

The Lion's Roar

St. Mark's Episcopal Church • Basking Ridge, NJ

Volume 60, Issue 12

December 1, 2009

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

140 S. Finley Avenue
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920
(908) 766-9058
(908) 766-9059 Fax
stmarks.br@verizon.net

Rector: The Rev. Richard M. C. Morley
Rectory: 908-340-4240

Organist: Lois Buesser
Music Director: Bill Corson
(908) 903-0702

Lion's Roar Editor:
E-mail: lionsroar@verizon.net

Services

Sundays

8:00 a.m. Holy Communion (Rite I)
9:00 a.m. J2A Program
10:00 a.m. Holy Communion (Rite II)
and Sunday School with Nursery Care

Wednesdays

9:00 a.m. Holy Communion (Rite II)
in the Chapel
(See enclosed calendar for variations
to weekly services.)

Parish Office Hours:

Monday through Thursday,
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Administrative Secretary:

Ann Millan (908) 766-9058

From the desk of the Reverend Richard M. C. Morley

Dear Friends:

"Why are my friends at the church down the street singing Christmas hymns in front of a decked out tree, and we're stuck singing these obscure 'Advent' hymns? Isn't it the Christmas Season?"

I've heard questions like this every year since I've been ordained. Such conversations bring back the bitter memory of a hotly contested conversation with my father one year about his anger at the Episcopal Church for 'taking Christmas out of the bulk of December.' For him, this was tantamount to faithlessness.

Sometimes I get worn down by the questions, and the wry looks, and the disappointment on people's faces. Sometimes I wonder if the Church shouldn't just change, make Advent a few Sundays earlier, and then begin Christmas a few weeks after the Mall does. (Of course, with the way things are going, Advent may then have to coincide with Halloween. . .)

One year, at a gathering of fellow clergy, one minister even suggested singing obscure, less well known Christmas carols to appease the naysayers. But, no. I'm going to stand firm. I'm not going to idly sit by while Walmart, Hallmark, and the local diner wage the War on Advent. We will fight - we MUST fight to keep the garland at bay, the nights un-silent, and the bells hushed from their jingling until the evening of the 24th.

OK, I've gone a little over the edge. But, I have a point. A good point: Advent is important. Vitally important. Spiritually important. And it is essential to a proper celebration of Christmas.

Advent is about preparing our hearts, souls, homes, and lives for the coming of Jesus. Advent is a season of preparation which hopes that spiritual preparedness leaks into the other seasons of our lives as well.

And, what could be more important than that? I mean don't you have a little preparing to do - preparing that doesn't involve shopping and decking, that is?

The interesting thing is that Advent is far less about preparing our lives for the coming of the Christ-child (though that's in there too), and much more about preparing our lives to receive him when he comes again. There's an old bumper sticker that reads: "Jesus is coming. Look busy." For a while I thought that it should be changed to "Jesus is coming. BE busy." But, then I remembered that if there's anything we have down-pat it's busyness. We're busy people all the time. We're veritable experts at 'busy.' The sticker should proclaim: Jesus is coming. Prepare your heart."

Those who commercialize Christmas do so to make money - and they prey on our well intentioned desires to feel good, warm, and fuzzy. But, such fuzziness melts away under the weight of needing to prepare our hearts for Jesus.

So, to quote from my favorite Christmas hymn (ironic, I know):
Let every heart prepare Him room.
And heaven and nature sing.

Blessed Advent,
The Rev. Rick
Morley, Rector

Walk To Bethlehem

The Walk to Bethlehem this year will be Dec 20th at 4pm starting at St. James up the street.

Each year we have this wonderful event in town where a parade of biblical figures go from one church to the next in a remake of the walk that Mary and Joseph took. The whole town is invited and there usually is a pretty good representation from all of our four churches. In each church there is scripture read by clergy and a musical presentation from each church music program in addition to traditional carols being sung by all.



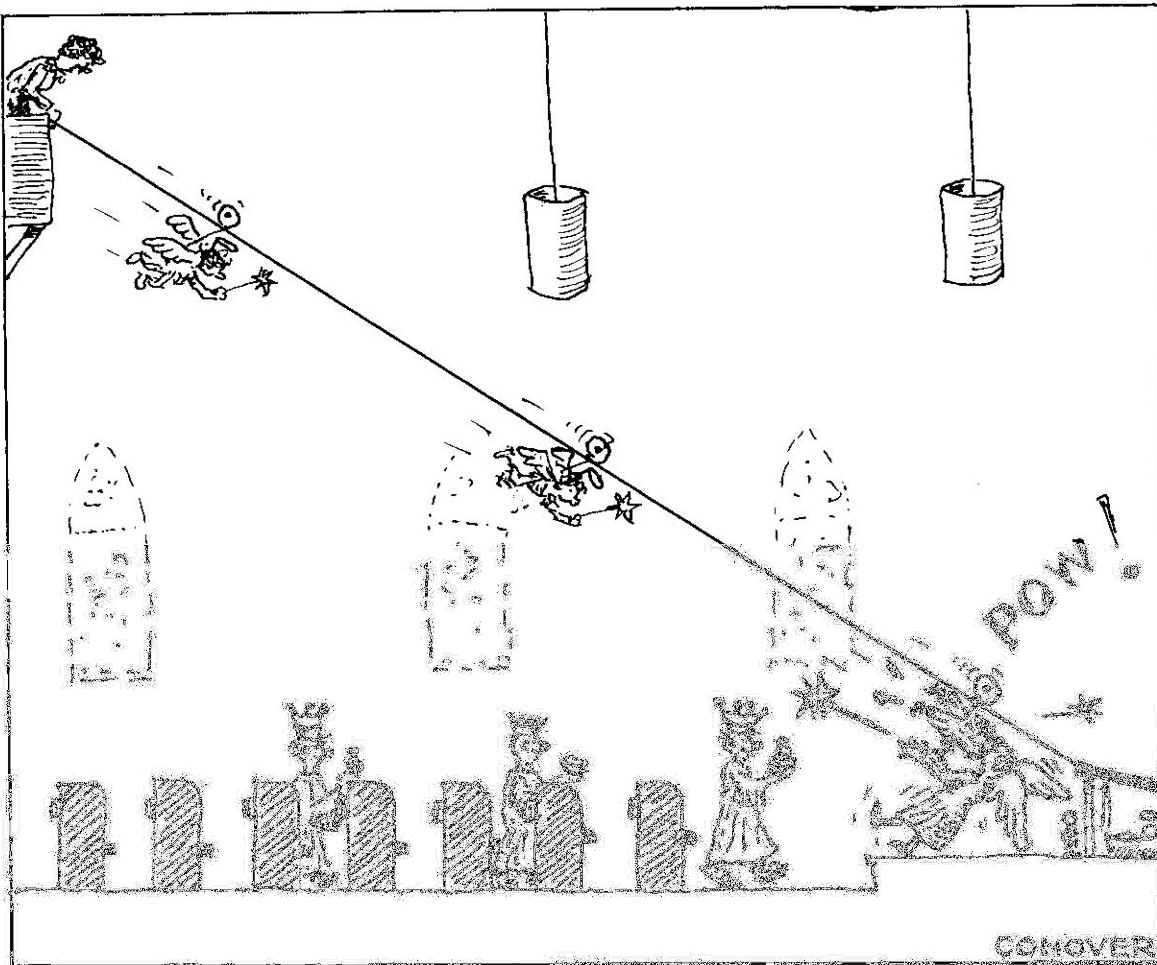
The Adult Forum: The Birth Stories

In our Thursday evening Bible studies we've learned that there are two stories of the creation in Genesis. Then we learned that there are two stories of the flood in Genesis. And, as we've looked at these story pairs we've noticed their differences and similarities, and we've even gotten a glimpse into each story's theological message.

Well. . . did you also know that there are two stories of Jesus' birth? There is one story in Matthew's Gospel, and another in Luke's Gospel. And, obviously they are both familiar, and both contain familiar elements – but they are also quite different, and each elicit a different (and strangely similar) theological message.

We're going to be examining these stories at the Adult Forum on Sunday mornings in Post Chapel, from 9:15-9:45. Come and join us! *Fr. Rick Morley, Rector*

LAUGHTER IN THE PEWS



Early rehearsals for the Creche Service are going well. Libby has a novel plan to make the pre-schooler angels more realistic but still has some work to do on the braking system.

SMAFTS

Save that date! January 24th is the fourth SMAFTS! (St Mark's Annual Family Talent show); a Sunday evening full of talent plus a pot-luck supper.

William C. Corson

Bulletin Submissions

Announcements to be included in the weekly bulletin should reach the office no later than Wednesday, 2pm

Saint Mark's Stewardship Stop

At the time of this writing we, the people of St. Mark's, have just celebrated Harvest Sunday. The day in which we are celebrating all the wonderful things the Lord has given us. It is also a time to show our thankfulness to the Lord by sharing our financial treasures.

I am happy to report that we are well on our way to reaching our financial goal. Only a week into the "active" stewardship campaign, (keep in mind these articles are written 2-3 weeks prior to being published) we have raised over half of our goal. Kudos to each and every one of you who have turned in your pledge cards. There is great enthusiasm and much hopefulness that we WILL reach our financial goal of \$250,000. Once we have reached that goal we can prepare and share St. Mark's expectations for the coming year, 2010.

I recently attended a statewide fundraising conference where I was surrounded by the best of the best in the field. My day began with one well known fundraising advocate, Dr. Jerold Panas engaging us in the art of asking for money. Enthusiasm was the focus – to show lively interest, as the dictionary explains it. However Dr. Panas was more interested in teaching us the Greek origin of the word – énthous – having a god within. The group went on to learn that in order to be successful in the ask there are two intertwined components – the one asking must possess enthusiasm for the cause as well as the person being asked.

We, the family of St. Mark's, are overflowing with enthusiasm. This is evident in everything we do, be it within or beyond our church walls.

As we transition into the season of Advent, a time of preparation and expectation, on behalf of the Vestry, thank you for your never ending enthusiasm – having God within.

Prayerful and in Peace,

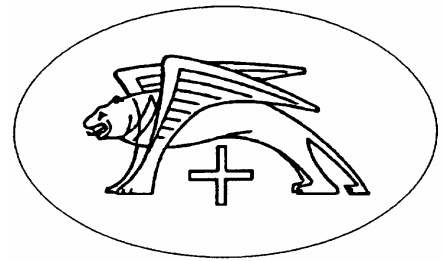
Dawn K. Knill, CFRE
Stewardship Chairperson

Bible Study Testimony

Did you know there are 2 creation stories? I didn't. Do you know there are 2 flood stories melded together? I didn't. Why were men's life span 900 years before God declared the life span of men will be no longer than 120 years?

Come to Bible study for fun and enlightenment. There are not enough of us participating in this spiritual adventure. If the time is a problem, speak to Father Rick and maybe a better time can be arranged.

Carole Pasquale



2009 Vestry

- Rector**
The Rev. Richard M.C. Morley
- Senior Warden**
Buck Kirch 647-3599
- Junior Warden**
Mary Urbas 630-9012
- Grounds**
Tom Defeo 604-2466
- Buildings**
Bruce Walker 604-9151
- Outreach**
Bill Schmidt 604-0535
- Finance**
Teri Passarello 696-0375
- Stewardship**
Dawn Knill 630-9116
- Worship**
Marilyn Lyga 766-5880
- Christian Education**
Paige Pioppi 604-4232
- Events**
Jim Lunny 903-0134
- Office/Communications**
Jim Martucci 604-2256
- Membership**
Jackie Kahle 766-0502
- Fellowship**
Anne Post 766-6621

Non-Vestry Positions:

- Warden Emeritus**
Jim Nishimura 647-5290
- Treasurer**
Bill Coffin 766-0158
- Recording Treasurers**
Doug Post 766-6621
Margaret Murphy 766-4126

Everyone is invited to participate in the commission meetings. Please contact the vestry representative for more information.

Dress For Success

We want to thank everyone who participated in the Dress For Success program this year.

This program is part of St. Mark's community outreach effort. We collect from both the parishioners and employees from Maser Consulting, where Joe works .

This year we were able to deliver 350 items of dress clothing to Dress For Success in Jersey City. As you can imagine with the current economy there are many out-of-work individuals this year who will benefit from the donated clothes. The staff at Dress for Success was extremely appreciative and thanked us profusely for the donated items.

Thanks again for your generosity!
Joe and Lorri Layton



Visits

Any "senior" members of the congregation who might like visits or who might need a ride or meals, please contact Nancy Brangaccio at 908-766-2820 or phone the office or Father Rick.

To the St. Mark's Episcopal Church family,

Food For the Poor wishes to thank you for the welcome you extended to Father Chesterman on his recent visit to your parish.

On behalf of our less fortunate brothers and sister of Latin America and the Caribbean, we thank you for having shared in their lives. They, and you, are blessed by your generosity.

In Christ,
The Food For the Poor Family

Fellowship

Come to the FEAST -- because the holiday rush is almost upon us, we'll be starting the groups up again in January. If you participated in the last round, and wish to continue, do nothing. (I've got your name) If you'd like to join the FEAST, give me a call and I'll add your name to the mix. If you'd rather opt out this round let me know that too. Here's how it works: I will take all the names of participants, mix them up and arrange into small groups. It's up to each group to figure out how they will meet -- for brunch, lunch, dinner, with or without children. Hosts rotate and there's no set number of meals you have to have. Call or email me with any questions.

annesandrapost@gmail.com Anne Post: (908) 766-6621

Coffee Hour

Last but not least I'll remind you that coffee hour is fun for everyone. There is a beautiful new 2010 sign-up sheet posted on the narthex bulletin board. Please choose a week and write in your name. If you need a partner, I'll be glad to partner with you. There are instruction sheets right next to the bulletin board, as well as on our St. Mark's website. I'm at church most Sunday's and I'm happy to walk you through set-up.

Thank you, thank you to everyone who has volunteered to help with Fellowship events this past year, especially Kay Vallario, Nancy Wojnar, Sharon DeFeo and Carol DeCoste.

Fellowship Chair, Anne Post

Open House at the Rectory following the *Walk to Bethlehem*

Come and join the Morley's for some hot chocolate, cookies, and other Christmas goodies at the rectory, following the Walk to Bethlehem! Drop in anytime from 4-7, and stay for as long as you're able.

December



Birthdays

- Dec 1 Robert Les
Bill Hubert
- Dec 3 Peter Gilbert
- Dec 5 Julia West
Michaela Williams
- Dec 6 Jacob Giordano
Nicholas Giordano
Noyoze Ewaka
- Dec 8 Jennifer Moore
- Dec 9 Eric Barkhorn
Nora Barrett
- Dec 10 Anne Kuehne
- Dec 11 Richard Davis
- Dec 12 Joanne Woolford
- Dec 13 Jessie Barkhorn
- Dec 14 Caroline Coffin
Christy Kenechaud
- Dec 17 Lisa Lehlehicioglu
- Dec 18 Ann Rosenblum
Thomas Woodford
- Dec 19 Sean Gogerty
- Dec 20 Lynn Tipson
- Dec 22 Bette Sisto
Trevor Tuthill
- Dec 23 Tim Baumgarten
- Dec 26 Elizabeth Weaver
- Dec 27 Sarah Rose
- Dec 29 Mattie Morley
Bryan Knill
Theresa Nishimura
- Dec 30 Jenifer Behrins
Beth Lohner
Phillip Saccone
Pamela Thwaite
- Dec 31 Rob Brangaccio
Meg Jewson

Anniversaries

- 12 -7 Tim & Nancy Opremcak
- 12-15 Jim & Paige Pioppi
- 12-28 Bill & Lauran Corson
- 12-29 David & Janet Day

Women of St. Mark's Christmas Gathering



You're Invited



Time: 6:30 p.m.
 Date: Thursday, 12/10
 Place: Sharon DeFeo's
 Christmas Museum

For: Hors d'oeuvres & dessert

Sign-up sheet in the Narthex
 or call Carol DeCoste, 766-0408.
 Fellowship & Fun for one & all!

Merry Christmas!

Just a thought...

Next time you are on your way to coffee hour, look around and see if there's someone new to St. Mark's who might like a friend to walk up with.

You can help out the greeters on Sunday mornings by saying your name when you walk up to the table to get your nametag. Sometimes it's hard to keep everyone straight when there is a crowd around the table and we've only had one cup of coffee!

Christmas Music

Christmas is always special but it becomes more so with wonderful music from our choirs. At 4:30pm, before the 5pm Christmas Eve service and at 10:30pm, before the 11pm service, the bell choir and adult choir soloists will be playing and singing many pieces of classical Christmas music that you are sure to enjoy. They also will be leading the entire congregation in a carol medley that Lois and Bill put together. So mark your calendars to come early on Christmas Eve!
 William C. Corson
 Director of Music

Advent Brunch

Join us for fellowship and good food, Sunday, Dec 6th after the 10am service. The *Ladies of the Kitchen* will be cooking delicious French toast & sausage. Father Rick and the *Men of the Kitchen* will be "maning" omelet stations. Please bring a casserole for 8-10 or rolls/pastries.
 Sign up sheet in the Narthex or call Carol DeCoste, 766-0408.

Warden's Corner:

The Sunday before Thanksgiving, I was at the Congregation B'nai Israel, to co-host the annual Blood drive. Upon entering their new wing, there was a sign posted announcing their celebration in February 2010 for twenty years. Considering in that 20 year history...the first years were spent at St. Mark's, takes my breath away. I am very proud of the diverse work that we have accomplished here, and wanted once again to thank all of you. Around noon, I returned to St. Mark's...and it was with amazement, I saw overflowing buckets of frozen turkeys (and trust me, frozen turkeys weigh a lot!!), we had 18 turkeys....combined with Congregation B'nai Israel, we have had our most successful drive to date. Thank you to all who donated...whether it be blood or turkeys...

As a foot note, at our Special Meeting this past fall, there was great discussion around creating a smaller, yet more nimble vestry commission of 9. One concern raised was whether or not we'd be asking any current vestry members for the resignation. The answer was no, between normal rotation of 1/3 of the vestry each year and resignations of vestry members, we will be presenting to St. Mark's a full slate: 3 nominees for Vestry Positions, a Junior Warden and 2 representatives for Conventions. If there is any interest, please reach out to Jackie Kahle.

December brings Advent, and many opportunities at St. Marks' and beautiful celebrations... Buck and I want to wish all our St. Mark's families a very Blessed and Merry Christmas.

Mary Urbas & Buck Kirch

Finance Report as of October 31, 2009 Year to Date

Represented below is a summary of St. Mark's operating income statement.

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>
Pledges	167,194	184,646	-17,452
Other Donations	<u>80,911</u>	<u>74,163</u>	<u>-6,748</u>
Operating Income	248,105	258,809	-10,704
Operating Expenses	<u>252,015</u>	<u>277,880</u>	<u>-25,864</u>
Net Operating Income	(\$3,911)	(\$19,070)	\$15,160

October year-to-date operating income results appear to be below budget by 4% but the income line includes an additional \$12,000 of income which will be moved to replenish the Chittick Fund. Therefore, Operating Income is closer to \$236,000. Last year at this time, the equivalent Operating Income was \$268,000. Year-to-date Pledge amounts were \$167,194 and are 9% below budget year-to-date. Year-to-date 2008 we were 6% above budget so we still have some work to do on getting the 2009 pledges collected.

We now have the full results for September Song – after expenses we netted \$16,369. As mentioned above \$12,000 will be moved to the Chittick Fund. We are anticipating another successful dinner auction.

Year-to-date operating expenses are coming in under budget by 8% due to the postponement of making two of our \$7500 Diocesan Fair Share payments. We are planning on making one \$7500 payment in November. We were over budget in two areas: postage and special printing as well as building maintenance. However, we are still below budget year to date. We do expect building and grounds expenses to increase.

Net operating income to date appears to be a negative \$3,911 compared to a budget of negative \$19,070. After removing \$12,000 for September Song, net operating income is closer to a negative \$16,000. The YTD budget includes two \$7500 fair share payments which we have not yet paid out. For comparative purposes, the adjusted YTD budget without the fair share payments would be a negative \$4,000 thus widening the year-to-date gap by \$12,000.

By now you have probably received your 2010 Stewardship Pledge card. As noted above, we are running at a loss. To avoid this situation in 2010, we need to rely on increased pledge commitments to cover St. Mark's operating costs. When you fill in your Pledge cards, think of the benefits you receive from being part of St. Mark's. Thanks to those who have already sent in your pledges and thanks to those who continue to contribute to all the St. Mark's funds and events.

- Teri Passarello

St. Mark's 2009 Crèche Service Registration

It's hard to believe, but Christmas is just around the corner! As this joyous season approaches, we are planning our annual **Crèche Service**, which will be held on **Sunday, December 20th** at the 10:00 AM service. If you and/or your child(ren) would like to participate, please fill in the form below and return it **NO LATER THAN Sunday, December 6th**. Children age 3 and up are welcome to participate. Please ensure that young children will not be afraid to walk down the aisle (we will not force any children to walk down the aisle). You will be notified of the part sometime in December.

A mandatory practice for all participants will be held on Saturday morning, December 19th. Please arrive promptly at 9:00 am. It is very **important that everyone attend**, so please plan your schedules accordingly. If you have any questions, please email Libby West at libbyjwest@msn.com.

We need new committee members for the Crèche Service. This is not a large time commitment but it is extremely rewarding. If you would like to be a member of the Committee please let me know at the above email. It is a lot of fun.

Please return the completed form to the box provided in the Narthex, the Church office or via email.

Thank you,
Crèche Service committee

.....

Child's Name: _____ **Age/Grade** _____
Parent's Name: _____ **Phone #:** _____

- _____ **I would like to be a reader (grades 6th through 12th)**
_____ **I would like to present a Crèche figure (Ages 4 and Up)**
_____ **I would like to be a junior usher (grades 5th and up)**
_____ **I would like to be a present collector (grades 3rd and up)**
_____ **I would like to be a Lamb**
_____ **I would like to be a Donkey**
_____ **I would like to be an Angel**
_____ **I would like to be a Shepherd**
_____ **I would like to carry a Star**
_____ **Parent is available to help at practices or during the service**
_____ **Parent is available to help sew costumes**
_____ **Child Participated last year as** _____
_____ **My child will sing in the Children's choir/choir**

Christmas Cards

When doing your Christmas cards this year, take one card and send it to this address. If everyone sends one card, think of how many cards these wonderful special people who have sacrificed so much would get.

A Recovering American Soldier
c/ oWalter Reed Army Medical Center
6900 Georgia Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20307-5001

Jack's Weekly Food Bank Report

CONGRATULATIONS! For the last two weeks the Food Bank Barrel has been overflowing. Keep up the great work. The cold weather brings an increasing demand for food. Most needed are canned meats and Parmalat.

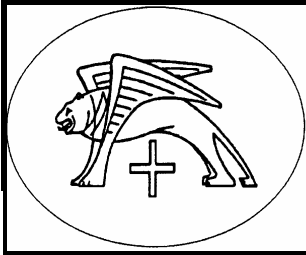
Monetary donations to the Food Bank Network of Somerset County are greatly appreciated. Checks may be placed in the Sunday collection plate or left in the Church Office.

St. Mark's Outreach for December 2009



- 1. Every Week, Jack's Weekly Food Program:** The continuing project sponsored by Jack Smythe in response to the *increased demand for food by 30%* over last year in central NJ including Somerset County. He is asking everyone to please bring a can or item of food to church each Sunday (or a bag of food once a month). All items are welcomed... **most in need right now are canned meats like tuna, hearty soups, meals in a can, or peanut butter.**
- 2. Children's Clothes for the Creche Service, December 20:** Please remember to bring a wrapped gift of a child's clothing item to the Creche Service on December 20., and please indicate on the outside of the gift box whether the item is for a girl or boy or either and the size. If you would like to help, please contact Paige or Jim Pioppi at 908.604.4232.
- 3. Christmas Ham Drive, December 20:** Marilyn Lyga and Bev Moore request that you also bring a ham to the Creche Service. Any type is OK such as canned, deboned, etc. The most preferred is a butt Ham.
- 4. Soup Kitchen in Morristown, December 30:** Come join in on the fun in preparing a meal item or helping to serve. Help is always needed and appreciated. Please call Kit McLaughlan at 908.221.1858.
- 5. Appalachian Service Project:** Youth Group project, includes youth 14 years and older. Please contact Martha Heiner at 908.766.0868 or John Lyga at 908.766.5880 for details.
- 6. Seamen's Institute, Knitters Needed for Hats and Scarves:** The new materials have arrived. Help keep the sailors warm on the high seas by calling Anne Post, 908.766.6621.
- 7. Prison Outreach Program:** If interested, please contact Father Rick at 908.766.9058.

For Outreach contact Bill Schmidt at 908.580.1259 or billprag@optonline.net



December 2009

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 <i>Caffeinated Theology, 7pm</i>	2 <i>9am Chapel</i>	3 <i>Ridge Oak, 10am Fellowship Village</i> <i>Prayer Exploration, 6:30pm Bible Study, 7pm</i>	4	5
6 <i>Birth Narra- tive @ 9:15</i> <u><i>Advent II</i></u> <i>8am Rite I 10am Rite II</i> <i>Advent Brunch</i>	7	8 <i>Caffeinated Theology, 7pm</i>	9 <i>9am Chapel</i>	10 <i>Prayer Exploration, 6:30pm Bible Study, 7pm</i> <i>Women's Group, 6:30</i>	11	12 <i>Trip to Cloisters in NYC</i>
13 <i>Birth Narrative @ 9:15</i> <u><i>Advent III</i></u> <i>8am Rite I 10am Rite II</i>	14 <i>Finance Meeting</i>	15	16 <i>9am Chapel</i>	17	18	19
20 <i>Birth Nar- rative @ 9:15</i> <u><i>Advent IV</i></u> <i>8am Rite I Crèche Service, 10am Walk to Beth- lehem, 4pm</i>	21 <i>Vestry Mtg 6:30</i>	22	23 <i>9am Chapel</i>	24 <i>Christmas Services: 5pm 11pm</i>	25 <i>Merry Christmas</i> 	26
27 <i>8am Rite I 10am Rite II</i>	28	29	30 <i>Soup Kitchen</i>	31	The office will be closed through January 3, 2010 Happy Holidays!	

The Lion's Roar

Date	Layreaders	Greeters	Ushers
12/06/2009	<i>2nd Sunday of Advent</i>		
8:00 a.m. (HC)	L&Ch D. Moore		J. Smythe
10:00 a.m. (HC)	L&Ch ML Schmidt	M. Ahalt	J. Martucci
	P&Ch Wm Schmidt	K. Sacchi McLaughlan	J. Kahle
	LR 2 L. West		
12/13/2009	<i>3rd Sunday of Advent</i>		
8:00 a.m. (HC)	L&Ch D. Post		J. DeCoste
10:00 a.m. (HC)	L&Ch Wm Schmidt	D. Knill	J. Layton
	P&Ch ML Schmidt	N. Brangaccio	L. Rose
	LR 2 L. Corson		
12/20/2009	<i>Crèche Service</i>		
8:00 a.m. (HC)	L&Ch D. Moore		J. Wojnar
10:00 a.m. (HC)	L&Ch N/A	M. Schmidt	J. Kahle
	P&Ch N/A	A. Wilmer	B. Walker
12/24/09	<i>Xmas Eve Services</i>		
4:30 p.m. <i>Music</i>	L&Ch D. Knill		T. DeFeo
5:00 p.m. (HC)	P&Ch C. Knill	N. Wojnar	T. Opremcak
10:30 p.m. <i>Music</i>	L&Ch R. Conover		J. Martucci
11:00 p.m. (HC)	P&Ch J. Kahle	J. Kahle	L. Rose
12/27/09	<i>1st Sunday after Xmas</i>		
8:00 a.m. (HC)	L&Ch D. Post		H. Woods
10:00 a.m. (HC)	L&Ch R. Conover	A. Post	J. Layton
	P&Ch J. Wyatt	A. Millan	B. Walker
	LR 2 S. Pasquale		