To everything there is a season…

Farewell
Saint Mark’s has spent the past several months saying good-bye to the retiring Rev. Dr. Paul St. Germain and to the Rev. Christopher Richardson, who will assume new roles at the Diocese and at St. John’s Columbus. Saint Mark’s has been truly blessed by their ministry with us over so many years.

This good-bye means they have formally agreed not to officiate or assist at any baptism, wedding, or funeral at Saint Mark’s. Once a new rector is well in place, they may be invited to worship with us. Saint Mark’s can best support Paul, Christopher and their families, during their transitions, by respecting the policy requiring them to keep a distance and to develop new boundaries.

Hello
On August 1, 2020, Saint Mark’s will welcome the appointment of the Rev. Chris Thompson as Transitional Priest-in-Charge. As such, he will lead us as pastor, priest and teacher, in communion with Bishop Breidenthal, and, with the Vestry, mutually agree on and pursue parish goals.

Chris is a native of Portsmouth, Ohio and grew up in West Virginia. He and his wife Mary Jo will be married 40 years this November. They have three children, all married, and eight grandchildren. He is a graduate of West Liberty University and the Virginia Theological Seminary and has been ordained in the Episcopal Church for 41 years.

He has served churches in West Virginia, Southern Ohio, Southwest Florida, and Southern Virginia. He served as Rector of All Saints’ Episcopal Church in Portsmouth for 10 years. He also served 21 years as a Chaplain in the Air Force National Guard (at Rickenbacker) and the Reserves.

Chris went into retirement in 2010 and since has served Mission Churches, Veteran Assistance Program and as an Interim. While Chris and Mary Jo moved to Winston Salem, NC to be closer to family, Chris will reside in Clintonville during his time at Saint Mark’s.

Chris is enthusiastic and energized by people, is joyful, loves to laugh and treasures his family and friends. He looks forward to getting to know each of us and safely sharing a socially distanced cup of coffee.

What’s Next?
At the July meeting, the Transition team from the Diocese of Southern Ohio met with Saint Mark’s vestry to review the process for the search for Saint Mark’s next rector. Canon Jason Leo oversees clergy transitions for the Diocese of Southern Ohio. Father Kevin Beasley from Saint Andrew’s Pickerington will assist Saint Mark’s as our search consultant.

The first step in this process is for the Vestry to form a Search Committee, usually seven to ten people. The Search Committee is intended to be as broadly representative of the parish as possible in a manner carefully selected by the Vestry. More details on the Search Committee nomination process will be provided in August.

The congregation provides input to the Search Committee. The Search Committee will actively and widely solicit input from the congregation to develop a “parish profile.” This process could involve online focus groups, telephone surveys, etc. The parish profile is a “birds-eye” view of Saint Mark’s designed to present a faithful image of our parish to potential clergy applicants. This process typically takes several months and Vestry approves the final product.

Once the rector position is advertised through the national Office of Transition Ministries, it might take four to eight weeks to receive applications. All applications are first screened by the Diocesan staff, then are forwarded to the Search Committee for further evaluation. Rather than past practice which involved out-of-town travel for the search committee to see the applicant in their current parish, there is a “Zoom” online interview and then a second interview or visit. The Search Committee will select a candidate for final consideration to be presented to the Vestry. The Vestry ultimately issues the “call” for the next rector.

I look forward to the road ahead over the next nine to twelve months and appreciate the effort that everyone is making to remain connected during this time of physical isolation. In closing, this passage from Thessalonians seems fitting: Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

In peace,

Dot Yeager, Senior Warden
SAINT MARK’S PHASED APPROACH TO RE-OPENING
July 16, 2020

During this time of world health crisis, Saint Mark’s has kept the safety of our community in mind when our church was closed to in-person worship. This has represented an additional sacrifice during this extraordinarily difficult time. As we plan to increase our in-person parish life, Saint Mark’s is guided by direction from our diocesan bishop, the Rt. Rev. Thomas E. Breidenthal. Bishop Breidenthal has provided a phased plan, which is designed to protect the spiritual health and physical safety of our church. The movement between phases is driven by the direction from public health officials, good science and pastoral care in our community and is subject to change, either backwards or forwards. Updated guidance from the State of Ohio was last issued on July 2, 2020. (For more information, please see the insert.)

Bishop Breidenthal has asked the clergy and lay leadership in each church to determine how best to apply these guidelines. Accordingly, Saint Mark’s formed the “Open Hearts, Open Doors” Task Force in May. See the link on Saint Mark’s website for a list of task force members and other materials.

Based on that guidance, several counties, including Franklin, are currently assessed at Level 3. The State of Ohio intends to re-evaluate the health status levels weekly each Thursday. While Franklin County remains at Level 3, when rates of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and death are rising, Saint Mark’s is in Phase One of the Diocesan Plan. In this phase, online worship is offered and a limited number of clergy and worship assistants, including lay readers, are permitted in the sanctuary. Lay readers are scheduled to serve at each service in the month of July. Also at this time, groups, primarily support groups such as AA, who have agreed to follow our safety guidelines, are being allowed to use our parish hall for meetings of 10 or fewer.

The Open Doors Task Force has been meeting regularly and preparations are underway for when Saint Mark’s is ready for the next phase, Phase Two. This phase is possible when public health indicators are favorable: for example, rates of cases, hospitalizations and death are declining and Franklin County would be assessed at Level 2. Phase Two includes in-person worship; however, bread and wine will not be offered and singing is also suspended. The following describes Phase Two:

- We will continue to refrain from singing and from sharing bread and wine
- Face masks will be required
- Social distancing will be achieved by marking off the available seats in the pews
- Sign-ups might be used to manage the number of worshippers
- More Sunday services could be offered to counter-balance the reduced capacity at each service: for example, 8 a.m. (Morning Prayer), 9 a.m. (Morning Prayer), 10:30 a.m (Liturgy of the Word), and 5 p.m. (Evening Prayer)
- Service details will be finalized in consultation with the interim rector
- Efforts will be made for as much as “touchless” experience as possible, by propping open entry doors, limited handling of bulletins, removal of prayer books and hymnals from pews
- High contact surfaces, such as pews, will be cleaned and disinfected before and after each service
- A log of all visitors will be needed
- Worship assistants will guide attendees as they enter and exit to ensure social distance: the verger, acolyte and usher roles could be “re-imagined” to support this new role

Saint Mark’s parish includes active ministries, such as Outreach, Mark’s Men, etc., are meeting online at present. While no change in format is expected in Phase Two, summer and fall are ideal times for people to meet outside in groups of two or more, but less than ten, when we reach Phase Two in future.
PHASED APPROACH TO RE-OPENING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Because many in our church family may fall into a risk group and are expected to continue to choose to worship online in Phase Two, Saint Mark’s intends to provide an online means for worship for the foreseeable future. The latest instructions for online worship access can be found on the Saint Mark’s website home page. At present, there is a Facebook livestream of the 10:30 a.m. service, also broadcast via Zoom. This allows for maximum participation, including by telephone. The videos for all services are also available on-demand, immediately following each live broadcast on Saint Mark’s Facebook page: https://www.Facebook.com/pg/SaintMarksColumbus/videos

We are blessed that our Diocese is vigilant about rapidly responding to the changing direction from the State of Ohio public health and other officials and ask for patience as guidelines are subject to change with very little notice.

EPISCOPAL LOGO MASK ORDERS

Some congregations have expressed interest in purchasing additional cloth masks with the Episcopal logo that were included in your PPE starter packages last month. These imprinted masks must be purchased in bulk (> 500), which is problematic for most of our congregations. But by combining orders from multiple congregations, we may be able to reach the minimum required for a bulk order.

Masks are $3.65 each. Please contact the office (614-486-9452 or OfficeManager@SaintMarksColumbus.org) ASAP if you are interested. Please specify how many you would like to order. Payment is due when the masks arrive - details on that are pending.

AN UPDATE FROM THE TREASURER

For the six months ended June 30, expenses exceeded receipts by $2,234. Pledged receipts were lower than the previous year by $35,658. Fortunately, we have received $14,786 more from non-pledged gifts than at this time last year. The Redding Road house rental income should end up better than budget, but the Junior Explorers will be well below it and it is unknown whether or when they might return. Fortunately, we received $72,723 from the CARES Act PPP Loan to help with our cash flow, so we are in good shape for now.

Just a reminder:

The CARES Act allows donations of up to $300 to the church (or any other charitable organization) to be deducted from taxable income even if you do not itemize deductions. For those who do itemize, the limit of 60% of adjusted gross income for charitable donations has been lifted.

To set up an electronic payment to the church:

Go to: https://www.ShelbyGiving.com/app/giving/SaintMarks and follow the directions. If you have any problem, please contact me at: treasurer@saintmarkscolumbus.org or call me at 614-906-6219.

If you would prefer to mail in checks, we are depositing checks received at the church a few times per week. Mail them to: Treasurer, Saint Mark’s Episcopal Church, 2151 Dorset Road, Columbus, OH 43221
For Paul's final Sunday on June 28, the Saint Mark's Choir unveiled a virtual choir presentation of Paul's favorite hymn, “The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord.” The hymn was a big hit, and since then I've had several people ask, “How did you do that?” The Epistle seemed like a good forum for answering that question.

First off, it's important to note that virtual choir projects such as this all are prerecorded in their entirety. All of the videos, including Tyler's accompaniment, are recorded separately and stitched together after the fact using video editing software. No part of the hymn could be done live, since synchronizing the performances would be impossible due to internet lag and time delays.

Therefore, in order to coordinate all these separate prerecorded contributions, the first step of any virtual choir project is to create some sort of master sound file or video that establishes the tempo, phrasing, and dynamics for all participants to follow. This can be a purely electronic recording, such as a MIDI-generated sound file, or it can be a recorded audio or video performance. For this project, we had Tyler record his accompaniment to the hymn first, and his video became the master for everyone to follow. The choir is used to following his lead during the singing of hymns in person, so this was a natural decision.

The next step is to send the master video, along with an annotated score, to all the various participants. Performance details, such as breathing, cut-offs, part divisions, pronunciation questions, and dynamics, have to be carefully notated in places where there might be confusion, in order to avoid any ragged moments. There is no rehearsal, so everything must be very clear for everyone in advance. Singers are instructed to listen and watch the master video as they record themselves singing along. The singers have to listen to the master recording with headphones during their recording so that their microphone records only their own singing and not the sound from the master. It is not uncommon for each singer to record multiple takes in pursuit of a recording that meets their own high standard.

Once complete, each participant sends their video to me for video editing. This begins a lengthy process of combining the many videos into one. The videos first must be carefully synchronized. Since modern videos capture at least 30 visual frames per second, lining up the various videos can take a lot of trial and error. Once the videos are in sync, the balance of each audio track must be adjusted, since each recording has its own baseline volume level. A little reverb is added to each track, since most people's home environment has a very dry acoustic. Following this, the size and position of the videos are determined for the final product. Sometimes, as in this video, the orientation of the videos is set to be varied as the video progresses, increasing the complexity. Finally, the video is rendered into the final product. Depending on the computer and the video editing software, this final step can sometimes take numerous hours of computing time.

Be on the lookout for more of these virtual choir projects in the months to come, as we continue to grapple with the reality that group singing is not advisable at the moment. Although the experience is not the same, it allows us to experience at least a glimmer of the beauty that choral singing brings to our worship services.
Thank you from Freedom a la Carte

Due to the pandemic, the St. Mark’s Outreach Ministry is unable to do many of the in person activities in which we would normally participate. Despite this we don’t want to abandon our partners, so last month we sent several donations to our partner groups. We received a very nice thank you from our friends at Freedom who very much appreciated the gift. We wanted to share their message with you as the gift was made possible due to the donations of so many of the members of our congregation.

“There are no great things to be done, only small things to be done with great love.” Mother Theresa
Labor Neighbor Day Bake Sale Canceled
Due to the current pandemic conditions, the fact we aren’t sure the City will be hosting the Labor Day Art festival, and the fact we weren’t sure whether our members would feel safe volunteering this year, the Outreach Ministry made the sad decision to cancel the plans for a bake sale this year. Hopefully next year we will be able to resume this community event.

Women’s Respite Canceled
Due to both the pandemic, and the Catholic Diocese’s decision to sell their retreat center, the Women’s Respite Retreat, normally hosted in July, had to be cancelled this year. That’s why you haven’t heard Anice Ellis asking for birthday bag donations. They are hoping they might be able to do a one day retreat in the fall if conditions improve. They are also looking at new locations that might work for next year’s retreat.

Thank you to everyone who gave during the Big Give whether you chose one of our partner agencies or a charity of your choice. The Big Give was a big success for our partner entities. NEAMAP received over $52,000 in direct donations plus the match. Freedom al a Carte received over $40,000.

Layette Ministry
During this time that we have been apart, a number of our Outreach and Knitting Ministry members have been busy in their homes. Since the first of the year, the group has sewn over 100 bibs and 100 burp cloths, hemmed 10 blankets, and knitted more than 15 hat/bootie sets and 20 toys. Next month we will be taking a carload of supplies to our friends at Trinity Episcopal in McArthur. If anyone would like to assist in the knitting or sewing, please contact Leslie Winters at 614-459-4123 or mslesliewinters@gmail.com. Trinity is also happy to have used newborn items for the layettes if you have any that you would like to donate. God willing, we still plan to have a shower for them in the fall, so if you see any cute items on sale you might want to plan ahead.
NNEMAP now delivers to those having trouble with transportation or with a compromised health condition confining a client to their home. NNEMAP Food Pantry has partnered with local janitorial and environmental services contractor Gimme the Dirt, Ltd. to offer free grocery delivery service for its customers.

NNEMAP has been helping the community for 50 years. Happy 50th NNEMAP!

NNEMAP's history goes back to 1958. The construction of Interstate 670 disrupted the area's “flytown” neighborhoods so drastically that home values plummeted. Within three months of the highway’s construction, a new population of disadvantaged persons needed emergency services. Fourth Avenue Christian Church opened a food pantry with several auxiliary services, and maintained it at their facility for 10 years. By 1968 about a dozen churches known as the Near Northside Cooperative Ministry were working with the Godman Guild Association to serve a population that had moved toward High Street. In April 1969, the pantry incorporated as Near Northside Emergency Material Assistance Program. The pantry operated for 17 years out of a house on Dennison Avenue, a former parsonage donated for the purpose by St. Mark's Lutheran Church. Several years ago NNEMAP moved to its current location on 11th Ave. While originally upset about having to move, the move to the new location generated a 40% increase in the demand for services within the first year. The demand continues to grow each year. Today NNEMAP serves over 50,000 clients each year and serves over 450,000 meals. The partner churches and OSU students provide over 150 volunteers a day which has allowed NNEMAP to expand its hours and activities. They also partner with insurance companies and the Columbus Department of Health to help clients obtain services and benefits.

Back to School Collections
NNEMAP will not be doing a back to school backpack collection this year. Outreach is going to have a discussion directly with one of the Columbus Schools we have supported in the past to see about needs with which we might be able to assist them. We will let you know of any plans for a collection if they are developed.

Next Outreach Meeting
The next meeting of the Outreach Ministry will be at 7:00 PM on July 28, 2020. New members are always welcome. If you would like to participate in the Zoom meeting, email Bill Karl at mrbill.karl@gmail.com and he will send you the directions.
July 1, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

It’s been hard for us as a worshipping community to forego the celebration of the holy eucharist. As you know, I am not convinced that communion can be administered or received safely under present conditions. A few days ago I set Sunday, October 18, as a tentative date for the resumption of the eucharist, but this will depend on how Ohio is doing in its containment of COVID-19.

In the meanwhile, our fasting from the eucharist provides us with an opportunity to reflect on what the eucharist means. Let me say, first of all, that the eucharist means more than receiving consecrated bread and wine. Certainly, receiving these carries immense weight. We stand in an ancient tradition that claims the real presence of Jesus in this bread and wine, which we believe to be the body and the blood of Christ.

But we miss the point if we focus the meaning of the eucharist on the act of administering and receiving communion. The shape of the eucharist from beginning to end points to what it means to be the body of Christ, and each moment in the liturgy is a moment of communion — that is, union, with our risen head.

When we gather, however formally or informally, to hear scripture read and preached, then and there we are receiving Jesus, who is God’s Word. When we stand for the Gospel, we are acknowledging the real presence of The risen Christ in our midst. Should we proceed no further, our communion with him would be complete.

When we pray for the church and for the world, we claim our relationship with Jesus, our great high priest, as we, the priesthood of all believers, humbly join with him in his constant intercession to the Father on behalf of the entire creation. Should we proceed no further, our communion with Christ would be complete.

When we exchange the Peace, we are living out Jesus’ first gift to his frightened community on Easter Day: “Peace be with you; my own peace I leave with you.” Peace is love released by the assurance of hope. That peace then becomes our gift to share. Too often we treat the exchange of the peace as a liturgical intermission, but entered into mindfully, it is a powerful reminder of our ministry to friend and stranger in Christ’s name. Should we proceed no further, our communion with him would be complete.

When we offer our gifts of bread and wine, of money and food, we are offering ourselves, our souls and bodies, trusting that the Father will accept what we offer, however flawed. We dare to do this because Jesus has accepted us as his family, and kindly incorporates us into his self-offering on the cross. Should we proceed no further, our communion with him would be complete.

When the celebrant lifts up bread and wine as our spiritual sacrifice to the Father through Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, we dare to believe that, however broken and neglectful we as the church have been, we will be given back to ourselves as the body of Christ.

This sacrament of our union with Christ and with one another lies at the center of our public worship. Why? Because it underwrites and affirms the union Christ has forged with all of us from the beginning of creation. Receiving communion is and should be precious to us.

But it is the outward and visible sign of an uncontainable grace which is ours to receive and share whether or not we partake of consecrated bread and wine. The grace of holy communion with Jesus and one another is present at every moment of the eucharistic liturgy, and therefore is present in every act of Christian worship, and potentially in every moment of our lives.

Just as the eucharist is communion with Christ from beginning to end, so is our walk as disciples of Jesus Christ. We may need to forego sacramental communion in this season, but we need not forego the spiritual nourishment Jesus is providing each of us in this hard time. What is this nourishment? It is Christ’s unqualified love for us, and our gratitude that feeds us and impels forward in his name. Holy communion is the outward and visible sign of Christ’s presence with us and alongside us every moment of every day. And when we are once again able to receive him in bread and wine, it will be in our thankful acknowledgement that he has been with us all along.
IN AND AROUND SAINT MARK’S

‘LAY WEEDERS’ (GARDEN HELPERS) NEEDED
If you have driven past the church campus lately you may have noticed that we could use some help in the landscaping.

If you have free time that you’d like to spend pulling weeds or pruning, maybe you’d like to be on our ‘Lay Weeders’ list.

This is a perfect COVID-19 activity since it's outdoors, you can schedule the time at your convenience, and physical distancing should not a problem. We do ask that you have a mask and that you let us know when you visit the property by completing a campus log-in form.

If you're interested in being added to the Lay Weeders list, please contact Ellen Berndt (ellen.berndt@gmail.com).

WOMEN OF SAINT MARK’S
A social (virtual) gathering for the women of Saint Mark’s. Tuesdays at 3:00 pm. If you are dialing in, dial 312-626-6799 and then add 918 6326 1255 # #. If you are joining by internet, click HERE. Contact Michele Johnson with questions, michelelbjohnson@gmail.com.

THE MARKSMEN
The Marksmen are a group of guys that get together to just "hang out" and chat. Typically the group gathers on the fourth Wednesday of each month, but during this time, they are meeting each week at ~7:45pm via Zoom. All should feel free to simply "drop in" for some good fellowship. Send an email to: "thestmarksmen@gmail.com" for more information.

MONDAY NIGHT BOOK CLUB
Book club meets the fourth Monday of each month. If you have questions, please contact Pat lams. New members are always welcome. I have listed the Zoom contact information below. If you are dialing in, please call 312-626-6799 and then add 926 8384 5541###. If you are coming in by internet, just click on the https address below (Meeting ID: 926 8384 5541, Password: 094773). For Zoom issues with this, contact Michele Johnson at 614-406-2233. https://saintmarkscolumbus.zoom.us/j/92683845541?pwd=Q1JwRHJOb2RSU2pPZlZ6bUk4UjhnUT09

SAINT MARK’S MEMBER CARE
Saint Mark’s Member Care ministry provides meals to parishioners who are in need of some help due to illness, recovery, or other situations. If you or someone you know could use some help with meals, please contact Michele Johnson (michelelbjohnson@gmail.com). We have a team of parishioners who are happy to serve in this way.

We also have a New Baby ministry which provides a welcoming rose and muffins to families with a new baby in the house. If you know of a family with a new baby, please contact Regan Bohnert (reganbohnert@gmail.com) with this information. In addition, if you are interested in helping with either meals or the new baby ministry, please contact Regan.

STEPHEN MINISTRY AT ST MARK’S
Saint Marks has a group of dedicated and caring lay ministers who are trained to “walk with” any parishioners who are or have experienced a difficult time in their lives. Stephen Ministers provide one on one confidential visits, friendship, and support to anyone who may be dealing with a loss or difficulty such as the loss of a job, death of family member, illness, or loneliness.

Our Stephen Ministers are some of the most caring and compassionate people I know.

If you would like more information about this ministry or know of someone who might be interested in the ministry, please contact the clergy or one of the Stephen Leaders, Pat Barton, Dianne Silliman, or Michele Johnson.

“ST. MARK’S COLUMBUS OHIO SPIRITUAL SHARING” FACEBOOK GROUP
A group for members of Saint Mark’s who wish to communicate about spiritual matters outside of church time.
A Message from The Bishop
Regarding the Governor’s Executive Orders

July 5, 2020

Dear friends,

This weekend I sent a message to all our clergy and wardens asking them to abide by our governor’s decision to restore restrictions on a number of business and social activities in counties in Ohio that have been experiencing sharper increases in COVID-19 cases. I trust that this decision has been conveyed to you by your clergy and lay leadership. And although I continue to call for and respect the judgment of our clergy and lay leaders, my recommendation is to respect our governor’s executive orders, not only as they pertain to counties at risk but as they pertain to all of us. It does not matter whether we should or should not be exempt as religious organizations from state directives. Precisely because we are religious organizations, we should support these directives if they fairly and transparently promote the good of all.

I would like to say a few words about why I take Governor DeWine’s actions so seriously. The Episcopal Church has always been committed to the just claims of government. Therefore we don’t ignore the lawful directives of our elected leaders — even when we are exempted from them as religious institutions.

There is a long history of Christian reflection on church and state, beginning in the New Testament and continuing into our own day. St. Paul calls for respect for government as an imperfect gift to protect the innocent from wrongdoers. Jesus tells the religious leaders of his day to give the government its due. At the same time, the book of Revelation is a diatribe against empire and its dependence on accumulated wealth and slavery. Most of us are aware that for its first three centuries the church constituted a loyal but pacifist opposition to state-condoned violence. After becoming legal, Christianity continued to demand that government demonstrate restraint and humility in the exercise of its pursuit of order.

From then until now, an uneasy peace has marked the church’s relation to the state. Some strains of Christianity have rejected the authority of government altogether. But most have taught respect for government as an instrument for good. In modern times, Christians in democratic countries have consistently honored the authority of leaders elected to serve the common good. This has not precluded sharp criticism of the state. But such criticism, across the ecumenical spectrum, has been driven by the conviction that duly constituted government has a legitimate role to play in the just and fair balancing of public safety and private freedom.

When we are truest to what is best in our tradition, we Episcopalians are about honoring the state, even as we hold it to account. We have the opportunity to demonstrate this by supporting our governor in his efforts to help Ohio get the better of COVID-19. I thank all our congregations for your diligence, discipline and patience as we move through this time.

Blessings,

The Rt. Rev. Thomas E. Breidenthal
Bishop of Southern Ohio
Birthdays are not included in Saint Mark’s online version of this publication to ensure privacy of our parishioners.

FROM THE PARISH REGISTER

We offer condolences to the family of:
Martha Wheeler; longtime, active member of St Mark’s, who passed away June 23rd at the age of 96.

FROM THE PARISH REGISTER is a new printed project to enhance communication among parishioners. It comes from a long standing tradition in the Church of England where certain public records were officially recorded in the great ledgers of their parish church. You can sign up for weekly email updates about Saint Mark’s on our website www.saintmarkscolumbus.org, click on “Join Our Mailing List.”

PARISH RELATED NEWS

We celebrate the following good news:
On April 16th Ross Bagby’s niece Marlina Niezgoda married her fiancee Randal Fruth in a small, private ceremony.

We offer condolences to the family of:
Ross’s brother-in-law Bernie Dyck passed away on April 18th in Misericordia Hospital, Winnipeg Canada.

PARISH RELATED NEWS reprises the tradition at Saint Mark’s to share important information that may be of interest to members of the parish. If you know of the birth or marriage of someone related to the parish (but not a member as recorded in the parish register), a job change, retirement, achievement, student news, etc, we invite you to share it with us (and with the permission of the individuals involved, of course!) so we may pass along the good news. Information may be sent to Robbie Hurley at hurley.roberta@yahoo.com or to the Parish Office at 614-486-9452 or officemanager@saintmarkscolumbus.org.
Virtual gathering has caused St. Mark’s to be evermore dependent on technology. In light of social distance restrictions, Wednesday night programming and enrichment and ministry group meetings have continued via Zoom video conferencing. Significant time and energy has gone into the production and delivery of live broadcasts of Sunday services via the internet and telephone as well as to make the recordings available on-demand immediately following each service. To advance this effort, the “Open Hearts - Open Doors Task Force” formed a technology sub-committee co-chaired by St. Mark’s Director of Music, Matthew Bester, Junior Warden, Mark Drew, and includes Organist, Tyler Robertson, and parishioners Jim Keyes and Sam Slee. This committee meets regularly by email and Zoom to do our best to keep you reliably connected to Saint Mark’s. If at any time you find yourself in need of technology help or advice, please contact Melanie in the Parish Office and she will put you in touch with someone from the committee who will answer, or find the answer, to your questions.

The committee has worked hard to rapidly advance the church’s broadcast ability. Recent improvements include upgraded hardware for the wifi in the Nave, additions to the homepage to include an instructional video along with easier access to both the Facebook Live and Zoom feeds, improved sound quality, and improved broadcast stability and performance.

Which leads us to “The Case of the Hungry Squirrel.”

Broadcasting our services smoothly and reliably has met a with a number of technological snafus. The most perplexing of these was unpredictable drops in internet speed leading to instability in our live stream broadcast. This resulted in our live stream “stuttering” at times and even dropping offline completely one Sunday. Dave Yeager, Saint Mark’s longtime IT guru, realized the problems occurred during and after periods of heavy rain. So he arranged for our internet providers to replace the cabling, and in doing so the culprits of the caper were exposed: our cute (yet pesky) resident hungry squirrel population apparently find internet wiring tasty (see Suspect mugshot and Exhibit A, below). Over the winter our squirrel friends chewed through the cable’s protective sheath and exposed the wiring, causing it to malfunction when wet. We are happy to report that with new cabling, along with the updated wifi equipment, we now have the needed robust and reliable internet access in place. As for the squirrels, we welcome them. Just so long as they bring their own lunch!

Suspect: Hungry squirrel with appetite for high speed data

Exhibit A – Heavily chewed internet cabling

Facilities News

Thanks to generous donations, work is underway to install a butterfly garden near Noah’s Ark and an irrigation system to nourish the Eagle Scout project plantings on the Tremont Road side of the campus. The irrigation system will include a feature to minimize water consumption. Also, exterior painting that was approved late last fall will be scheduled to begin soon.
Please see the below message from Bishop Breidenthal, which was published on Thursday, July 2, in response to the latest guidance from the State of Ohio. This clarifies how the new color-coded system aligns with the previous guidance, from the Diocese of Southern Ohio, for phased re-gathering for in-person worship. Counties that fall into Levels 3 or 4 must remain in Phase One, with suspension of in-person worship. At those levels, a limited number of worship assistants may be present at the church service with appropriate social distancing.

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I hope this letter finds you well during this most turbulent of times. Governor DeWine unveiled a new color-coded warning system for the state of Ohio at a news conference this afternoon. It shows county-by-county hot spots as the coronavirus continues to spread across the state.

The new system displays the prevalence of the virus in each county, making it easier to implement additional closures or measures on a county-by-county basis. More information on how these levels and indicators work follows below.

In light of this new data, I have made the difficult but necessary decision that any of our congregations located in counties that fall within alert level 3 or 4 as defined by the state, should revert back to phase 1 as set out in our Phased Return to Increasing In-person Parish Life document. This means that no in-person services can take place in those specific counties.

This data should be reviewed on a weekly basis. Should your county go down to an alert level 2, then your leaders (clergy and vestry) will need to decide if/when to return to in-person services. Please use caution when making this decision. Staffing of your respective buildings should be reviewed in a similar light.

In addition, both Columbus and Dayton have issued orders requiring face masks to be worn whenever you are outside of your home. Cincinnati city council is meeting on Friday to vote on a similar order. We urge you to follow the orders applicable to your area.

State officials explained that there are seven different data indicators to determine the four alert levels. Each data indicator helps identify the risk factor for each county. Those seven factors are as follows:

- **NEW CASES PER CAPITA**: When the data show that a county has had an average of 50 cases per 100,000 people over a 2-week period, then that triggers a flag for an increasing case rate. Using this data means we are taking into account the population of each county when monitoring increases.

- **SUSTAINED INCREASE IN NEW CASES**: If the number of new cases in a county continually increases, then that’s another indicator of virus spread. A county will be flagged for meeting this indicator if the data show at least a five-day period of sustained new case growth.

- **PREVALENCE OF NON-CONGREGATE CASES**: Data showing more than 50% of new cases originating from non-congregate settings during at least one of the past three weeks will trigger a flag on this indicator.

- **SUSTAINED INCREASE IN ER VISITS**: ER data will show us the trend in the number of people who visit an emergency department with COVID-19 symptoms or who receive a COVID-19 diagnosis as a result of the visit. A county is flagged when there is an increase in such ER visits over a five-day period.
• **SUSTAINED INCREASE IN OUTPATIENT VISITS:** This data set looks at the number of people visiting outpatient settings, including telehealth appointments, with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 symptoms. A county is flagged when there is an increase over a five-day period.

• **SUSTAINED INCREASE IN NEW COVID-19 HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS:** When the numbers show at least a five-day period of sustained growth in the number of county residents with COVID-19 who are admitted to a hospital, then the county will be flagged for meeting this indicator.

• **ICU BED OCCUPANCY:** This indicator looks at regional data for both COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 use of ICU beds. A county is flagged for this indicator when the regional ICU occupancy goes above 80% for at least three of the last seven days.

Ohio’s new alert levels are as follows:

• **ALERT LEVEL 1 (YELLOW):** A county has triggered zero or one of the seven indicators, and there is active exposure and spread. Today, Ohio has 53 counties at Alert Level 1. The majority of these counties are seeing a moderate number of cases, according to the CDC’s definition.

• **ALERT LEVEL 2 (ORANGE):** A county has triggered two or three of the seven indicators and there is increased risk of exposure and spread. Ohio has 28 counties in this category. These counties are seeing cases that are growing in the community in the last two weeks.

• **ALERT LEVEL 3 (RED):** A county has triggered four or five of the seven indicators and there is very high exposure and spread. As of Thursday afternoon, seven counties are at Level 3 (Red) across Ohio. Those counties include Trumbull, Huron, Montgomery, Butler, Cuyahoga, Hamilton and Franklin. Risk is very high. Ohioans should limit activities as much as possible. Wear a mask when you go out.

• **ALERT LEVEL 4 (PURPLE):** A county has triggered six to seven of the indicators, and there is severe exposure and spread. Stay home as much as possible. No counties are currently at Level 4 (Purple).*

** Data WLWT & Ohio Department of Health

Blessings,

The Rt. Rev. Thomas E. Breidenthal
Bishop of Southern Ohio
Part of the Diocese of Southern Ohio, Saint Mark’s held its first worship service in 1951 in a converted Methodist church in Grandview. Ground was broken in 1953 for the Parish Hall (now the Education Building) where services were held until the current Nave and Sanctuary was completed in 1958. Office space in an adjacent building was purchased in 1989. Major renovations of the entire facility occurred in 2004 and 2008 creating a campus today that empowers Christ’s ministry within and beyond our parish.