



St. Mark's News

June 2020



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Dear People of God,

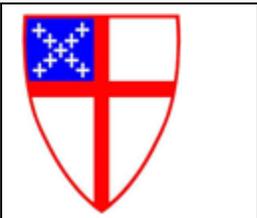
This year the Day of Pentecost was Sunday, May 31st, our Initial ReGathering Sunday. Pentecost is Greek for "50th day." It is the name of the Jewish "Feast of Weeks" fifty days from the Passover when the Law was given to Moses. Pentecost was a day of celebration of the Old Covenant. At this Feast, the first fruits of the corn harvest were presented in accordance with the Law of Moses. In Christian tradition, Pentecost celebrates the gift of the Holy Spirit which descended on the disciples gathered in Jerusalem for the feast. The gifts or harvest of the Holy Spirit are described in this way by St. Paul: "The harvest of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness and self-control." (Galatians 5:22)

The Feast of Pentecost is observed as the anniversary of the descent of the Holy Spirit, the Birthday of the Church, and has been considered as one of the chief Christian festivals from the very earliest times. The Day of Pentecost is also referred to as Whitsunday (or White Sunday) in recognition, among other reasons, that baptismal candidates wore long white gowns on this traditional day of Baptism. However, the traditional color is red, the color of fire. Red recalls the tongues of flame in which the Holy Spirit descended on the Day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is pictured in the Acts of the Apostles as both wind and as flame! For the whole story read Acts 2:1-41.

We remember that it was only after the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that the Apostles boldly set out to bear witness to Christ. Before Pentecost, the disciples were unsure of what they were to do next, and spent most of their time in hiding. After Pentecost, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, they understood their mission to spread the Good news of Jesus, and they had the courage to come out of their hiding and speak openly about who Jesus was, and what he had accomplished by his dying and rising. After Pentecost, the disciples are a people with a mission, who perceive themselves as spiritually and sacramentally connected to the risen Christ.

The defining characteristic of the Church is the enduring love, power, and presence of God. Jesus continues to be present with us through the Holy Spirit. May we here at St. Mark's Church continue the work that has begun in Jesus, to glorify the Father. May we have that relationship with God so that when the world sees us, they see not us, but the risen Christ in us.

Father Bert



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Sr. Warden Report:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The month of May brought some great things for which I am thankful:

We continued the 'virtual worship' services and had the great music of my friends Will Flynn and John Katterhenry several times, in addition to the organ music by Cindy Canova - TBTG!

I had a spinal injection that significantly reduced the pain I've had for months – TBTG!

We had the first vestry meeting since March, and one item for which I was appreciative was the motion and approval to have the concrete sidewalks completed by a contractor (since the Marksmen are currently unable to meet) and it was done last week - TBTG! Another was noting the treasurer's report showing that contributions have nearly kept up to budget expectations – TBTG!

Then on May 31, we had our first "ReGathering" worship service (with many precautions in place) and enjoyed the presence of 11 folks. Even through masks and being unable to hug or shake a hand, it was so wonderful to actually see some of our friends back in our familiar building!

Not all went according to my wishes, however:

My back pain has begun to increase again, although still much better than before. Then a CT scan revealed a nodule thought to be cancer on my lung, and another test soon will determine the plan of action.

Some - brothers and sisters, relatives, acquaintances and strangers - seem to be living in complete fear and forgetting to sort fact from fiction, to weigh risk versus reward, and post/repost so much propaganda on FaceBook that I've had to stop opening that app as often.

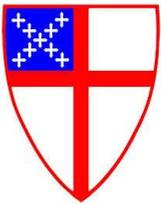
The news has shown the ugliest part of humanity and our country, with so many pointing to racism as the culprit – maybe I'm naïve, but I surely thought we loved each other and that we all realized the inside of every egg is yellow, regardless of the shell color – God made us all!

Please pray for immediate healing for our country, and for the world. Let us ALL recognize the value of each part of His creation.

God guided the foundation of the USA and He can mend the torn pieces again.

Peace be with you,

Clay <><



The United Thank Offering (UTO) is a ministry of the Episcopal Church for the mission of the whole church. Through UTO, individuals are invited to embrace and deepen a personal daily spiritual discipline of gratitude. UTO encourages people to notice the good things that happen each day, give thanks to God for those blessings and make an offering for each blessing using a UTO Blue Box. UTO is entrusted to receive the offerings, and to distribute the 100% of what is collected to support innovative mission and ministry throughout the Episcopal Church and Provinces of the Anglican Communion. Blue boxes are in the Narthex or in the Parish Hall. There are two ingathering's each year, one in May and one in November

Barbara Noegel



St. Mark's Altar Guild:
Virginia Johns and
Judy Perkin (Co-Chairs),
Mary Agnes Goldwire,
Jennifer Luke,
Elise NesSmith, and
Marianne O'Neill.

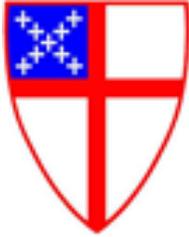
June 2020 starts with Trinity Sunday on June 7. Trinity Sunday celebrates the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The liturgical color for Trinity Sunday is white to indicate that this is a Christian celebration event. All of the other Sundays in June, we return to the color of green. We do have two Saints' days which fall in June – June 11th and June 29 but neither of these are on a Sunday. The Altar Guild hopes that you worship in blessing and peace during the month of June.

Please remember that flowers are an important part of the Altar signifying life and the world's beauty. Please sign up to give Altar flowers and also to have the Sanctuary candle burning for a loved one.

Please know that Judy Perkin will be accomplishing most of her move to Texas in June but will still be returning to Starke periodically. I wish to thank all of my fellow Altar Guild members, both past and present, for their support and love. My funniest memory of the Altar Guild was setting up for the Thanksgiving service and just as all of the fruits and vegetables seemed perfectly stacked, they all came crashing down and paraded perfectly down the center aisle of the church! No one was the wiser the next Sunday AM but I was holding my breath during the whole service. Both my Scion and my Subaru have also served valiantly as flower wagons for both poinsettias and Easter lilies. I ask that all of the church family members take time to remember that the work of the Altar Guild is a vital part of the worship experience. Please support this important ministry.

I will miss all of you so much but will keep in touch. So many of you give so much to make St. Mark's what it is. St. Mark's is a family and Christian community. My time at St. Mark's has been a great blessing. As many of you know, I served in roles other than the Altar Guild. My new church home will be St. John's Episcopal Church in McAllen, Texas. I will leave my new address with the church office.

Onward to doing God's work and to giving him praise and glory!



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Episcopal Relief and Development is the arm of the Episcopal Church providing aid and relief services. You can donate through the ERD website Episcopal Relief and Development <https://www.episcopalrelief.org>, give money through St. Mark's, or send a check to the address below.

Episcopal Relief & Development
P.O. Box 7058
Merrifield, VA 22116-7058



In response to the physical distancing guidelines recommended by local health authorities, Episcopal Relief & Development and local partners are adapting programs to reduce the spread of the coronavirus. For example, the Anglican Development Services of Nyanza (ADS-Nyanza) in southeastern Kenya is working with the Kenya Government Ministry of Health, Episcopal Relief & Development and other organizations on the prevention, control and home management of COVID-19. ADS-Nyanza is equipping their Community Health Volunteers and Early Childhood Promoters with personal protective equipment (PPE) and providing handwashing facilities in strategic social places as well as supporting contact tracing in several counties. Episcopal Relief & Development is also working in other countries to provide emergency food and supplies to vulnerable communities impacted by the stay-at-home orders and shutdowns. In partnership with Hope Africa, the agency is distributing food parcels to rural communities in the dioceses of Zululand and Kahlamba in South Africa. The Episcopal Diocese of Ecuador is distributing food and medical supplies to the elderly, single women and children in highly impacted areas of coastal Ecuador. In Brazil, Servicio Anglicano de Diacono e Desenvolvimento (SADD), the development arm of the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil, is providing food, hygiene and cleaning supplies to women, adolescents and children, particularly those in vulnerable communities such as those without homes, domestic violence survivors and other low-income communities. In Pakistan, the Women Development & Service Society (WDSS), a ministry of the Diocese of Raiwind, Church of Pakistan, is distributing food and emergency supplies to over 1,500 families.

<https://support.episcopalrelief.org/covid19>

CONTRIBUTIONS Made Easier!

Present financial issues are not unexpected, with reduced attendance... However, there are new options available to keep your pledges up-to-date:

The office door now has a mail slot where you can drop off anytime, Of course you can mail it in, and we've begun an electronic method using PayPal to make it even easier.

If you would automatic reminders and/or payments, please let us know.



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EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

We will continue 3rd Sunday meetings once we are cleared from quarantine. Also ladies when we're back up and running, we are to provide snacks after church on the 2nd Sunday. When we can be together again I'll set up a sign up sheet.

God Bless you. *Cindy Canova*

The Bradford Food Pantry remains in need of our continued support. You can drop off your food items at the office (leave outside the door and they will be collected and taken to BFP)

The items needed most are cereal and peanut butter.

If you are not able to bring food items, the Food Pantry will also accept checks made out to the Bradford Ecumenical Ministry, or you may give cash/checks to the church in their name.

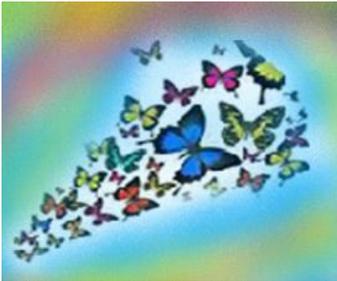
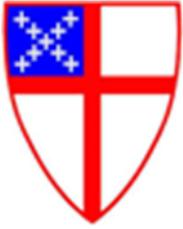
And if you have a couple hours a week free time, contact Brenda Farnsworth at (904)263-0333. Help is always needed and much appreciated!



Singing to (in) the Choir



Once the COVID-19 pandemic is under control and normal services resume, Practices will be scheduled with our new organist and choir members...



Cursillo (#143) was POSTPONED due to the current social distancing issues; it will be rescheduled after it is safe to do so. **If you wish to attend** or simply want more information about it – please speak with Fr. Bert (or anyone that has already attended) ... we'll be happy to help with the application process!



Kairos Prison Ministry

"I was in prison and you visited me." Matthew 25:36

Kairos is the Greek word for **God's Special Time**. Kairos volunteers represent the Christian faith and come from many denominations, but present only those principles that all share in common. Kairos leadership is drawn from lay persons, although clergy play a vital role.

Men Team Members, both lay and clergy, are needed to help serve at Florida State Prison – West (FSPW). Our group draws members from Starke, Keystone Heights, Gainesville, and Jacksonville. We sponsor two 3 ½ day introductory weekends each year in FSPW, plus monthly reunions on the third Saturday each month. Team members, old and new, are trained before each Kairos Weekend at a series of team meetings.

Be a Prayer Partner: Kairos is totally dependent on prayer. Many who cannot serve on Kairos teams serve as active prayer partners. Kairos is entirely dependent on financial support from volunteers, churches, organizations and business groups.

If you would like more information about Kairos Prison Ministry, please contact Mike Goldwire in our Parish at 352.275.8531, or talk to him or Joe Lukas at church on Sunday.



The current safety concerns regarding COVID-19 have postponed fellowship for now; When it is considered safe to hold normal worship services again, a sign-up sheet will be made available.

Thanks to all!

Clay



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COVID-19 Testing HERE!

Yes, the Bradford County Health Department will be outside our church on Sunday, June 14 at 11:45 to test anyone desiring to be tested; photo ID is needed, and minors will need a parent to authorize the test. This service is provided absolutely FREE of charge!

Schedule of FaceBook Live Worship

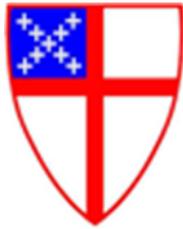
St Mark's will plan to hold a live video worship service each Sunday morning, beginning @ 10:20.

We will also plan a live video each Tuesday at Noon.

(There may be additional broadcasts from Father Bert on some evenings.)

*******Annual Visit by our Bishop*******

Bishop John Howard will be celebrating here June 28th, and anyone desiring to be baptized, received or confirmed in the Episcopal Church should contact Fr. Bert ASAP.



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Breakfast meetings are postponed until considered safe to resume...

*Our Monthly **FAMILY GRILL 'N CHILL** is POSTPONED until safe to hold fellowship gatherings again! Stay Safe!*

(17 enjoyed the event in January)



NEW MINISTRY in the Works at St Mark's (albeit postponed):

A new community outreach opportunity has been proposed and endorsed by the vestry as a way to demystify our church, utilize our garden and maybe even feed those who are hungry. The proposition is to have an abbreviated service in the garden every other Tuesday. This would be a short and very casual Eucharist which would hopefully attract people who are non-working and those who could make it on their lunch hour. We would provide a simple bag sandwich lunch that could be eaten in the garden or taken away. This would give us an opportunity to utilize our beautiful garden and reach out to those who might seek out a less traditional service or even just as a way to feed some who might be hungry as well as feed those who are spiritually hungry. The garden is really being spruced up and made more accessible to all so this would not begin until the improvements are made in March or April. It is proposed to call this, "Lunch with Jesus or Lunch in the Garden with Jesus." If you would like to weigh in on the name, volunteer to help make sandwiches or donate toward lunch, please contact Marianne O'Neill who will head up this new ministry to get it off the ground. It is also suggested that an offering basket be available if anyone wishes to donate with the understanding funds will be funneled back into the community as donations to the Food Bank or other community outreach.



From the Deacon's Bench

Greetings to each one of you. How I miss being with you! April became May and now May becomes June, and still we are safer apart, at least the older of us. This is a strange season, indeed.

First and foremost, thanks must go to those who are working so hard to keep us connected, especially at worship. For this I, for one, remain extremely grateful. I am grateful also for our lives here at Penney Retirement Community. We can remain apart, and yet have access to the great outdoors, support and greet each other with a smile and a wave while we keep the mask and hand sanitizer handy. We are blessed.

For those of you who have been involved with the prayer shawl ministry, many thanks! The other day I had the opportunity to send a shawl to someone in the nursing home whom I had heard was having a challenging time of it. And from another woman who had long-awaited surgery this morning, who wrote to me this afternoon, "... it emanates comforting vibes.... I intend to come home tomorrow and be wrapped up in it. I know it will make me feel better." I have to say that tonight I feel that I have been the one blessed. The point I seek to be making is this: there is so much suffering and anxiety around us, and there is not much any one of us can do in many ways. However, for those of us who can make a shawl and give it to another in God's love, we can indeed make a difference in our small corner of the world.

I am reminded of a quotation from Mother Teresa:

"Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."

Let's keep it up and knit and crochet, and look forward to that day when we can sit around a round table and crochet and knit once more!

Linda Bronsted



FOOT NOTES:



A **Plexiglass Fund** was started earlier this year to begin saving for replacement of the hazy plexiglass that protects the stained-glass windows of our chapel... expected to begin late 2020... donations appreciated!

SCHEDULE OF BROADCAST

We plan to continue Sunday mornings at 10:20, and Tuesdays at Noon. Father Bert additionally broadcasts some evening prayers – FaceBook should notify 'followers' of St Mark's Episcopal Church – Starke when these occur.

Parish Prayer List

We started a new prayer list in January. If you would like someone to be added to the prayer list, please let the office know.

COMMUNICATIONS are so vital to everyone, especially now with the loss of personal contact... **Please call** a few of your brothers and sisters **frequently**, just to check on each other and perhaps make their day!



FLOWER CHART:

The 2020 Flower Chart is posted in the Narthex. Be sure to sign up for your memorials and thanksgivings! The cost is \$50.00 and may be shared



SANCTUARY CANDLE:

Sign up for the sanctuary candle by calling Barbara. The cost is just \$4.00.

St Mark's Episcopal Church is still doing ministry and managing expenses. Even though many can not attend physical church right now, there are multiple ways to give and ways to worship!

Contributions can now be submitted by mail to the office, or dropped through the new mail slot on the office door, or *via PayPal* for electronic transfer (be SURE to make it for a 'gift to family/friends', not 'payment for goods/services'); receipt of all contributions are blessed during the Sunday Eucharistic Worship broadcast on FaceBook Live.

YTD as of May 31, income was \$61,039, and expenses were \$58,498. Contributions are slightly below budget, but we have a SBA/PPP loan that may be converted to a grant, which greatly improves the financial picture.

(Detailed reports are available)

VESTRY

Meeting Scheduled - June 14 after the Sunday morning worship; we will meet in the Parish Hall, 1 person per table; please wear a mask, and please **DO NOT ATTEND** if showing

During this time of 'Virtual Worship Services', you may hear Father Bert pause and say a prayer prior to offering the bread at communion; this is the special prayer that he speaks:

“In union, Blessed Jesus, with the faithful gathered at every altar of your Church where your blessed Body and Blood are offered this day, and remembering particularly my own parish and those worshiping there, I long to offer you praise and thanksgiving, for creation and all the blessings of this life, for the redemption won for us by your life, death, and resurrection, for the means of grace and the hope of glory.

And particularly for the blessings given me... I believe that you are truly present in the Holy Sacrament, and since I cannot at this time receive communion, I pray you to come into my heart. I unite myself with you and embrace you with all my heart, my soul, and my mind. Let nothing separate me from you; let me serve you in this life until, by your grace, I come to your glorious kingdom and unending peace. Amen”

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

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Photo courtesy of Esther Massey Lawson 6/2019