

Connections



Rector's Reflections

The Rev. Brian Shoda

This year February 14 is both Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday. This is an unusual occurrence, but they are related, especially for those who love God. Let's start by looking at Valentine's Day.

Many would say that Valentine's Day is a day to prove your love for someone. Ask yourself, do you really prove your love by giving someone a heart shaped box of candy or a dozen roses? These gifts might celebrate your love for each other, but they don't prove that you love each other. Proof comes from things far more profound than giant teddy bears or chocolate covered strawberries. Love is proven in the way you treat each other, in the way you show care and respect. Love is shown by kindness, loyalty, and fidelity. It is in the strength of a loved one who stands by you when you are sick, who provides for everyday needs, and takes their full share in the work or needs of the family. One example that I can give that was unnoticed for many years was the fact that my dad left for the mines each morning at about 4:30 a.m. and the last thing he would do before he left was to stoke the furnace so that we would not wake up in a cold house. My mom had to give up her career so that she could marry my dad and my dad gave up on going to college to provide for his family. Those were hard times, but they had each other and eventually they had my three brothers, my sister, and me.

Ash Wednesday is a time to consider how much we love God. It is not found only in going to church or not, but in how we live our lives. Are we good examples of Christ for the world to see? I know that I am not as good as I could be and Lent is a time to work on my relationship with God and others. Ashes are a reminder that time is fleeting and that we will soon be gone from this world. We are quickly forgotten. For example, can you name your great grandparents? Very few people can.

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The Episcopal Church

Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry invites the entire church to study the books of Luke and Acts this Lent and Easter.

"O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever."

Psalm 136:1

St. Mark's

Our altar guild invites and welcomes you to join them in this important ministry. Contact Laura Smith for more information.

Stained Glass Restoration Memorial and Thanksgiving Gifts



We can all agree that St. Mark's is a warm and welcoming place in which to worship. Many families throughout its existence have made St. Mark's their church home.

Some of the most memorable moments in our lives take place in church - marriage, baptism, confirmation, burial, religious epiphanies, wonderful moments of joyful celebration, and connections to our Supreme Being.

Our campaign for the restoration of our beautiful stained glass windows continues. With all these special memories in mind, please consider a donation if you have not done so already. Consider *buying* a stained glass window as a memorial or thanksgiving gift.

Additional donation information can be found in a flyer on the back table in church. Questions should be directed to Fr. Brian, Beth Curtin, or Sandy Buzzerd.

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

The Diocese of West Virginia

The Rt. Rev. W. Michie Klusmeyer,
Bishop of West Virginia

The Rt. Rev. Mark Van Koevering,
Assistant Bishop of West Virginia

Clergy and staff

The Rev. D. Brian Shoda, *Rector*
Margaret Place, *Organist*
Kim Kelly, *Sexton*

Vestry and officers

Arlene Verge, *Senior Warden*
Judy McBee, *Junior Warden*
Sandy Buzzerd, *Treasurer*
Susie Barker, Beth Curtin, Melinda
Golden, Kim Kelly, Linda Lockhart,
Swanee Shedd, Cindy Stull

Contact us at

StMarksBerkeley@frontier.com

Office: 304-258-2440

180 South Washington Street
Berkeley Springs, WV 25411

Website address

StMarksBerkeley.com

Newsletter editor

Michelle White

Upcoming dates to remember

February 1, 8, 15, 22 (Thursdays) – Volunteer with the Back Pack Program, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Contact: Susan Caperton.

February 7 (Wednesday) – Bill Grow's birthday! 

February 9 (Friday) – Judy Webb's birthday! 

February 13 (Tuesday) – Pancake supper and game night, 6:00 p.m.

February 14 (Wednesday) – Ash Wednesday service, 12:00 p.m.

February 15 (Thursdays) – Thursdays in Lent we will pray Stations of the Cross at 12:00 p.m. Contact: Father Brian.

February 16 (Friday) – St. Mark's volunteers prepare and serve a hot meal at Starting Points community kitchen. Contact: Arlene Verge.

February 21 (Wednesday) – Katie Caperton's birthday! 

February 22 (Thursday) – Glenn Horr's birthday! 

February 24 (Saturday) – Evie Caperton's birthday! 



Getting to know you

Bill Grow

Bill was born, raised, educated, and began his career in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Most of his career was with Bethlehem Steel working in the fast changing field of information technology.

He was transferred to the Sparrows Point, Maryland plant to become the manager (superintendent) of information technology and the family moved to Bel Air, Maryland. Leaving Bethlehem seemed a strange thing to do, but these moves proved to be life changing. Bill eventually left Bethlehem Steel and finished his career working in information technology consulting.

Bethlehem was a wonderful place to live. This close community of about 50,000 was home to very good schools and lots of jobs. Bill met Carol in their high school typing class and they both sang in Glee Club. They reconnected later and were married in 1970. Their life together in Bethlehem was insular, by example, in 1977 they bought a new Buick and when they sold it 10 years later the car had only clocked 25,000 miles.

Bill's transfers expanded their world. The wide-range of opportunities available to their two children were especially important. Their two children each have two children now and it was their son who introduced them to Berkeley Springs. Bill and Carol live next door to their son's family's weekend home, not too far out of town. Trees instead of buildings fill the landscape and the friendly people of Berkeley Springs are a great attraction.

Volunteer work with the Morgan County Homeless Coalition is important to Bill and speaks to his long-time concern about

homelessness. Bill and Carol regularly volunteer to make overnight shelter stays possible. Bill finds it to be very rewarding to have people come to the shelter on very cold nights, knowing the guests will be warm that night.

Before their move to Berkeley Springs Bill enjoyed playing golf, but since moving here he hasn't played. Bridge now occupies a fair amount of his time. He's now an avid Bridge enthusiast and on average plays about three times a week. He also loves to read and enjoys historical fiction and spy novels most of all.

Bill was raised in the Lutheran Church and Carol in the Roman Catholic. They came to the Episcopal Church about the time they were married as a place they could together call home. He finds the Episcopal service comfortable and familiar; the liturgy speaks to his heart.

He describes the congregation of St. Mark's as one of the friendliest he's ever known. With that as a benchmark Bill measures up in spades. His warm smile and gentle greetings are a most welcome addition to our friendly family. We thank God for Bill and Carol and we delight in their contributions to God's Work in this place and the community around us.

Compassion

Compassion does not deny our clear perception of another person – our “take” on them, our being able to “size them up,” our being able to “see through” their gimmicks and games and posturing – but rather to see all this through new eyes. So much of what is irritating in life are people inarticulately, desperately asking for help.

-Br. Curtis Almquist
Society of Saint John the Evangelist

Vestry Update –January vestry meeting and annual meeting

Arlene Verge, Beth Curtin, Judy McBee, Melinda Golden, Linda Lockhart, Father Brian, and Sandy Buzzerd were present at the vestry meeting.

Updates on old business:

- Epiphany Studio, a company that restores stained glass, will be submitting an estimate for our window restoration project.
- Over \$20,000 has been donated toward the window restoration project.
- The work on the entrance porch to the church has been completed.

New actions:

- The 2018 budget has been approved.
- Sally Berman will attend the diocesan convention in October on behalf of St. Mark's.
- Pipes froze in the sacristy and flooded the sacristy and the men's bathroom below the sacristy. Old copper pipe has been replaced by plastic pipe and wet carpet has been removed. A new sink and faucet are needed in the sacristy and the ceiling in the men's bathroom has been replaced. The pipes will be wrapped and the heater left on at a low temperature to stop pipes from freezing in the future.
- Susie Barker, Swanee Shedd, and Cindy Stull were elected as additions to the vestry.

Announcements and general information:

- Our apportionment from the diocese has increased to \$11,000, about \$1,000 higher than last year.
- Game nights are continuing to be well attended by parishioners and non-parishioners with the hope that this will bring about increased Sunday attendance.
- We will use Rite I during the season of Lent this year.
- The Bishop will be visiting us on April 8.
- 98 people attended the music portion of the Christmas Service with 78 staying for the service. Many thanks to Margaret Place for making the music possible.
- Many thanks to Ellen Smith for creating the bulletins each week for the Sunday service.
- Additional volunteers are needed to take communion to the homebound each month.
- The parish directory will be updated.
- The major challenge at present is our aging facility.
- The 2018 budget expects a shortfall of about \$8,000.

Rector's Reflections – continued

Jesus showed His love for us by miracles, teachings, and the gift of love. Jesus proved His love for us by dying on the Cross and rising from the dead. Love is celebrated by gifts, but it is proven by hard work and sacrifice. This is the act of love that lasts for all time. We need to follow that example. Happy Lent!

God Bless! *Fr. Brian*