

# THE LION

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## *Message from the Rector*

***“Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” St. Matthew 3:2***

Repent: to turn away, to be converted. That is the crux of the message proclaimed by both John the Baptist and by our Lord Jesus Christ himself. Repent: turn away, be converted.

Many years ago I received an advertising email from TAN Books and Publishers, and attached to it was an article entitled “Pious Practices for Lent.” In this article were outlined various Lenten disciplines and a few brief examples of each. For instance, under the heading “Abstinence” was a list of things people often give up during Lent: meat, sweets, dessert, gum, coffee, alcohol, eating between meals, smoking(!), and so forth. Of course, we twenty-first century Christians can add our own unique things to that list: television, the internet, movies, that modern “ball and chain,” the iPhone, and a host of other technological distractions.

Another “pious practice” reviewed was the practice of prayer. We can (and should!) increase the time we spend in prayer during the forty days of Lent. Those who pray some form of the Rosary can increase its use. We can be more conscious of participating in the Holy Eucharist on Sundays and at the weekday services during Lent. We can engage in a “Holy Hour” where we do nothing but rest in silence before our Lord. And, of course, we can also increase the intercessions we make for our friends, our families, our neighbors, the members of our parish church, and for the world as a whole, especially those who are suffering around us.

And finally, there are the disciplines of engagement that should take up a bit more of our time during the forty days of Lent. We should be more conscious about performing certain works of mercy: visiting the sick, the lonely, and our shut-ins. We should increase the giving of our alms. We should become more involved in evangelism. And finally, we should engage in good spiritual reading, the kind of reading that leads to deeper spiritual growth.

The result of all these things is repentance and ongoing conversion; a life of deeper dedication and devotion, more fully consecrated to God. The goal, of course, is to become more and more like Jesus in our everyday walk of life.

But this life of deeper dedication and consecration does not occur without a bit of effort on our part. We must combine our efforts with God’s grace to assist him in bringing this conversion about. It is often a slow and difficult process, but one that is essential to our growth in grace and in Christ-likeness.

Repent: turn away, be converted. Become like Jesus: we were born (again!) for nothing less.

I wish each and every one of you a blessed and fruitful Lent.

*N.B.*

Once again this year, our Ash Wednesday services will be held at noon and 7:00 p.m. at the church. Holy Communion will also be celebrated Monday through Thursday at 8:00 a.m. in the chapel. Ash Wednesday is February 18.

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## *Music Notes*

Kathleen Knott, Music Director/Organist

### A Lenten Hymn

On Ash Wednesday the Recessional hymn will be # 149 “Eternal Lord of love, behold your Church” from The 1982 Hymnal. This hymn is particularly appropriate for us as we start our daily pilgrimage through the forty days of Lent. The text is matched to a French psalter tune from 1551 which is march-like in character. A Canadian named Thomas Cain (b. 1931) wrote the meaningful text for this hymn. He was a professor at Yale, and became interested in the historical function of Lent in his work as a member of the Worship and Doctrine Committee of the Diocese of Niagara.

This hymn is full of references to the Scriptures and has import for us as we begin our journey through Lent. In verse 1, the text refers to the travels of the Israelites on their journey across the desert. We are reminded of Paul’s words from Romans 6 and 1 Corinthians 15 in verses 2 and 3. We visualize the promise of hope as we sing about the grass breaking through the ground in verse 3.

This hymn is just one example of the profound poetry found in the words of many of the hymns we sing. May we open our ears as we sing this Lenten hymn and allow it to influence our worship and help us prepare our hearts during this penitential time.

1. Eternal Lord of love, behold your Church  
Walking once more the pilgrim way of Lent,  
Led by your cloud by day, by night your fire,  
Moved by your love and toward your presence bent:
2. So daily dying to the way of self,  
So daily living to your way of love,  
We walk the road, Lord Jesus, that you trod,  
Knowing ourselves baptized into you death.
3. If dead in you, so in you we arise,  
You the firstborn of all the faithful dead;  
And as through stony ground the green shoots break,  
Glorious in springtime dress of leaf and flower.

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## *Treasurer’s Report*

Cal Brown

We are now in our new year and it will be an exciting one for St Mark’s. I take this opportunity to urge you to send in your pledge for 2015. While St. Mark’s is financially sound, it is necessary for our congregation to give freely in order for us to meet our current and ongoing monthly expenses. Many have already pledged, but many have not. I ask you to pray over your giving. God knows each person’s financial circumstances and, if asked, He will direct your heart.

The following is a copy of the report presented to the congregation during the annual meeting:

St. Mark's continues to be financially stable with assets of \$4,483,473.00 and a total equity of \$4,426,317.00. We are fortunate that we are mortgage free. While our reserves have decreased during 2014, we have a beautiful walkway to show for it. The walkway cost was approximately \$312,000.00, paid for

*(Treasurer's Report con'd)*

with the money from our reserve account.

We have a reserve of \$434,673.00 in a special savings account. These funds are reserved for capital needs, building repair, replacement of aging equipment such as air conditioning, roof replacement and most importantly, a safeguard for hurricane damage. Our insurance company has a very significant deductible, thus in the event of a catastrophe, immediate funds must be available for repair to our structures.

Last year we failed to meet the operating expense budget, but fortunately, the overall expenses were down. We had budgeted for a curate or an assistant, but the right person was not located. However, this year we have Reverend Randall Russell on board to assist in parish ministries, thus increasing expenses for his stipend and benefits.

We continue to struggle receiving pledges from our members, which makes it difficult to properly gauge the payment of expenses. Fortunately, we have a very giving congregation who always steps up to the plate when needed. In the future, our goal is to encourage increased pledging. By doing so, the business of St. Mark's can be more carefully planned.

Last year we received for our general fund the sum of \$325,661.00 and \$70,916.00 for the endowment, building, furnishings and designated funds. Total income from all categories was \$413,508.00.

The total consolidated expenses for St. Mark's during 2014 were \$309,358.00.

Forty-seven percent of last year's operating revenue of \$325,661.00 came from pledges, with fifty-three percent coming from non-pledged giving.

For the coming year, our expense budget has been set at \$360,310.00. This, of course, means that our congregation will, by necessity, be required to gift and tithe the sum of \$360,310.00 in order for St. Mark's to meet these expenses.

It is a pleasure being the church treasurer and I would like to especially thank Janice Johnston for her hard work as St. Mark's bookkeeper. She does an excellent job. Janice does need help each Sunday after the 10:00 a.m. service counting the daily receipts. As good accounting dictates, it is necessary for a second person to assist her in this task. I solicit you to speak with her, if you are so inclined, to assist in this very necessary job.

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## ***Anglican Church Women***

Linda Philpott

The ACW was honored to have our own Sheryl Vittitoe speak at our last meeting. Sheryl is the CFO for the Indian River State College System. She shared some wonderful insights into the college and how as an administrator she lives out her faith walk.

On **February 19** Dr. Mary Ingui, will be the guest speaker for February. Dr. Ingui will be speaking on "Faith of Our Founding Fathers".

On Sunday, **March 8** at 6:00 pm, the parish will host students from George Mason University for a barbecue potluck. The students will be here for a Habitat project.

Father Bob and Judy Stull will be with us on **March 19th** for a Quiet Day. There will be communion at 10 am followed by presentations and meditations at 10:30. There will be a soup lunch at 12 noon. This is open to the entire parish.

## ***Women's Bible Study***

Linda Philpott

The women's bible study is about to finish Part 1 of the Study of St Luke's gospel, chapters, 1-16. The second part will commence on February 25 for seven weeks. The cost of the upcoming study is \$17.00. You may join us for this study even if you did not participate in the first part. Please contact, Linda Philpott, 794-3750, thepotts04@yahoo.com for more information.

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## ***Annual Meeting***

The annual meeting of the parish was held on Sunday, January 25. Several encouraging reports were given, all showing that our parish is alive, healthy, and moving forward in doing the work of our Lord in our community. Our financial position is solid, and although we fell a little short in our 2014 budgeted income, our budgeted expenditures also came in below expectation. We are looking forward to a productive year.

Paul Dodson and Susan Chenault-Hahn were re-elected to serve another three-year term on the Vestry. We want to thank Joyce Smith for her many years as Recording Secretary. She stepped down from this long-held position at the December meeting.

Delegates elected to the diocesan synod, to be held in Charlottesville, Virginia in July, are Lisa Brenneman and Janice Johnston. We also welcomed Rev. Randall Russell, his wife Amy, son James and daughter Ella to our church. Rev. Russell will serve as Curate to Fr. Mike and is currently in the process leading to ordination in our diocese. He was approved to proceed by both the Board of Examining Chaplains and the Standing Committee of the diocese at the clergy winter conference held in Fernandina Beach at the end of January. Congratulations, Rev. Russell, and we welcome you and your family to St. Mark's.

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## ***Upcoming Holy Days***

### **February/March/Early April Holy Days**

February 2 (12:00 p.m.) – Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary

February 18 (12:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.) – Ash Wednesday

February 24 (12:00 p.m.) – Feast of St Matthias the Apostle

March 25 (12:00 p.m.) – Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

March 30 – April 1 (12:00 p.m.) – Holy Week

April 2 (7:00 p.m.) – Maundy Thursday

April 3 (12:00 p.m.) – Good Friday

April 4 (4:00 p.m.) – Sacramental Confessions

April 5 (8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.) – Easter Sunday (10:00 a.m. service *with incense*)

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## **St. Mark's Anglican Church**

**Rev. Canon Michael L. Ward, SSA**

**Rector**

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