

THE MESSENGER

ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH · SOUTHBOROUGH, MA

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Newsletter Deadline

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The deadline for the next addition of the Messenger is May 20th. Please send all articles and photos to office@stmarkssouthborough.org

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

Upcoming Adult Forums May & June

May 1, 9:45 am Adult Forum -
Come to our **Fancy Tea/Coffee!**
The youth group will serve as
waitstaff bringing you tea or
coffee in our beautiful china
teacups! Baked goods will also
be for sale as part of this
fundraiser for Mission Trip this
summer.

May 8 - Coffee and conversation
- get to know someone in the
parish a bit better or catch up
with people you know!

May 15, Adult Forum –
ChurchNext TV: The death of
mainline churches has been
greatly exaggerated, says award-
winning writer and Episcopal lay
preacher Greg Garrett. In his
book, [My Church Is Not Dying](#),
Greg presents the case of many
mainline churches that are not
only surviving but thriving. While
the popular cultural narrative of
mainline churches is that they
are declining and headed for
extinction, Greg argues that
these congregations are ideally
suited to handle the faith
concerns posed by the majority
of those seeking answers to
important life questions.

Sunday, May 22, 9:45 am Adult
Forum – ChurchNext TV: Biblical
Storytelling is gaining popularity,
Cont'd Pg. 7

A Word from the Rector

This spring I've been working closely with Jerry Kane and some members of our vestry to plan my sabbatical in 2017. The grant application request for proposals begins with a simple question: What makes your heart sing? I've pondered that question a great deal in the last few months as we've talked about what a time of renewal might look like both for me and for St. Mark's.

I've recently told the vestry that this conversation has been a real gift for me. It's allowed me to feel nurtured and cared for by all of you. It's given me the joy that comes from knowing I can pursue a passion — Wilderness Spirituality — both in my study and in my practice for an extended time in order to sustain me over the next years of our shared ministry together. You've engaged in conversation this winter and early spring about what you might do during this sabbatical time to explore this topic as a parish. There's been excitement and a sense of hope together.

What has emerged is a plan that will tend and feed all of us. We'll explore this theme in more depth together before my sabbatical begins a little over a year from now because we all experience the wilderness times in our lives—the unexpected deaths or the oncology department or a broken relationship or the loss of a job. We also see again and again that God meets us in the wilderness—the Hebrews when they were liberated from Egypt, Elijah who heard God in the silence when he camped out in a cave, John the Baptist who ate locusts and wild honey and Jesus who often withdrew to a lonely place to pray. A recent study came out explaining scientifically why hiking has a huge benefit for us—even if it's just a stroll in a park nearby. (You can check that one out here: <http://www.wimp.com/what-hiking-does-to-the-brain-is-pretty-amazing/>) We connect powerfully with God in nature.

And so I want to say thank you. Thank you for encouraging me to take time for renewal. Thank you for your digging in and exploring this theme with me. In a few days we'll be sending in our grant application and so please say a few prayers if you could for that as well. (We won't hear back until late in August.) I look forward to the days ahead and the work we will continue to do that has been given to us by God.
- Phil

Welcoming Newcomers

After completing a newcomer class, St. Mark's welcomed over 10 newcomers to the church this past Sunday. Please welcome our newcomers to St. Mark's:

- Marti & David Budding
- Jennifer Daly
- Matt & Amber Hayden
- Jim Kelly
- Kathleen & George Lamprey
- Elizabeth McColloch
- Sarah Began

Please welcome these new members and introduce yourself if you haven't already.

Easter Egg Hunt!



Reaching Out to Help Others — Outreach Committee

Once again, St. Mark's Outreach Weekend, March 12-13 provided parishioners of all ages with an opportunity to get informed, connected and involved with local charities. Over 50 people participated in activities to support the homeless, the elderly, families in crisis, and youth re-building their lives following prison.

Our Saturday kick-off breakfast was catered by *Straight Ahead Café*. This event not only gave us a chance to visit with other Parish volunteers, but it provided the Café with its FIRST on-site catering job. The Café, which provides job opportunities to youth following prison, has been focused on delivering packaged sandwiches and salads to Worcester businesses. Preparing multiple breakfast items from scratch for a large crowd – on-time and cooked to perfection -- strengthened the youths' confidence in their ability to succeed in a culinary career. They will use this experience, and a reference from St. Mark's, to expand their catering services.

Following breakfast, several volunteers helped the Altar Guild dust and polish pews and other areas of the church. Their efforts were clearly visible throughout Holy Week. Parents and children visited with senior residents at Beaumont in Westborough, decorating pots and planting flowers to brighten up the residence. Other volunteers caravanned to Hopkinton and spent a few hours at Project Just Because. This charity provides families in need with free access to home goods, toys, books, baby equipment, and new and slightly-used clothing. Volunteers sorted and stacked several dozen containers of sleepwear for children of all ages.

Outreach — Cont'd p.3

On Sunday, volunteers traveled to Boston in the wee-hours of the morning (and Daylight Savings time!) to prepare and serve breakfast to the homeless at St. Francis House. For some, this was their first time volunteering at a homeless shelter. They found the experience very rewarding and could see that their efforts were appreciated by shelter patrons.

St. Mark's next Outreach Committee Meeting will be Sunday, April 24 at 9:45am during the Adult Forum. Please join us to discuss upcoming opportunities to support local charities.

— Marta von Loewenfeldt
Outreach Committee Chair

Attention all Acolytes

Are you starting grade 3 or above in the fall? Would you like to participate more in the worship services? If so, sign up to be an acolyte this fall! Send an email to office@stmarkssouthborough.org and you will be notified of the upcoming acolyte training and added to the acolyte rotation for the fall.

Beaumont Outreach

A diverse group of teens, children, and adults —23 total parishioners from St. Mark's and a few of their invited friends —embarked on a fun, intergenerational event at Beaumont Rehabilitation Center in Westborough during outreach weekend.

This is the fourth year in a row that St. Mark's has done an intergenerational activity where potted plants were given to the elderly for Outreach weekend, and it was our largest turnout to date. Several members of the group were able to join in the group breakfast provided by the Straight ahead café and some parishioners unable to do the Saturday nursing home visit came in earlier in the week to paint pots for the event. We came to the Beaumont recreation room and painted small terra cotta pots with elderly residents. We then placed in them gardening soil and small potted plants, such as pansies and violas.

Afterwards we made deliveries to residents of the colorful plants in their decorative pots. The residents enjoyed interacting with the children and teens and doing an art project together. Those who painted their own pot were very eager to take it back to their room with a colorful plant inside as a reminder of spring. We were also able to give to Beaumont residents some colorful crosses— Easter crafts that were made by the grade five and six Sunday school class. Even the residents who did not engage in painting pots seemed to enjoy having social contact with younger children and teens and making new friends.

We hope this activity will be offered again in the future as it was a great way to mingle across generations. We could also extend hospitality and the joy of Christ beyond the pew and into the community.



Pentecost Party

Kids Only Party! Join us on Sunday, May 15th for a Pentecost party upstairs in the Sunday School classrooms We will be serving a special Sunday School Snack celebrating Pentecost.

Launching the Passion Groups

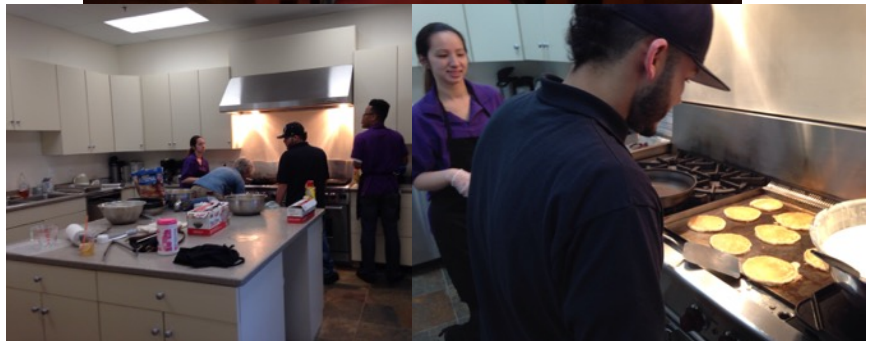
Interested in finding out what happened with the St. Mark's Points of Connection survey you took this fall? Be on the lookout in the month of April for an email or phone call informing you of how to participate more fully in the groups you expressed interest in!

Calling all artists!

Join us for the first meeting of the Liturgical Arts Group at St. Mark's. The group will meeting on May 7th at 10:00am. The Arts Group will make hangings, photos, paintings and more. Interested in join us? Contact Fr. Phil @ phil@stmarkssouthborough.org

We Want Your Photos

Smile for the pictures and then send them to photos@stmarkssouthborough.org. We want to see St. Mark's in action in our upcoming newsletters! Take a look at the photos from our Outreach weekend below!



Signs that Spring has Sprung

Robins are bobbin' Daffodils & Forsythias are bloomin'
The Red Sox came back to Fenway Park

AND

Shorts are hangin' out at the

Bargain Box!

Bargain box is open Thursdays from 10-5pm and Sundays from 12-2pm. The Bargain Box is open until Sunday, June 5.

You deserve some fun

COME SHOPPING!

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Do you knit, crochet, or quilt? Please join us as we create prayer shawls for those who are ill or home-bound. Even if you don't knit, crochet, or quilt, please join us for a time of fellowship! We will be meeting in the Parish Hall, 9:30 – 11: 00 AM.

Please contact Rosemary Nelson at rosemaryjnelson@gmail.com or at 508-481-2774 for more information about this ministry.

DATES: April 16 (Blessing of the Prayer Shawls on April 24th at the 10:45 service), May 21, June 18, September 10, October 15 (Blessing of the Prayer Shawls – 10:45 Service), November 12.

Altar Guild

March was a very busy month for the Altar Guild + to say the least!

We had a great turn out for the cleaning of the church on Saturday, March 12 (Outreach Weekend). We cleaned all the pews with Murphy's Oil, polished all the brass and candle followers. We dusted everywhere we could reach and the church did "sparkle" thanks to the hard work of Mary Arnaut, Connie Banfill, Peg Bloy, Rosemary Buse, her granddaughter, Libby, Lora Burroughs, Dee Cameron, Mary Coogan, George Cummings, Rosemary Elsbree, Sandy and Tom Ferris, Marjorie Page, Brenda Quinn, Anita and Robert Reeder, Kristin Romine, Helen Seward, Maureen Smotherman, Joanne Vangel, and Carey Zimmerman. We also did the usually setups for Sunday's Eucharists.

The following Saturday, March 19, we met in the parish hall to make palm crosses for Palm Sunday. Rosemary Elsbree and Helen Seward met on Friday to soak the palms to ready them for making the crosses. Many thanks to Lora Burroughs, Mary Coogan, Rosemary Elsbree, Carol Gustavson, Brenda Quinn, Anita Reeder, Kristin Romine, Helen Seward, Donna Syers, Karen White and Carey Zimmerman who made the crosses.

Many thanks to Steve and Jan Taylor who did the palm fan arrangements on our altars. They do this year after year! Thank you!!

Holy Week kept us busy as well. We thank the March Team - Carey Zimmerman, Mary Arnaut, Peg Bloy, Carol Bronder. Kristin Romine for their dedication in seeing that the duties for the week were addressed. The veils were placed on the reredos, crosses, etc.

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Potluck for Peace

On March 13 St. Mark's hosted an Interfaith Potluck for Peace, over 85 people attended! We had parishioners of St. Mark's, along with muslim families in Southborough, people from other parishes in town and other members of our community. The abundant potluck included dishes from around the globe and those attending shared stories of their lives and faith. The event was a smashing success that has grown out of our desire to connect with those of other faiths and to build bridges with them in our common life and desire for peace.

A group of 20 parishioners traveled to the Islamic Center of Wayland on April 3 for continued dialogue and education about Islam. Our hosts, Ajaz Munsiff and Safdar Medina, and other leaders took time to answer questions ranging from the role of women in Islam to aspects of their daily prayers. We then were able to observe their noonday prayers. Many people of that community commented on our desire to connect with them and to learn about our neighbors. Our next steps will be a shared meal in June at the Community House here in Southborough for the breaking of the Ramadan fast. We'll keep you posted as days get set!

St. Mark's Church

Altar Guild — Cont'd from P. 6

and setups were done for the various services during the week. Dee and Helen prepared the "garden" in the chapel for the Maundy Thursday vigil.

Saturday, March 26, brought us back to church to bag the 86 Easter plants and do the necessary work in preparation for Easter Sunday. Again, many ladies were present to help. Thanks to Mary Arnaut, Peg Bloy, Rosemary Buse, Dee Cameron, Mary Coogan (who vacuumed all the kneelers), Rosemary Elsbree, Brenda Quinn, Anita Reeder, Kristin Romine, Helen Seward, Maureen Smotherman, Karen White, Carey Zimmerman. We did the setups, changed candles, changed linens, pressed frontal, and vacuumed the church.

We thank Anita Reeder, Rosemary Buse, Maureen Smotherman, and Karen White who arranged all the plants. Our church looked beautiful!!

Thank you all so very much and God Bless us all!!

Respectfully submitted,
Helen Seward & Dee Cameron, Altar Guild Co-Chairs

Adult Forum Cont'd Pg. 2

thanks to the Network of Biblical storytellers International. Learn about this new telling of old stories. Listen to The Feeding of the 5,000 as told by Kathy Culmer.

Sunday, May 29, 9:45 am - Coffee and conversation. No Sunday School.

Sunday, June 5, 9:45 am – Adult Forum – ChurchNext TV: The most popular Prayer Book in the world came at a great cost to the writers, whose work continues to feed the spiritual lives of millions of people today. We will see how the tolerance and diversity of the Anglican Church we know today arose out of real need in the 16th century.



Staff

The Rev. Philip N. LaBelle, Rector
James Wallace, Organist and Choirmaster
Christiann Kelley & Kathleen Cormier, Dirs. of Children's Ed
Emily Howard, Parish Coordinator
Dave Holland, Sexton

Sunday Worship Services

7:45am Spoken Eucharist
8:45am Family Eucharist
9:45am Faith Formation
10:45am Sung Eucharist

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