

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

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Church mouse

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What Makes a Dad

God took the strength of a
mountain,
The majesty of a tree,
The warmth of a summer sun,
The calm of a quiet sea,
The generous soul of nature,
The comforting arm of night,
The wisdom of the ages,
The power of the eagle's flight,
The joy of a morning in spring,
The faith of a mustard seed,
The patience of eternity,
The depth of a family in need,
Then God combined these
qualities,
When there was nothing more to
add,
He knew His masterpiece was
complete,
And so, He called it ... Dad

Prayer Ministry

You are invited to participate in a new prayer ministry. We meet on Thursdays at 5:30 p.m. in St. Mark's sanctuary. If you are unable to attend and have a prayer request you would like lifted, please contact the church office or feel free to place your written request in the prayer box located in narthex.

Prayers Concerns

Please lift the following people up in prayer:

Prayers for our new pastor
Jim
Theresa

Upcoming Events

**June 10 - Men's prayer
breakfast**

June 11 - Handbell concert 3:00

June 12 - Council meeting 7:00

June 18 - Happy Father's Day

Council has adopted a new policy for anyone that wishes to use the fellowship hall for an event. All requests are to be sent to Lisa Bartholomew. She can be reached at 231-9494. She will handle all the arrangements, scheduling, paperwork and payments. This will allow for a one point person contact rather than having too many people involved.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Happy Days !!!!!

Birthdays: June

June 6 - Austin Roney
June 10 - Madie Palmatier
June 17 - John Warner
June 24 - Vicki Chichester
June 25 - Trudy Shaul and Denise
Minton
June 26 - Kenny Hanley
June 30 - Nanette Amendola and
Joshua Warner

Mother's Day was an exceptional day at St. Mark's. Not only did we celebrate mothers of all kinds, but the ladies were treated to a delicious breakfast prepared by our Men's Group. Thank you to all who made donations, cooked, served, washed dishes and cleaned up. The women who attended were truly blessed as you made their day very special!

Did you know St. Mark's offers the following opportunities for you and your family to participate?

Phoebes - every Monday from 9-2 PM

Youth Sunday School - Held during the worship service message

Adult Sunday School - Sundays from 9:15 - 10 AM

Prayer Ministry - every Thursday night beginning at 5:30 PM

After School Program - every day from 3 - 5:30 PM following school schedule

Men's Prayer breakfast - second Saturday of each month

If you know of anyone that could use an encouragement basket please speak with Janet or Gloria.

If you have articles you would like in the newsletters please put them in Debbie's mailbox.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Servers for June

June 4:

Acolyte - Dylan
Ushers - Bonnie/Bill
Reader - Georgia
Greeter - Harry
Prayer - Ginny
Counter - Debbie

June 11:

Acolyte - TBD
Ushers - Maurice/Ginny
Reader - Jim
Greeter - Pat
Prayer - Jim
Counter - Diane

June 18:

Acolyte - Dylan
Ushers - Harry/Sharon
Reader - Deb P.
Greeter - Maurice
Prayer - Chris
Counter - Carrie

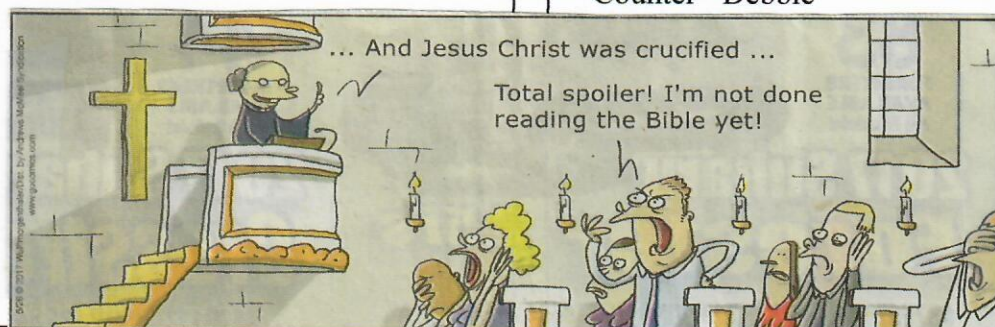
June 25:

Acolyte - TBD
Ushers - Chris/Gene
Reader - Ted
Greeter - Janet
Prayer - Ted
Counter - Debbie

New website

Our webpage is up and running.
Check it out. The address is

[www.stmarkslutheran
middleburgh.com](http://www.stmarkslutheranmiddleburgh.com)



The Middleburgh
Ecumenical Bell Choir
Concert

Sunday - June 11, 2017
3:00 p.m.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
Fellowship Hall





MIDDLEBURGH CENTRAL SCHOOL

CLASS of 2017

BACCALAUREATE SERVICE

SUNDAY, JUNE 18th - 7:00 P.M.

**at Middleburgh United Methodist Church
281 Main St.**

Please join us in giving thanks to God and
honoring our graduates.

Refreshments following service

St. Mark's Christian Care After-School Program



Wow! Here we are again! Almost time to say "Good-Bye" to our ASP children for the summer. Again the children learned new verses and this year we added not only the Lord's Prayer, but memorized the 23rd Psalm. They would love to share what they learned with their families, friends and the members of our church.

Our graduating student this year is Drew Hall, who has been with us since 2nd grade and will be moving up to 7th grade.

You are invited to a short special program on Friday, June 16th, at 4:00 p.m. in the church to hear them share their verses, sing for you and celebrate Drew's "graduation" from ASP. Pizza will be provided afterwards with some snacks and dessert.

We look forward to seeing you on....

Friday, June 16, 2017

at 4:00 p.m.

Replacement of Fellowship Room Chairs



Many of our black metal chairs in the fellowship room need to be replaced. They survived the flood, been repainted, seats repaired and now it is time to lay them to rest.

We are looking to purchase 50 new chairs. The cost per chair is \$20.00.

If you would like to donate towards the purchase of the new chairs, you may do so by:

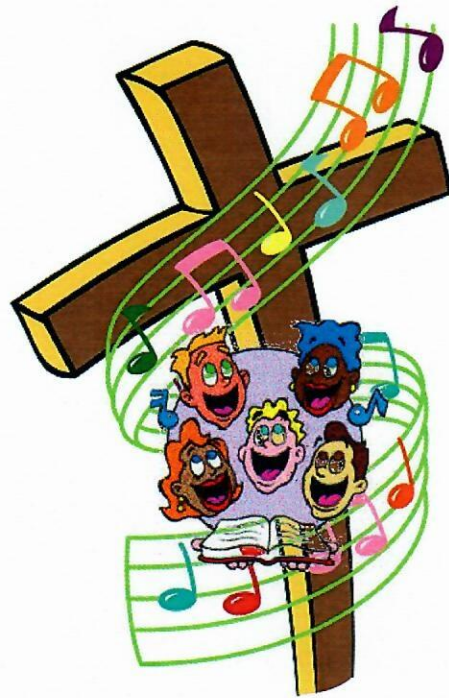
- Offering Plate – mark envelope/check Chair Donation
- By Mail – mark check Chair Donation

Thank you!

Update on Roof Replacement

We have received a new quote from the contractor for the sanctuary roof replacement. We have been blessed that it came in with no increase from last year's quote. Our plans are to move forward and work should start soon.

Once the roof has been completed, we will be moving ahead with our driveway project.



It is easy to become complacent about recognizing the God-given talents we share with others in service to our Lord. So.....

Thank you, St. Mark's choir!

Thank you for your faithfulness in serving God, for your time and commitment to rehearse, your suggestions about songs and their arrangements, and especially for your patience. Thank you for being willing to "yes" when special requests are made for you to sing. It has been a blessing for me to witness the use of your gifts as God calls you to do. Also, a **special...**

Thank you, God!

for being our choir director and being the one who guides us to the selection of our songs. We are truly blessed to be His servants!

Your sister in Christ,
Carolyn

Phoebe Circle Update

It is difficult to believe it has been five busy months since we provided an update on the Phoebe activities. So many people have been blessed by our Phoebe outreach ministry, including those of us who make the various items we give away.

As in the past, our main focus has been on creation of quilts; however, we have been expanding to include other items to donate. To date we have passed on the following number of quilts and we cannot begin to describe the joy and thankfulness expressed to us when the quilts are delivered:

- 12 to Lifesaver Ministry
- 6 to Baptist Health
- 16 to Eddy Nursing Home (in Troy)
- 6 to Albany VA Hospital
- 6 to Schenectady City Mission

In addition, we have blessed 53 adults and 16 children with quilts either as part of a group or as individuals.

The walker carriers and the fidget blankets for Alzheimer patients have been a huge success at the hospitals and nursing homes. In fact, the Eddy Nursing Home is requesting we make more for them.

To date, 20 individuals have received Encouragement Baskets as our way of saying "we are thinking of you and praying for you". Along with the quilts, they have brought joy, hope and love to the recipients. Janet Abrams and Gloria Falcone have done a fantastic job in taking the lead in making the baskets. If you know of anyone who may need some lifting up, please let either of them know. Great job, Ladies!!!

As sometimes happens at the Phoebe's, a large donation of yarn "magically" appeared in the Phoebe room. Since there was an abundance, some of it was passed on to the American Legion Auxiliary to be made into lap blankets for the veterans in the Albany VA Hospital.

We welcome any suggestions of other places where we can make donations.

As always, if you are available any Monday from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., please stop in to see what we are working on and if you would like to, please join us.

Our mission continues to be the same. We enjoy the fellowship, Bible study time and strive to be the hands and feet of Jesus, our Lord.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Nesbitt

Who Is Jesus?

Dear disciples of Jesus,

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Who is Jesus?

For many, Jesus is one big question mark. This is true even for many pastors and theologians of the Church. It is the reality they choose, unending uncertainty about the nature and identity of Jesus. Just one big question mark.

Some in our culture think of Jesus as complex, creative, and wise beyond our capacity to know or follow. Others see Him as simple and unrefined, having little to do with life today. Even more believe that everyone is entitled to make up their own mind about who Jesus is, and every opinion is just as right and true as any other opinion.

Have you ever asked yourself what's behind the question mark? Isn't it true that we love to question Jesus and assert ourselves as the ultimate authority? We love to diminish His authority in order to assert our own! We question His identity but seem self-assured about our own. We prefer our own little kingdom in which we reign. Who needs another kingdom when we can barely survive in this one? Even if this Kingdom of Heaven existed, who could really know anything about it?

Our faith does not rest on our personal opinions or the wisdom of others. It is built on the foundation of the revealed Word of God in Holy Scripture.

Epiphany is a season of light that reveals the truth of who Jesus is. It was revealed to the Wise Men by a star. It was revealed in Jesus' baptism. The heavens opened, the Spirit descended, and a voice from heaven proclaimed that Jesus is God's beloved Son.

Surrounding the Gospel for the Baptism of our Lord in the third chapter of Matthew, John the Baptist is addressing the very source of our confusion



From the Bishop

Bishop John Bradosky

regarding the nature and identity of Jesus. Our sinful nature reminds us that we have eaten from the tree of knowledge so that we can take the place of God, that we might be our own gods. This is the very issue that requires repentance, the washing of Baptism. John the Baptist is proclaiming that believing in yourself is a dead-end street. Believing in your holy genealogy without being rooted in God through faith in Christ will not only be fruitless but also result in ultimate condemnation.

John the Baptist is announcing that the Kingdom of God has come near. John is preparing the way for the Lord, a voice in the wilderness announcing the presence of Christ Jesus. He is baptizing people for repentance and forgiveness, but he boldly proclaims that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire — all-powerful and responsible for ultimate judgment.

Perhaps you may remember that the theme for our theological conference this past year was “Who do you say that I am?” - Lectures on the person of Christ.” In introducing the lectures, I made the following comment: “After Jesus called His disciples, He began to teach them. The Gospels record that central to His teaching is who He is, His identity. In Luke’s Gospel, for the first eight chapters — beginning with the announcement of His birth — Luke wants us to know who Jesus is. In their journey with Jesus, His followers discovered who He is and, I believe, He wanted them and us to know. Christian education and all catechesis must begin here, in boldly and confidently answering the question, ‘Who is Jesus?’”

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In the ninth chapter of Luke's Gospel, Jesus tests what His disciples had been learning. He asks them two questions. First, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" (This is the opinion poll question.) These people had only a brief exposure to Jesus. They had many opinions and ideas about the identity of Jesus. The disciples told Jesus what they had heard: "John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the prophets." Then Jesus gets to what may be the most important question he ever asked the disciples. "But what about you, who do you say that I am?"

Their response is perhaps the single most important response a disciple of Jesus could ever make. Our faith, the faith of the Church, is built on the response of Peter. "You are the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the Living God."

I believe that question remains the single most important question a disciple of Jesus could ever answer. If we do not know who He is, why would we be willing to follow Him, entrust our lives to Him, believe in Him and give our lives for His purposes, His mission?

Jesus is who He claimed to be — the way, the truth and the life. He is the only source of salvation and redemption. We are not saved by theological concepts, but by a person, Jesus Christ. It is not our conceptions of faith or grace that save, but only faith in the person Jesus Christ and through the grace of Jesus Christ that we receive forgiveness and eternal life.

The nature and identity of Jesus Christ is not only central to our faith but just as essential to our witness. If we are unsure who Jesus is, how could we ever possibly tell others about Him? This is the starting place for evangelism and mission, as well.

Like Luke, Matthew does not want us to miss the true nature and identity of Jesus. Immediately following His Baptism, Jesus faces the tempting wiles of Satan and overcomes them with the power of God's Word. Matthew records Jesus' preaching, teaching, healing, calling disciples, modeling life in the Kingdom of Heaven, and sending out His disciples to do what he was doing: preaching, teaching and healing. Jesus is feeding the

multitudes, casting out demons, blessing children, performing miracles, and preparing His disciples for His death and resurrection, giving the Great Commission and strengthening their capacity to lead the Church following Pentecost.

Each step in the journey of Jesus that Matthew records reveals the nature of Jesus' identity. Jesus is symbolized not by a question mark but by His voice, His touch, His footprints, His cross, and the empty tomb.

Matthew wants us to know that this Jesus of Nazareth is the compassionate Savior of the world. His love and compassion are for all people — rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, the marginalized and those in power, the oppressed and those who are affirmed. Jesus is God's anointed one, the Messiah, the Christ. He is the fulfillment of all that God promised to his people and to the entire world in the Old Testament. Matthew makes it clear that in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the Kingdom of Heaven breaks into our world.

True discipleship moves the question mark from Jesus' identity to our identity. The real question of life is not, "Who is Jesus?" but "Who am I in relationship to Christ?" Jesus is unchanging. We are the ones who are in constant need of transformation, and the human structures of the church are in constant need of reformation.

Baptism was not essential for Jesus but it is for us. In His baptism, Jesus is identifying with us, modeling the life of faith for us. The writer of the book of Hebrews brings even more clarity to Jesus' baptism. *"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need"* (Hebrews 4:15-16). Jesus has identified so completely with us that we can approach Him totally confident that He will understand us and that He is interested in all we do in our lives.

Through Baptism we are claimed by Christ, adopted as His children, heirs of His Kingdom. We are

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marked not by a question mark but by a cross — anointed by the Holy Spirit, promised forgiveness and eternal life in the Kingdom Jesus came to proclaim.

Baptism is not an insurance policy for heaven, but our boarding pass to a lifetime with Jesus. Baptism begins a relationship with Jesus which is nourished, fed, strengthened, enriched and kept alive by faithfully availing one's self of God's means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments, and in the faithful presence of a community of disciples.

Jesus is not watching from a distance but joining us on the road of our pilgrimage through life, and He is interested in all aspects of our lives — our joys and sorrows, our successes and failures. This life begins with the gift of faith that grows and matures and is passed on through our lives in word and deed so that others come into that same life-giving relationship with Christ Jesus.

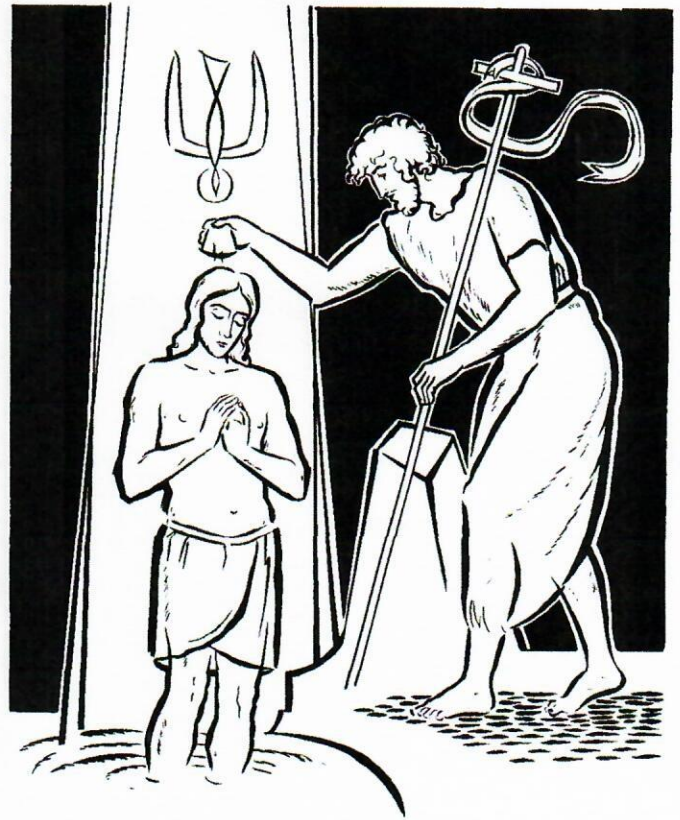
My identity is that of a disciple of Jesus, following Jesus by believing in Him, by loving Him, serving Him by serving others, and by being obedient to all that He has commanded.

Let me make just one more point regarding Matthew's description of the Baptism of Jesus: the point of divine affirmation. Jesus was praying and the God of all creation opened the heavens and the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus in the form of a dove. And God spoke from heaven, "You are my beloved Son, with you I am well pleased."

Too often we seek outward affirmation from those around us. While there is nothing wrong with being liked or thought well of, there is a danger in putting too much value in the affirmation of others. As humans, we are relational beings, and it is natural to want to connect with others in a positive way. As we accept the reality of the Kingdom of Heaven, we also wonder about our heavenly connectedness and its place and priority in our life.

Jesus was not seeking affirmation, but the Father showed up in this powerful way. Perhaps it was a sign to remind Jesus that he was not forgotten but that an ever-vigilant Father was affirming the work that Jesus had begun and would continue to do.

BAPTISM of the LORD



Perhaps it was a sign for us to love who the Father loves — His Son — and that none of us can accomplish God's will for our lives without His presence, encouragement and affirmation.

While we can never be certain why the Father showed up in the way He did, we can be certain, as we look at the life and ministry of Jesus, that it served His intended purpose. After His baptism Jesus continued to carry out God's plan for humanity with precision and assurance, even when confronted by adversaries, both human and satanic. Regardless of His opposition, Jesus did not allow anything to deter Him from completing His task in this life — securing our redemption and salvation through His life, death and resurrection.

Those who say it was easy for Jesus to do what He did because He was divine miss the weight of His humanity. In this life He faced all that you and I face. He dealt with any issue that you and I have or ever will have to encounter. Jesus led others by showing them what it was like to obediently follow the will of the Father. He commanded his disciples as one who followed the commands of His Father. Matthew is reminding us that God the Father was

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so pleased with the faithfulness of His one and only Son that He affirmed Jesus before those who needed to hear the affirmation.

That final point in the baptismal experience of Jesus is simply this: when God is pleased, nothing else matters.

Paul writes in his letter to the Galatians, "You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (*Galatians 3:26-27*). And so the words spoken to Jesus at His Baptism are words for us to hear. They are addressed to us right now in this moment, "You are my Son, you are my Daughter, with you I am well-pleased." St. Augustine paraphrases, [God says to us] "On You I have set my favor; through You I am doing what is my pleasure."

Through you I am blessing your family.

Through you I am changing your workplace.

Through you I am working my perfect plan.

Through you I am strengthening my ministry in this congregation.

You are God's beloved. Everything must start there; and sometimes you will have to fight to keep your identity clear.

2017 — like every year — will have its ups and downs. "Remember who you are."

Some ventures will fail. Some will succeed. "Remember who you are."

Temptations will come for you to give up or become cynical. "Remember who you are."

In our own Baptism Jesus says to us: "You are my Beloved, in you I am pleased."

It is good to be with you following Jesus in this new year.

Bishop John Bradosky

Canadian Rockies Theological Conference

"Auschwitz and Addis: The Church and Persecution" is the theme of the 2017 Canadian Rockies Theological Conference May 9-12 in Canmore, Alberta.

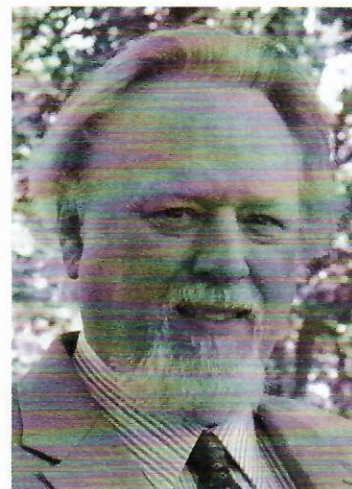
Featured speakers are the Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba, NALC Assistant to the Bishop for Missions, and the Rev. Dr. Paul Hinlicky, Tise Professor of Lutheran Studies at Roanoke College in Salem, Va.

The conference will consider how the Christian church has in the past become complicit in movements that have led to the persecution of innocent people by those who claim allegiance to Jesus Christ. Dr. Hinlicky will speak about what Christians can learn from the rise of Nazism in Germany. Dr. Buba will address the situation in Ethiopia under the Communist Derg.

The conference is held at the Coast Canmore Hotel in Canmore, Alberta — just outside of the beautiful Banff National Park.



Gemechis Buba



Paul Hinlicky

NALC Pastors Karl Johnsen and Phillip Gagnon are the organizers of the conference.

More information on the conference is available on the Canadian Rockies Theological Conference Facebook page or on the NALC website.