
SAINT MARK



Saying Grace from Pastor Roy

It was a joy to share a week with our Saint Mark youth in Haiti. They are dedicated Christians, fun, and inquisitive. The Church offered a wonderful gift by sending us to Haiti to learn from the people there. Let me share just one day from our Holy Week Pilgrimage.

It began at dawn with the news that one of the residents died at Wings of Hope, the community of the severely disabled, where we were living/serving. Junior Michelle, was a long time beloved member of the community, whom I had met years ago. Unexpectedly I was asked to co-preside at the funeral and offer the homily and commendation. This was Maundy Thursday. It was a stunning, heart-wrenching, holy occasion to be with this community of frail bodies and deep souls who mourned even as they claimed loudly the promise that these bodies will give way to the new creation in eternal life. They grieved and celebrated their beloved Junior who suffered came to this home after being abandoned by his family and living for a time in the forest.

We had been asking ourselves all week, “where is Jesus present” among us? On Maundy Thursday as I looked upon this community of very poor, severely disabled people singing (screaming/vocalizing) their faith, I experienced the community of Jesus who became vulnerable for us. Wonder of wonders.

Following the funeral, the residents and staff proceeded with the planned re-enactment of the Lord’s Supper and Foot Washing service. When the disabled poor man came to wash my feet and those of our youth, it seemed like I was being caught up in some extraordinary experience of what Jesus intended in that original supper. Never have I sensed such raw, ragged holiness.

Late in the day, we took the promised trip to the Caribbean sea. Shortly after we arrived and were already swimming, I looked over at the small group assembling on the shore. A man in a suit and tie stepped into the water accompanied by another. It was suddenly clear that a baptism was taking place, and not just one, but two young men were baptized. Our group began to sing in celebration. I could only gasp, laugh and try not to drown.

A day that began with unexpected death/lamentation was now ending with unexpected baptism/joy. Life yields to death that yields to life. All of this happened this single day - and more. Immersion in Haiti. Indeed. Thank you Saint Mark for the experience. You will hear more from our young people in this newsletter (turn to page 5).

Worship Times: May & June

May 6- One service, 9:30.

*Cornerstone Montgomery Art Show following worship

May 13- Two services, 9:30 & 11:00, Christian Education at 9:30

May 20- Pentecost Sunday + Confirmation Sunday! One service at 10:00 am. No Sunday school.

*Summer schedule begins this day

*Join us after worship to celebrate Sunday school teachers and give thanks for their service this year.

May 27-September 2- One service @ 10:00 am

***June 3-Aug. 26-** One room church school for children ages 4 through 3rd grade.

Intergenerational Service Opportunity

The youth group will be volunteering at A Wider Circle with a number of different jobs such as assembling boxes, sorting and folding clothing and moving household items into their showroom, etc. We would like to join forces with the rest of the congregation for this event to show our support for the youth group. Please let me



You can view a slideshow of photos on Youtube by clicking [here.](#)

know by emailing Dorothy_a_alexander@mcpsmd.org if you are interested in volunteering your time. We will meet at A Wider Circle around 12:00 noon.

Alternate Transportation Sunday- May 6

Leave The Car At Home And Come To Church Another Way

BIKE or WALK (or SHARE THE RIDE) TO CHURCH DAY!

For Spirit and Service **Sunday, May 6**, dress will be casual – if warm enough -- shorts are fine! Please take the opportunity to continue to celebrate Earth Day and go easy on the Earth.

Butterfly Garden Project!

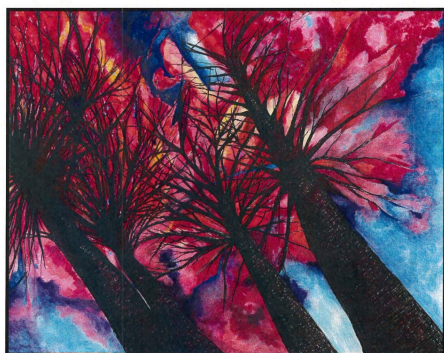
Please join us in sprucing up the butterfly garden. It's been a hard winter, and it needs some love. Just a few hours on **May 12 - 9:30 to 11:30** (rain-date May 19) will make a big contribution to beautifying our grounds. We would appreciate some younger helpers. Children and youth are welcome. Email Alison Bennett at alison.bennett72@gmail.com to let her know you are coming.

Summer Choir

If you'd like to sing in the choir, but can't commit to weekly rehearsals, then perhaps you'll consider summer choir. We only meet briefly before the 10am service each Sunday to rehearse for that service. We won't sing an anthem, but rather, help teach new hymns, or add harmony, or simply provide strong leadership for the congregation. This will begin on Memorial Day weekend. Please contact Jeff (jeffdmusic@gmail.com) or a choir member if you have questions.

A brand new art exhibition from Studio In-Sight

A - May - zing



"The View From Below" Allison

Hosted by Saint Mark Presbyterian Church
10701 Old Georgetown Road, Rockville, MD 20852

Show Runs May 6th - June 29th 2018

Art Opening & Reception: May 6th, 10:45 am - 1:00 pm
Exhibition Hours: Monday through Friday, 10 am - 4 pm

STUDIO-IN-SIGHT artists of  **Cornerstone**
Montgomery

Cornerstone Montgomery Art Show

We will have new art from clients of Cornerstone Montgomery, one of our mission partners, on display beginning May 6.

Quill of the Clerk

The Session met on April 17 and heard reports from the Pastor, Associate Pastor, and various ministry teams.

Pastor Howard gave an update on his trip to Haiti with youth during Holy Week and told about his participation in a conference at Wheaton College.

The Session approved motions to distribute the payment for the website updates amongst 3 different teams, and to hold one service of worship at 10 am beginning Sunday May 20 and continuing through Sunday September 9.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Casper, Clerk

Vacation Bible School- June 25-29

VBS will be June 25-29, 9:00 am-12:00 pm at Saint Mark. Children aged 4 through 5th grade are welcome to participate. Youth and adults are invited to volunteer! The more volunteers, the better. There will be crafts, games, music, Bible stories and much more! We will explore where God's world comes together and what it means to love the Lord our God, and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

If you would like to register your child for VBS, [click here](#). Complete registration for each child please.

If you plan to or would like to volunteer (volunteers ages 6th grade and up are welcome!), please [click here](#) to register.

Legacy Campaign update

The Legacy 3 Campaign (LC3) launched April 15. The theme for our campaign is "Growing our Roots-Securing God's House." If you missed the launch, you can see the video [here](#). You will also find at this link statements from LC3 team members on why they will give to the campaign, the brochure describing the campaign, and donation information.

Here's a way to think about your pledge: How much would you want to give to special mission projects? Once you determine that, multiply by 10 to get your pledge. The deadline for pledging is May 31. Remember you have 3 years to pay and if your circumstances change you can change your pledge at anytime. If you have not pledged or let the team know that you will not be pledging by the deadline, one of the team will reach out to you. Let's dig deep and go over the top!



People of Faith for Climate Solutions

Saint Mark is supporting Carrie Witkop in participating in the new Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions (MC-FACS). This group began in Northern Virginia and has spread across the river. MC-FACS works in partnership with Interfaith Power and Light to enlist the moral power of faith groups to reduce carbon emissions, and will provide opportunities to participate in climate justice activism and advocacy. ***The next meeting will be at Saint Mark, Thursday, May 17 at 7:00 PM.*** If you want to be more active around climate justice, please join us. Email Carrie at carriewitkop@gmail.com or Alison at Alison.bennett72@gmail.com.

NIH Community Chorus concert at Saint Mark

The NIH Community Chorus with the East Avenue Ensemble will present a CONCERT IN CONTRASTS: BRAHMS AND AMERICANA. Saturday May 5, Our Lady of Visitation Parish, 7:30 PM and Saturday May 19, 7:30 at Saint Mark. Free Admission, donations accepted for NIH Charities (Children's Inn, Safra Lodge, etc.)

In our prayers....

- Meredith Ransohoff - Lymphoma
- Beth Irons - recovering from broken tibia in ski accident, contact Brent Shoemaker if you'd like to help by bringing Beth a meal.
- Maggie Xu has returned to China to be with her sister, who is a doctor, and her parents. Maggie appreciates your prayers and support during her difficulties.

Reflections from Haiti mission immersion

Jeremiah Whitney

My experience being immersed in Haiti showed me a side of humanity I never imagined. From the vast mountains, Caribbean Ocean, and palm trees to the lively villages and dirt roads, it was apparent that we were not in the US anymore. Arriving in Port Au Prince proved very overwhelming; the endless sights of rubble, garbage, loose animals and packed populations gave a clear illustration of the word “dire.” On Tuesday we travelled from where we were staying in Jacmel, to a town called Benjin, where we heard the stories of a few Haitian students, about my age, who described the unbearable living conditions they faced, and the efforts they had to make just to get an education, something everyone deserves. As each day went by, I observed many God moments unique to Haiti. Being introduced to the residents at Wings of Hope, I had never met a group of people so happy to see me, without ever having seen my face before. These were individuals who could never make it on their own, and I found it touching to know that certain people get up every morning for the purpose of making sure these young adults lived the healthiest and fullest lives they could. The beauty of lending a helping hand, the lack of resentments, and the love Haitians had for each other and our group was amazing.



Lindsay Hutton

The first night we were in Haiti we got to meet Bill and Woodrut and hear their stories. It was all very moving and touching but one part that literally wouldn't unstick itself from my head was a song that they shared with us. Woodrut would sing “tipa tipa”, the kreyole words for “step by step”, and we would respond with “toujou” meaning “everyday”. The song was about the Haitian women who carry all their goods on their heads to the market to sell, doing everything they can to take care of their families.

We were late to the meeting with the high school kids from rural Haiti. And I mean really late, but it wasn't totally our fault. We didn't factor parts of our journey through Haitian country



into the travel time, so we spent a bit of time driving very slowly - or not at all - through the market. We weren't happy we arrived late but I'm so glad we got to experience that part of Haitian culture. It was so colorful and vibrant with more people there than I've ever seen all in one place. People carrying food or clothes or anything on their heads and buying and selling fruits, fish, and livestock.

It was really great to hear a song about the strong women of Haiti and the marketplaces where they make their living, then to experience it firsthand the next day. We weren't there to swoop in and put bandaids on scraped knees. We were there to support the people in their own pursuit of better lives and to witness the rich culture of Haiti.

On this trip I saw the work of God. He is with the people of Haiti and is working in the most difficult places. With His help the people are building up their own country and lives just as the mothers bring everything they've got to take care of their families. God is within us and the people around us and I'm so thankful I was able to experience this trip.

Nicole Bratton

Every second of our spring break trip to Haiti was unforgettable but there is one moment that I will hold close to my heart forever. We were taking a roller coaster of a road up to the town of Benjin and when we arrived, we saw two young boys sitting up on a little hill so we decided to join them up there and say hello. They were a little wary of us at first, being strangers and all, but they soon opened up and started laughing when we broke out the PLAYDOH!! I had originally brought Play-Doh on this trip to Haiti for us high schoolers to play with on the airplane, but it came into much better use there on that little hill making our new friends smile. The original two boys turned into more than five kids climbing up on the big rocks to meet us and take their turn with the Play-Doh. They were all very creative: making bracelets, rings, and long chains out of the molding clay. All of us high schoolers were of course playing with the Play-Doh too! And although none of us could



communicate with the kids, we still had a fantastic time playing with them!

What I enjoyed a lot about this moment was that it wasn't a scheduled activity we had planned for the day, but just a genuine moment with the amazing, friendly people of Haiti. Throughout the week, Pastor Roy kept asking us where we saw Jesus that day, and I can say with full certainty that I saw Jesus at work through the welcoming people of this town and their loving children.

Olivia Kaufmann

The time we spent in Haiti was an amazing week, and I am already eager to go back. In reflection on the week, one of the ways in which I saw Jesus was in the time we spent with the Wings of Hope residents on Good Friday. The residents and staff put on a passion play to act out the events leading up to Jesus's death. During the play many songs were sung and the joy was clear in the residents' heart. Following the play we helped out with the easter egg hunt put on in the wings courtyard. They warned us ahead of time that it was going to be very competitive and that the residents were very cut throat, but boy were they not kidding.

They held three rounds, and we helped out with the first two. The first round was for the residents in wheelchairs, each of us was paired up to help push and collect eggs with a resident. As we ran around the courtyard trying to push past the other wheel chairs to get the coveted eggs, it was clear how happy it made the residents, not only to be competing, but to have the help and companionship which we provided. The first round was kind of a blur, it blew my mind how quickly everyone ran. The second round was for the residents who could walk. For that round I was paired up with a resident named Marhitza who was a little slower than the other because she needed a walker to move. Before the egg hunt I had spent some time sitting with her during the services, and communicating as best we could (she was deaf and didn't sign). As the round got ready to start the staff held the residents in the dining room while the eggs were hidden and sang songs and chants to help pump everyone up. As we rushed out of the room I felt a little concerned, everyone had pushed past us, and snatched up a vast majority of the eggs. Luckily as we headed across the courtyard we found one egg in Pastor Roy's pocket. Maritza was so excited to be able to find and get this egg, that no one else had gotten.



The smile on her face, made my week and showed me the joy and generosity of Jesus. The fact that such a simple thing, like finding an egg, brought so much jubilation really showed me the beauty of what Wings offers, a happy and loving home to some people who would otherwise be cast out and rejected by society.

George Casper



Going to Haiti reminded me of a particular song that goes something like this: Fifty miles to go, and she was running low on faith and gasoline... It'd been a long hard year, She had a lot on her mind, and she didn't pay attention... She was going way too fast, Before she knew it she was spinning on a thin black sheet of glass... She saw both their lives flash before her eyes, She didn't even have time to cry... She was so scared, She threw her hands up in the air... Jesus, take the wheel...

Some of the roads in Haiti were like running over a pothole every foot. On top of that, you were driving on the side of a cliff, going around twists and turns and twists and turns. But as perilous as our journey

around the country was, it also provided some of the most amazing views, allowed us to drive through a bustling marketplace, and grow closer with each other from our shared experience. I think that the time I was closest to God was on these car rides, sure it may have been because I felt like I was tempting death, but I also was as close as I ever may be to my faith and God's creations.

Estelle Casper

Estelle put together a fabulous slideshow as her reflection. You can view it by clicking [here](#).

