



THE  
**LION'S MARK**

NEWSLETTER FOR SAINT MARK'S CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA

A COMMUNITY THAT GATHERS IN FAITH, SERVES IN LOVE, AND PROCLAIMS HOPE, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

## There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God

FATHER SEAN MULLEN



**T**he history of Saint Mark's recounts that the church was built on "made ground," that is, an area of wet land that has been made dry by human intervention, usually by adding "fill." Up until the late nineteenth century or later, the streets of Philadelphia were crossed by creeks and streams, and dotted with marshland. Somewhere, I seem to have heard that a stream still runs underground below 16th Street, though I'm not sure that's true. In 1907 the parish undertook a major project to dig down to bedrock and install a surer foundation because the footings that the pillars of the church stand on had sunk several inches, and the church floor had become very uneven, among other things. A river may run through the streets of the New Jerusalem, but if it runs underneath your building in Philadelphia, it might cause problems!

And yet, water is as essential to the literal and spiritual landscape of the church as it is to any natural ecosystem in which life can be supported. During Lent we always endure a self-imposed drought of a kind. We empty the Font of water and put its heavy brass cover on it; and we empty the holy water stoups that are found near every entrance to the church. The water in those stoups is meant to provide a silent, tactile reminder of our baptism, by which we became members of the Body of Christ. For two years now, we have kept those stoups empty. For a long time, earlier in the pandemic, we emptied the Font, too, even when it was not Lent. We were being careful not to provide too many opportunities to spread

the virus that has caused this pandemic. And so, we endured a longer than usual drought.

It's all too clear that the pandemic, while waning, is not yet over. But it's also becoming clear that we should, perhaps not endure a self-imposed drought any longer. Literally, this means that on Easter this year, we will not only fill the font with water for baptisms at the Great Vigil, we will also fill up all the holy water stoups—at every entrance to the church—so we can remind ourselves repeatedly of our baptism, coming and going.

Symbolically, the reminder that the drought is over is a concise expression of our faith. What does it mean to believe in Jesus? It means that we believe that every drought will come to an end; that when life has become parched and stultifying, refreshment will come; that when the world around us has dried up and seems headed only toward death, soon water will flow. Christian faith does not promise a life without drought: it promises that refreshment will come!

I rather like the idea that a stream might run somewhere nearby beneath Saint Mark's. I find the idea appealing that if we dug down, we'd hit water. Part of me wishes we could connect the Font to such a stream, and fill it with water that's already flowing somewhere under our feet—though chances are such water might need a bit of filtration to clean it up! The symbolic importance of water in the church conveys an important message, and that we have lived too long without it.

But whether or not there is a secret stream hidden beneath our streets, in Christ we can be sure that every drought will come to an end, including the droughts of pandemic disease, warfare, sickness, racism, and injustice.

This Eastertide, take note of the little stoups of holy water at each entrance of the church when you come and go, and use the water in them to remind you of your own baptism. With baptism, Jesus gave you a promise that when there is drought in your life, refreshment will come! Sometimes this refreshment is entirely interior: a refreshment of the spirit that allows us to find the strength to go on. Sometimes we find refreshment in community—or church, or family, or friends. And sometimes we find refreshment in the world around us—maybe in an actual stream, or at the beach, or as we walk by the Font, dip our fingers in, and make the sign of the Cross with a drop or two of water.

Remember, droughts don't happen in the desert, where there was never meant to be much water in the first place. Droughts happen in places where there ought to be water but there is none. There ought to be water at Saint Mark's, there ought to be refreshment. I don't know whether there is a stream that still flows underground nearby or not, but there ought to be. And even if there isn't, there will be water at every door to the church to remind us that with Christ every drought comes to an end, and the water flows, and refreshment comes!

# UPCOMING EVENTS

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## MAY

- 15 4 p.m.—Saint Mark's Singers Concert: Songs of Mary
- 26 7 p.m.—Choral High Mass on Ascension Day
- 30 Parish Office Closed  
*Low Mass at 10 a.m.*

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## JUNE

- 5 4 p.m.—Solemn Evensong & Benediction on Pentecost
- 11 Parish Picnic  
*Stay tuned for details*
- 13 Parish Election Ballots Due
- 20-24 Camp Mustard Seed

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## JULY

- 4 Parish Office Closed  
*Low Mass at 10 a.m.*
- 25-29 Summer Choir Camp



Sunday  
May 15  
4 p.m.

# MUSIC AT SAINT MARK'S

ROBERT MCCORMICK

Mid-Lent, Philadelphia ended its indoor mask mandate, allowing the adults in our choirs to rehearse and sing unmasked (if they desired). For them and for me, this was a true gift; I have remarked to many that I fear our singers did so well singing in masks that they made it seem easy, as if it was no big deal! I can vouch that singing in masks is in fact extremely difficult and tiring, and requires singers who spent years developing healthy vocal technique to make uncomfortable adaptations in order to project and sustain sound. Our Boy & Girl Choristers have continued to rehearse and sing masked, as Covid continues to spread in schools. For them, too, it's no easy task, so I am grateful to all our singers for all they have done during the pandemic.

Regardless of the status of masking, Eastertide is one of my favorite seasons of the church year, so full of resurrection joy. Perhaps my favorite feast day (after Easter and Christmas, of course) is Ascension Day, forty days after Easter. There is much marvelous choral music and many great hymns for this feast, possibly explaining my affection for it. The liturgical choral season concludes with Pentecost (which is the last day for the Boys & Girls before their summer break), Trinity Sunday, and Corpus Christi.

Elsewhere in this issue you may read about the spring concert of the Saint Mark's Singers. I am tremendously proud of them and of Bryan Dunnewald for a tremendous first year. Bryan will leave that new choir in terrific shape for his successor.

On the subject of Bryan's successor, just after Easter news will have been shared of the appointment of Dr. Thomas Gaynor as Assistant Organist & Choirmaster. Thomas will take up

his duties on August 1, a seamless transition after Bryan's last day on July 31 (stay tuned for further details on how we will say farewell and thank you to

Bryan). Thomas is a native of New Zealand, where he grew up in the Anglican choral tradition (and his grandmother is an Anglican priest). He moved to the U.S. nearly a decade ago to study for his master's and doctoral degrees at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. He has won first prize in not one, but four, international organ competitions! He impressed us all during his interviews with his talent and warm personality. He is also a gifted choir trainer and a faithful churchgoer, and all of us will benefit from his work among us. Later in the summer or early fall, we will share a more fulsome introduction to Thomas Gaynor.

The last week of July (25-29) brings our annual Summer Choir Camp, divided into Schola (ages 3-7) and the Choir (ages 8 and up, with our Choristers at the core). This year we will return to our previous pattern of a full day's activities for the older group. If you know children of any age who may be interested, please speak to me or to Mother Frazier. I look forward to seeing you soon and often!





## SUMMER AT CAMP MUSTARD SEED

MOTHER BRIT FRAZIER

Among the many happy gifts of the Easter season, one particular joy is the approach of summer. The air is finally feeling milder, the trees around Rittenhouse Square are full of blooms, and exciting summer plans are in the works for Family Ministries at Saint Mark's. Last summer, of course, it seemed that the whims of the pandemic shifted our capabilities from month to month. Guidelines and safety precautions changed frequently, and our families still waited on word about vaccines for children. But one thing seemed clear: it was—as it always has been—a good idea to spend time outdoors. And so Camp Mustard Seed was born.

Last year, some of our Saint Mark's kids headed up to Grumblethorpe Mansion in Germantown on six consecutive Thursdays in June and July. We sang together. We made crafts. We learned about wildlife and sustainability from gifted educators who tend the Grumblethorpe urban farm. In a season of uncertainty, we relished the graces of those happy Thursdays—a little slice of “normal” summer life after all we'd been through together that past year.

We are still navigating pandemic questions this year, but it remains a great blessing to spend time outdoors. This year, Camp Mustard Seed is back with even more exciting opportunities for learning and exploring. This year, our campers will have the benefit of spending a

full week together sharing in the fun. From Monday, June 20 through Friday, June 24, kids ages 6—13 are warmly invited to join us at Grumblethorpe in Germantown for a second season of adventure. Registration is open to all Saint Mark's families, and also to friends, cousins, neighbors, schoolmates, and anyone looking for summer programming that includes nature, friendship, faith, and good fun.

Last summer, a highlight of camp was certainly the day we learned about gardening and cooking. We explored a working herb garden and harvested plants for making bread, soup, and tea. We planted our own seeds, and we learned together about how water, sunlight, and other environmental factors help all of our herbs, fruits, and vegetables to grow. Kids made their own loaves of bread, and we later used some of this homemade bread for communion at the outdoor Mass we celebrated each Thursday before lunch. God provides so many gifts for us in nature, and it was illuminating to see kids exploring their own role in caring for the earth and sharing in its abundance. We will be doing a bit more cooking and planting this summer!

We can't mention Camp Mustard Seed without mentioning games. Have you ever played hotdog tag? Or raced boats made from recycled milk jugs? Grumblethorpe Mansion is blessed with two acres of land, and the areas not reserved for growing and seeding are perfect for a round of Nerf tag. There are so many things to look forward to together this summer, and if you know children ages 6-13, let them know that they are welcome at Mustard Seed!



# NEIGHBOR *Care*

FATHER STEPHEN MOORE

Across the parish Neighbor Care clusters meet most weeks—seven engaged and vibrant communities—within-a-community—each led to meet the abiding call of our faith to care, pray and share.

And, invariably, the conversation turns to how our world has become more precarious—the COVID pandemic, the war in Ukraine and its possible longterm implications, rising prices and flat wages, the effects of global warming, and our deep-seated anxieties about our governments and major corporations. Each in their own way are all eroding our inner being. These are the things people have been talking about whenever Neighbor Care gathers.

In all the circumstances of life, we are invited to pray. But I wonder whether we know how to pray well in times of crisis. One possible reason for this difficulty is that we are more familiar with the language of blessings and have a limited range of prayers of despair, anguish, and protest.

Br. Charles, an Australian Franciscan, writes on his blog: “This limitation of ours is not reflected in the Psalms of the Bible. There we find the language of honesty—“I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears” (Ps 6:6); the language of plight and frustration—“How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?” (Ps. 13:1); the language of demand—“Rise up. O Lord them, overthrow them! By your sword deliver my life from the wicked” (Ps 17:13); the language of escape—“I would fly away and be at rest; truly, I would flee far away” (Ps 55:6); the language

of questioning God’s justice—“For I was envious of the arrogant; I saw the prosperity of the wicked... They are not in trouble as others are... They scoff and speak with malice; loftily they threaten oppression” (Ps 73:3,5,8); and the language of judgement—“O Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked exult? (Ps 94:3).”

But any fear that may be felt over current and recent hostile circumstances is not inhibiting the clusters from responding positively to the call to engage.

Center City North (co-led by Bill and Zita Kreindler) brought their cluster together just before Holy Week to talk about love and forgiveness, a conversation which developed into a soul-searching examination of the demands of ‘loving your enemy.’ Elena Van Stee (Schuykill) hosted a lively discussion before Easter over a potluck dinner (which she holds each month) based on a favorite quotation from a poem, song, play, story, article, or letter, while during Lent both the Far Flung and Franklin clusters (led by Isabelle Benton and Aileen White, and Kevin Hook, respectively) each mustered their neighborhoods to share Compline.

Davis Dure, who leads the Northwest Philly cluster, sustains a prayer cycle in which each member is the focus of intentional prayer on one day a month. In addition, a parishioner in the group is coordinating dinners for an unwell neighbor. At Fairmount, its two leaders—Barbara Mische and Anna Marchini—have organized neighborhood functions hosted by parishioners, and in Southwest Philly, Ted and John Schmiechen are planning five post-Easter dinners and events.

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# 10 A.M. FORUM

For the final weeks of the Sunday Forum until summer we'll be meeting in person in the Parish Hall. Help yourself to a cup of coffee, meet friends, and be part of a deeper conversation about the faith we share and the ways we live it out.

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## MAY 8-29: POETRY AND THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

This four-week series will survey some of the ways that the feast days of the church year helped to shape the poetry of England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Come learn about favorites like Donne, Herbert, and Milton as well as names you may not have heard before.

## JUNE 5: THREE GREAT FEASTS OF THE CHURCH: PENTECOST

We'll talk about the biblical roots of this feast day and the traditions that have shaped our observance of the Fifty Days of Easter. And we'll talk about the Holy Spirit, who gets scant theological attention from the church.

## JUNE 12: THREE GREAT FEASTS OF THE CHURCH: TRINITY SUNDAY

Why does the Trinity require a special Sunday? Why do preachers fear this day? Learn the history of this feast along with a discussion of trinitarian faith and worship.

## JUNE 19: THREE GREAT FEASTS OF THE CHURCH: CORPUS CHRISTI

This very Catholic feast day has an uneasy relationship to the liturgical calendar of the Episcopal Church. Come be part of a discussion of its origins and the forms of worship that we practice in relation to the Eucharist.

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# BELL TOWER BROWNSTONE BLUES

FATHER SEAN MULLEN

Since January, a protective sidewalk shed has been set up at the base of the bell tower, and scaffolding around the south facade of the Lady Chapel. Perhaps you are wondering why.

A city ordinance requires periodic inspection of tall buildings or buildings with tall appurtenances, like a bell tower. In December we arranged for an inspection of the bell tower up close for the first time in several decades, there being no easy or inexpensive way to get up close for a look. We expected to find some need for repair, and we had anticipated spending up to \$70,000 for the inspection and repairs we hoped to do at the same time.

Brownstone tends to deteriorate over time in several predictable ways, and all masonry buildings as old as ours need ongoing maintenance, so it's not a surprise, per se, that the tower needs some work. It has been a surprise, however, to discover the extent of the work that we think will be required on the bell tower, which had its last program of restoration thirty years ago. In that time, the tower has withstood thirty years of time and weather, an earthquake, and a year's worth of vibration during hotel construction just behind the church. While the tower is structurally sound, the amount of spalling, delaminating, broken, or loose stone or mortar poses a danger, should any of that material fall to the ground. And over time, deteriorating conditions could lead to structural compromise, if not attended to.

Our architects at John Milner Architects worked with the engineers and masons who inspected the tower, and used information gathered over nearly fifteen years of work with us, including laser scan-derived

drawings of the building, and extensive experience with previous campaigns of brownstone restoration at Saint Mark's, to come up with a broad estimate of how much work needs to be done and how much it will cost. The only way to access the entirety of the 170-foot high tower is to erect scaffolding, which will be expensive in and of itself. An estimate that includes the scaffolding, design work, engineering, and masonry restoration leads us to expect that we will have to spend about \$2 million on the restoration of the tower.

We expect that we will need some institutional partners to help us undertake this work, and we have been working with several potential institutional funders to begin application processes for partial funding. Realistically, we expect to spend the next year or so raising funds for this work, and planning for it, so that a year from now we can begin a major project of preservation. This work is very likely to coincide with our 175th anniversary celebrations.

As you know, late last year we began raising funds for a few smaller-scale projects at the church that require attention. Tower repairs were supposed to be on that list of smaller repairs, but this project has now

taken on something of a life of its own. The Threshold Campaign is still being conducted to raise funds for other masonry and roofing repairs, replacement of aging air conditioning units, and funding to finally devise a workable and attractive plan for much needed accessibility to our buildings. These goals all remain in focus and require our attention. As we develop a clearer plan for fund raising to attend to the bell tower, we'll continue to be in touch with the wider parish community. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to ask questions.

So far we know of no reason that we cannot continue to ring the change of eight bells that are hung in the tower. Those bells were cast in London in 1876 at the Whitechapel foundry and hung in our tower shortly thereafter. The bell tower masonry may be giving us cause for some blues at the moment, but its graceful spire continues to be a sign of our aspiration to be in closer communion with God, and the bells continue to call us to worship.

If you have questions about this project or would like information about becoming a lead donor, please be in touch with the Rector.





## SINGING + BOTA = *Friendship*

**BRYAN DUNNEWALD**

On all of our recruitment posters for the Saint Mark's Singers we say, "join us for friendship and song." And yet, when assembling our newest choir I wondered how much friendship there would be. With membership from across

the city combined with varying ages, life experience, and degrees of musical ability, there was no guarantee everyone would have a good time or even get along.

As we began singing together at the first rehearsal, our shoulders dropped, smiles grew (under our masks), and laughter transitioned from a nervous to relaxed tone. We moved to the garden for Bota con brio, our happy hour, and to my immense joy, the Singers immediately struck up conversations with

each other over their glasses of wine and cans of seltzer. If someone looked on from the street, they would be unable to distinguish longtime parishioners from those new to Saint Mark's.

It now seems to me that singing together attracts, or creates, friendly people. We have 37 wonderful people who look forward to lending their voices to the choir every week. They leave together, go to other events together, and come to our services together. The Saint Mark's Singers has had community as its focus since its inception, and I hope it will continue to be a place where people from around Philadelphia can gather to sing, enjoy a glass of wine, and be friends.



SAINT MARK'S CHURCH  
PHILADELPHIA

1625 LOCUST STREET  
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## MUSIC & CHOIR CAMP JULY 25 - JULY 29

**SCHOLA • AGES 3-7**

9:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

Professional musicians, teachers, and faithful volunteers, exploring the wonders of music and more. *Lunch and snacks provided. Extended care 8-9:30 a.m. for additional fee.*

**Early registration by July 1 \$60 Regular registration after July 1 \$70**

**CHOIR • AGES 8+**

9:30 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.

Award-winning choral training for girls & boys with unchanged voices. Field trips and other fun activities. *Includes lunch and snacks. Extended care from 8-9:30 a.m. and 4:30-6 p.m. for additional fee. Early registration by July 1 \$165 Regular registration after July 1 \$215*