** using a website such as <https://prayer.forwardmovement.org/> or <https://dailyoffice.wordpress.com/>

Way of Love Small Groups

THE WAY OF LOVE

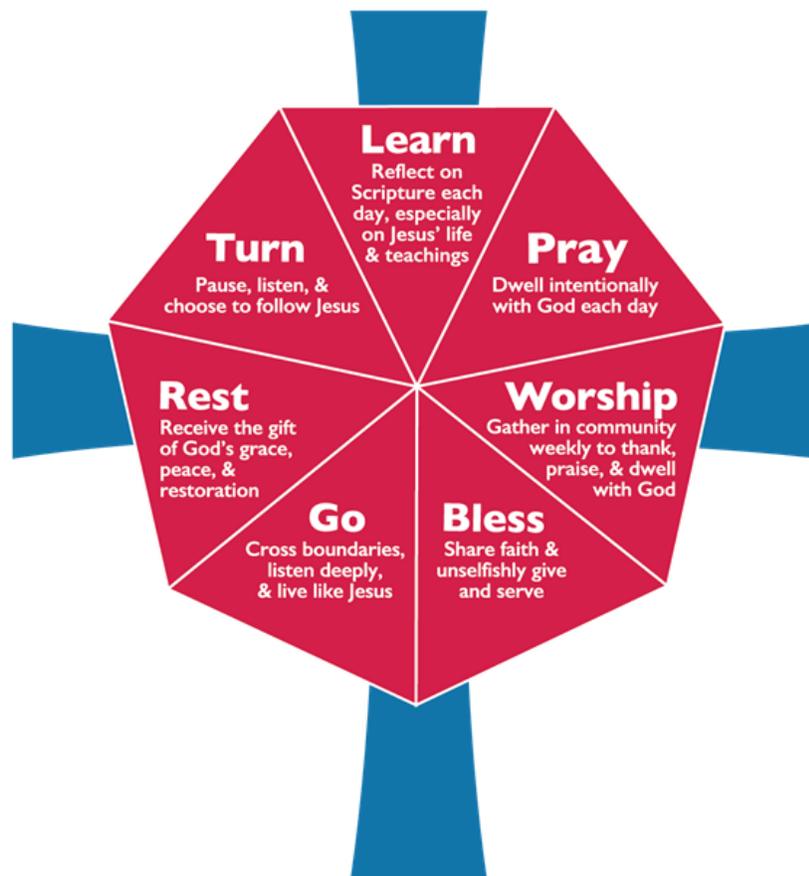
Practices for Jesus-Centered Life

You are invited to take part in the exciting small group "Way of Love" program being offered during Lent. For five weeks, we will be meeting in small groups to experience Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's call to turn, learn, pray, worship, bless, go, and rest, practices for a Jesus-centered life.

To learn more about the way of love, ctrl + click this [link](#). And listen to Presiding Bishop Michael Curry explain the basic concept of this five week Lenten program.

The groups will meet once a week for five weeks beginning the week of March 7-14. The proposed days and times are Saturday 10-11:30 am, Sunday 8:45-9:45 am, Sunday 5-6:30 pm, Tuesday 5:30-7 pm, Wednesday 12:45-2 pm, Thursday 5 -6:30 pm, Friday 5:30-7pm, Friday 7-8:30 pm.

Be sure to sign up in the Great Hall this Sunday or email Fr. Peter with your preferred times for participation.



THE WAY OF LOVE

Practices for Jesus-Centered Life

Cont'd on pg 4

But maybe you aren't convinced that a five-week Lenten small group experience is for you. Take a minute and consider this Top Ten List of why you shouldn't attend (and the answers Vestry members who went through the small group experience already provide to each reason)



#10 You shouldn't attend because you are nervous about being in a small group.

"I felt nervous too, but it didn't last because the questions and activities helped me get to know others in the group quickly...the chocolate and the music helped too"

#9 You shouldn't attend because you won't know enough.

"This program isn't about knowing anything, it's about you, your life, and your willingness to think and talk with others."

#8 You shouldn't attend because it's going to be really boring.

"Has church EVER offered something that was boring?!? Oh, right, it has...But when you walk into this group it's going to seem more like a party or gathering of friends."

#7 You shouldn't attend because you won't be able to relate to ANYTHING the group is talking about.

"This couldn't be further from the truth—the Way of Love has been tested and we've worked to make the questions and content about real life. You'll be amazed how much you have in common with others and about how related-able the program feels."

#6 You shouldn't attend because you won't know anyone there.

"Not for long; activities will get everyone engaged with each other right away."

#5 You shouldn't attend because your life is busy and you might miss a night.

"Each session can stand along, so even though we'd like you to make it to all of them, you will benefit by going to even just one session."

#4 You shouldn't attend because whose gonna watch the kids?

"That's an easy one! Just talk to Fr. Peter or another Vestry member and we will help with logistics for childcare. Some groups are already contacting certified teachers to watch children."

#3 You shouldn't attend because you don't like to drive at night.

"Me either. That's why we have daytime meetings as well as evening meetings."

#2 You shouldn't attend because you don't feel really comfortable with Bible studies.

"Good news! This isn't a Bible study. It is simply an opportunity for people to get together and get to know each other a little better while talking about real life and faith."

#1 You shouldn't attend because you already have friends at St. Mark's...you don't need a small group.

"St. Mark's is filled with wonderful people and friends. Part of the gift of this place is that we can keep widening that circle of friendship. As we say each week, 'Christ welcomed all, we welcome you.'"

Mission to Rosebud Episcopal Mission in South Dakota

Since announcing the possibility of a week-long mission to the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota, twelve people have expressed their interest in taking part in this mission. Beginning on March 4, the team will begin meeting to learn, grow, plan, and prepare for their mission to be a blessing to others and to grow in Christ.

To learn a little more about the Rosebud Mission check out the mission's website at:

<https://rosebudepiscopalmission.org/>

Stewardship Bible Study Welcomes You on Sunday March 17, 2019

The Stewardship Ministry Team has begun holding monthly Sunday morning Bible Studies in the Williams Media Room on the third Sunday of the month.

All are invited to come and reflect on a passage of scripture and share in a non-threatening, welcoming environment.

The Study begins at 9:10am and ends by 9:35am so choir members can still make it to their pre-service rehearsal. Come and join us as we dwell in the Word of God and in community together.



Special Guest Preacher the Rev. Canon Pam Mott



On the first Sunday of Lent St. Mark's is pleased to welcome the Rev. Canon Pam Mott who will be preaching at both the 8 and 10am services while Fr. Peter presides at the Eucharist.

Please welcome Canon Mott as she helps us begin walking the road of Lent in 2019.

St. Mark's Middle and High School Youth Return from their Annual Winter Retreat to Angels' Rest Retreat Center

On February 22-24 Middle and High School students, along with adult mentors headed to Leyden, Mass and the Angels Rest Retreat Center for three days of fun, growth, learning, and retreat.

During this time youth build relationships, they build trust, they pray, share and grow in faith. The retreat helps build many of the elements that are necessary for these teens to practice how to live as Christians and hold on to hope and grace in the midst of a world filled with anxiety, despair, and division.

Many thanks to April Knight, Bailey Gawron, Dan Tapper, Maddie Lister, and Chris Belair who gave their time and abilities to chaperone and lead this retreat.

This program is made possible by the offering of parishioners as well as additional gifts made by parents/and guardians. To help subsidize this and other youth programs, please consider making a special gift to the church so we can truly welcome **all** to this important spiritual event.

RECOGNITION OF EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

On March 3, we will be celebrating our Eucharistic Ministers as we hear from them a brief statement about what it means to serve God by being entrusted to administer the sacrament of holy communion, the consecrated bread and wine. In their service, they help us connect with God through their physical actions of serving the chalice. It is a gift to be a Lay Eucharistic Minister to share the body and blood of Christ with another.

After the service we will have cake in the Great Hall. Please feel free to approach any of our Eucharistic Ministers if you have any questions on how to become a Lay Eucharistic Minister or what is involved in joining this ministry. And please take a moment to thank them for their time and talents which make Sunday services possible.

Blessings,

Christine Whitehead & Father Peter+



Outreach News



During Lent, the Outreach Ministry Team will be focused on the Big Blue ministry that has been going out every Tuesday night in Christ Church Cathedral's big blue van to deliver warm items and food to the homeless living outdoors in Springfield. Warm socks and gloves are the most needed items during this cold spell. We give out all the sandwiches, gloves and socks we bring every week as well as pop-top canned food and protein bars of any kind. If you have gently used winter coats and blankets or would like to donate some new warm socks and gloves, please bring them to the Great Hall by the Outreach Wagon. Someone from St. Mark's will be going out every Tuesday night and will hand deliver these items to those who need them most.



Thank you from the bottom of my heart to everyone who sent a card, a text, made a phone call or attended my mother's funeral service. It touched me deeply and I am so grateful for the love and support of my St. Mark's family.

May God bless each and every one of you.

Claire Sygiel



St Mark's Church
Monthly Financial Report
01/31/2019

If you have questions about this report, please speak with any Vestry or Finance Team member.

	Actual 2019	Projection 2019	Budget 2019
Income			
Other Offerings	436	8,585	8,500
Pledges-current year	13,236	205,000	205,000
Endowments	1,921	7,685	7,682
Building Expense Recovery	940	16,600	16,600
Special Gifts	1,400	3,000	2,000
Fund Raising	7	10,500	10,500
Total Income	17,941	251,370	250,282
Expenses			
Outreach & Stewardship	1,971	27,182	27,116
Salaries and Fringe Benefits	11,950	149,170	149,166
Church & Rectory Utilities	2,752	25,296	25,440
Office Expense	709	7,062	6,875
Christian Education	125	4,815	4,815
Clergy Expense	355	3,200	3,200
Altar Expense	15	1,185	1,185
Music Expense	45	1,510	1,510
Welcome & Mutual Care	137	1,850	1,850
Buildings & Grounds	3,763	26,447	25,847
Debt Management	3,540	16,200	15,200
Total Expenses	25,361	263,917	262,204
Surplus (Deficit)	-7,421	-12,547	-11,921

On behalf of the **Daughter's of the King**, Marge Shaw would like to thank all who contributed to

Undie Sundays in February.

153 items were collected for the men at the Springfield Rescue Mission!

Your generosity is most appreciated!

**Undie
SUNDAYS!**

A Pastoral Letter from the Bishop

to the People of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts

February 20, 2019

Dear People of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts,

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and President of the House of Deputies Gay Clark Jennings issued a call in January 2018 to The Episcopal Church to “examine its history and come to a fuller understanding of how it has handled or mishandled cases of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse through the years.” They invited voices from across the church to help determine how to proceed in both “atoning for the church’s past and shaping a more just future.”

Thankfully, many of those voices have been heard over the past year. Stories were collected and anonymously related in a “Liturgy of Listening” at the 79th General Convention last July in Austin, Texas. They also inspired a number of resolutions which came before General Convention, among them resolution D034.

This resolution called for a three-year suspension of the statute of limitations on clergy disciplinary cases involving sexual misconduct involving adults. (There is no time limit on reporting clergy sexual misconduct against children and youth under age 21). The adoption of this resolution lifts the statute of limitations, providing an opportunity for those injured or affected by sexual misconduct by Episcopal clergy to relate their stories, as well as a vehicle for the church to respond with disciplinary processes for the clergy responsible for these acts and with concrete actions toward the healing of individuals, congregations and, in some cases, entire dioceses affected by abusive actions.

As your bishop, I invite prayers from all of our clergy, lay leaders, and congregations for all who have been victims of clergy sexual abuse, harassment, or exploitation. And for those who have been affected, I encourage you to speak the truth of your experience. For too long, these stories have existed in the shadows. As painful as it may be, it is time to bring them to light and to repent for the failings of the Church and to pursue appropriate discipline for those who have committed acts of misconduct and to seek healing for victims and their loved ones who have affected by these actions.

How does one go about reporting these incidents? Our diocesan Title IV Intake Officer is the Rev. Dr. Molly Scherm. Those coming forward with a complaint can be assured that their identity will be held in confidence until and unless they agree that it may be revealed to others. The Episcopal Church’s clergy disciplinary process can be reviewed here.

I realize that merely raising these issues can cause pain and hurt among our members. I know and trust you to be pastorally aware – knowing as I do that silence is complicity, but that speaking the truth is never easy. As leaders, ordained and lay, you are in my prayers as you offer love and support in the name of Jesus to all who have been hurt in our diocese.

We take this work of safeguarding God’s people seriously. When trust has been violated, God’s people and God’s mission suffer. Our Fall Clergy Day, on Thursday, September 26, 2019 will be devoted to Safe Church Training and Updates on Title IV. All clergy will be required to attend this training as we continue to do this work that God has given us to do, toward God’s mission of mercy, compassion, and hope.

Faithfully,

+Doug

The Rt. Rev. Douglas J. Fisher
IX Bishop of Western Massachusetts

Aging Gently with Dignity

We are a group of gently aging people who meet once a month to engage in conversation, prayer, and moral support with other gently aging people who are attempting to age with dignity.



February Meeting Notes

Our sleeping mat project is well under way, we have presented two finished mats to the Big Blue mission at St. Michael's Cathedral in downtown Springfield.

MANY THANKS - to everyone who brought in used shopping bags! Our storage room is now full and we are putting a hold on any more donations until we use what we have accumulated.

Ongoing work on the St. Mark's archives during our meetings has been an enjoyable endeavor with good memories and conversation.

We now have the Gently Moving - Art of Tai Chi presented in a 15 min. segment at each meeting by way of a brief video. Our thanks to Betty, Ginny and Lester.

Up Coming

Just for fun, we will have a guided Art Lesson at our next meeting on March 20th presented by Cat Rosengarten.

Next Meeting Date

Weds, March 20, 2019

Monthly Prayer Intention

For strength & guidance in moving into the future.

LOOK IT UP!

Job 12:12

Note!

We meet on the third Weds. each month in the Williams Media Room following the noon Service.

Lunch is provided or bring your own.

All are very welcome!



Friends Next Door

Friends Next Door is a lecture series that explores the differences and similarities as we read and relate to sacred texts. We will talk about how our traditions understand concepts such as afterlife, sin and repentance, prayer and spirituality. We will also compare and contrast the various ways religious traditions incorporate ritual into the lifecycle. In each session there will be leaders from two religious traditions guiding the discussion.

March 14 - **Afterlife**

March 21 - **Sin and Repentance**

March 28 - **Rights of Passage / Lifecycle**

April 4 - **Liturgy**

April 11 - **Spiritual Seeking in Modern Times**

Thursday evenings, from 7:00-8:30 p.m. with coffee, tea and desserts
Sinai Temple 1100 Dickinson Street, Springfield

Planned and presented by:

Cantor Elise Barber, Temple Beth El
Rev. Marisa Brown Ludwig, First Church of Christ in Longmeadow, UCC
Rabbi James Greene, Springfield Jewish Community Center
Rabbi Devorah Jacobson, JGS Lifecare
Rabbi Amy Katz, Temple Beth El
Rabbi Jeremy Master, Sinai Temple
Rev. Pam McGrath, First Church of Christ in Longmeadow, UCC

Rev. Ute Schmidt, Baystate Health
Rev. Jason Seymour, Unitarian Universalist Society of Greater Springfield
Rabbi Mark Shapiro, Sinai Temple
Rev. Anne Strickert, St. Paul Lutheran Church
Rev. Peter Swarr, St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Rev. Kelly Turney, East Longmeadow United Methodist Church



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