

Come let us
Adore
Him

THE WAY

THE NEWSLETTER OF

✦ ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

1612 WEST GENESEE ST.; SYRACUSE, NY; 13204

315-488-8511 + STMARKSSYRACUSE@GMAIL.COM



January 2018

Contents

Cheerful Notes.....	p. 2
Some Ways to Help	p. 5
Christmas at St. Mark.....	p. 6
Images of Christmas.....	p. 8
January Ministry Schedule/Stump the Rector.....	pg. 9
Clothes Closet/Can Drive.....	p. 10
A Miracle: Unscathed.....	p. 11
Movie Review: 'Wonder'.....	pg. 12
Clothing, Food, Friendship & More –the History of the Clothes Closet.....	p. 14
January Food \$en\$......	p. 16
Food \$en\$ Outreach.....	p. 18
Treasurer's Report/Special Thank You.....	p. 19

Mission Statement: The Church of St. Mark the Evangelist is a community of faith sharing the love of Jesus Christ with one another and the world.

Hallelujah!



Service Time

Sundays:

10 am-Holy Eucharist

Nursery available during service

Office Hours

Tuesday—Friday:

9 am to 2 pm



Cheerful Notes



Ever since the years of my youth, the Advent Season has always been a joyous, almost mystical time of the year for me, full of memories of my childhood home, festive with decorations of Christmas and carols of the season playing from first our floor model Philco radio, and later our Zenith Hi-Fi monaural console, followed by a Stereo system with large speakers in our living room of the ranch style home my father had built on a country hilltop when I was eleven years of age.

Our Hephzibah Baptist Church was also festive, with greens, poinsettias, and candles everywhere in the years when I sang in the junior and youth choirs and enjoyed the eternal Scriptures and sermons about the birth of the Christ child. We didn't have a Christmas Eve service in those days, but late on that evening after all our presents were wrapped and put under our tree, Mom, Dad and I would sit on our couch by the glowing Christmas tree with Christmas music playing and we would read the Christmas story from the book of Luke. Then we would pray together before going to bed and dreaming of sugar plums...or new Lionel train components for my expanding model railroad!

Among the first vinyl record albums my Dad brought home for our Hi-Fi set was a low-budget RCA recording of Handel's *Messiah* performed by

the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of Sir Ernest MacMillan, and featuring soloists Lois Marshall, soprano, Mary Palmateer, contralto, James Milligan, bass, and a very young Jon Vickers, tenor. Up until this time when someone mentioned Handel's *Messiah*, I thought they were talking about the *Hallelujah Chorus*! But now, as I listened to Handel's settings of the Old Testament prophecies of the coming Messiah, and the fulfillment of those prophetic words, the Bible came to life for me as never before! I had received Jesus Christ as my Savior the previous summer of 1956, at Word of Life Island at Schroon Lake in the Adirondacks; and my heart and mind were hungrily receptive as Handel's music poured out the story of Christ, His birth, death, and resurrection. I never even dreamed in those days that someday music would be my calling, but I began to wish that I could someday sing the *Messiah*!

The following year during the Christmas



Gerald B. Dagher

vacation from school, our high school choral music director, the legendary Gerald B. Dagher, chose sixteen of us to audition for the Pennsylvania Southeastern District Chorus. We met together several times during our time off

from school to practice the five pieces we had to know for our audition. Then in January we all traveled to Plymouth-Whitemarsh High School in suburban Philadelphia to sing for the judges. I was scared stiff, as I didn't think I was a very good singer; but I sailed through the audition without any mistakes. The judges were very friendly and complimentary with me, and I was feeling quite relieved as we drove back home.

I was even more excited that day, however, because I was going to have my first real date that evening, with a beautiful Christian girl named Virginia, whom I had been crushing on for quite a while before I worked up enough courage to ask her to go out with me. I drove us in my Dad's 1955 Buick Century to Lancaster, PA, to see a first-run showing of Michael Todd's "Around the World in 80 Days." The drive to Lancaster was "enhanced" by a jealous ex-date of Virginia's who kept passing us in his blue Chevy coupe while ringing the Bermuda bells installed on his car! We finally lost him and arrived safely at the movie theater!

"Around the World in 80 Days" was a very long movie, and I got Virginia back to her home a bit after curfew; but, strangely, her parents were very cordial to me.

When I arrived at my home I was alarmed to see that the lights were still on inside. I knew my parents were still up, and I thought I was in trouble. I was wrong! They greeted me warmly and told me that they had received a phone call from Mr. Dagher, who told them that I had placed first of all the baritones in District One, and that

the judges and he all felt that I should begin studying voice!

I was more surprised by this than anyone! I did begin to study voice the following summer, and in February of my senior year in high school, my Dad made me audition for Eastman School of Music, which I did reluctantly. I was a very frightened young man as I sang for the Director of Admissions, Dr. Edward Easley. And again I was incredibly surprised by being accepted on the spot and even offered a scholarship! Before I left for Eastman in the fall, I got another phone call

from Mr. Dagher, who called to ask me to sing the Bass arias in a **Messiah** performance he would be conducting the following December at the large Methodist Church in my home town of Coatesville, PA. I think I was more excited about that than about being an Eastman student!



In mid-October of my freshman year I was eating dinner in the men's residence dining hall, and I overheard an upperclassman who was a rather pompous tenor soloist, a guy who "knew it all," and who ordinarily wouldn't even talk to a mere freshman, mention that he had heard that a Jon Vickers (the aforementioned tenor soloist on the Toronto Symphony recording) was going to make his debut at the Met the following year. He was asking if anyone had heard of him. I timidly said that I had a recording of him singing *Messiah* in my room. Ten minutes later, the tenor was sitting on the bottom bunk in this lowly freshman's room as I put Vickers' performance

Continued on page 4

of “Comfort Ye /Every Valley” on my portable phonograph. (When this low-budget recording was made in the mid-1950’s, it is my understanding that Jon Vickers, the son of Christian parents who ran one of Toronto’s rescue missions, was working in a Toronto bank. The bank manager had heard Jon sing in church and practically forced the shy young man to audition for the recording.) So the smug tenor listened to the opening recitative and about half of the aria, and then he sneered, “If that guy is making his Met debut, I should be there right now!!” He stormed out of my room and never spoke to me again! I was at once hurt, then angry, but then really curious about what Vickers sounded like now in 1959! A few days later I read about the Sir Thomas Beecham-Eugene Goossens project to record for RCA a new complete **Messiah** album, re-orchestrated as they thought Handel himself would have done if he had had modern orchestras at his disposal. I learned that this stereo album, with all of the then-usually-cut movements included, was due to be released in December. I determined to buy the album

for my Christmas present to my parents, and I began visiting the record shop near the Eastman School daily to see if it had arrived! It finally came in the morning of the day that I was to fly home to Philadelphia on the customary Capital Airlines turbo-prop Viscount airliner. I paid the \$25 and proudly took the beautifully constructed album home! My Mom and Dad and I listened to the album from beginning to end on Christmas



Theater at the Eastman School of Music.

Night, marveling at the stereo sound, at the majesty of the London Philharmonic, and especially at the performances of little-known basso Giorgio Tozzi and, of course, the now Wagnerian tenor, Jon Vickers, who was to become a legendary tenor during his long career at the Met! With his first phrase, “Comfort Ye... Comfort ye, my people,” I totally understood why the Met had hired him! Since that evening I have listened to that performance countless times. I played it on the air every Christmas during my stint in Christian radio, and I continue to use excerpts as teaching tools for my students. It had been my dream to conduct the first performance of the Beecham/Goossens orchestration of the oratorio in Central New York with the Syracuse Chorale and symphony (once Lady Beecham had finally released the score after Sir Thomas’ death), but neither the funds nor the interest ever materialized here. If any of you would ever like to hear this musical treasure, I would be happy to play it for you!

May our Abba Father bless and enrich you and yours in every way during this blessed season, and throughout the New Year!

*From Your Director of Music,
Warren Ottey*

Looking to help? Here's a way...



Latest Food Pantry Needs

Thank you all for your generous donations in support of this important ministry

Currently, the Food Pantry is doing well with certain items like canned soups and veggies, but really could use donations of:

Peanut Butter
Jelly
Tuna Helper
Cereal
Pasta Sauce

Canned Pasta (like Chef-Boy-R-Dee)
Canned Stew
Pudding Cups
Cocoa
Boxed Pasta



Personal Items Needed

As you know, Circle V puts together bags of personal items as a supplement to the Food Pantry for those in our community who need them. It has recently come to our attention that folks are coming in specifically for these products—in particular, shampoo, deodorant and toothpaste. Right now, we have plenty of soap, but are out of these other items and are currently accepting donations for men and women.

If you are able to help, please bring your donation to the church during service or during office hours and Circle V will put the bags together.

Thank you all so much for your generosity and compassion for our neighbors.

The Wonder of Christmas

Community Christmas Weekend at St. Mark



St. Mark the Evangelist brought the True Spirit of Christmas to the community, inviting neighbors and parishioners to come together to enjoy mesmerizing music, delicious food, the chance to shop for loved ones, free winter apparel, free gifts, a visit with Santa and, most importantly, the opportunity to learn about the true meaning of Christmas.

The weekend kicked off on Friday evening, Dec. 8, with a special concert by two premier Syracuse singing groups, MANNA and CNY Voices. The evening was an entertaining mix of fun and upbeat classic Christmas music guests could sing along to as well as sacred Christmas music. Intermission was served up with yummy Christmas desserts.

Directed by Cherry Ottey, MANNA is a women's vocal ensemble that performs the Gospel for senior living facilities and special events such as anniversaries, birthdays, weddings, conferences, etc. CNY Voices is directed by St. Mark's Organist and Choir Director, Warren Ottey. Formed in July, 2015, CNY Voices is one of the newest choral ensembles in Central New York, founded by a group of experienced singers whose love of music and bonds of friendship with each other inspired them to give birth to a choir, where those qualities would be exemplified in its structure, rehearsals, concerts, and in our image in Greater Syracuse and beyond.



On Saturday, Dec. 9, the church was brimming with the Christmas spirit and activity as many members of the community came out for the Clothes Closet's biggest event of the year – the Community Christmas Clothes Closet where guests got to get some much-needed winter gear for free along with a complimentary hot breakfast and were able to enjoy variety of other fun doings. The Clothes Closet is spearheaded by Cheryl and Gary Nedd, while The Green Café is the brainchild of the Neddos' four young granddaughters, Allysa (15), Kaitlyn (13) and Emily Doane (11) and Jasmine Nedd (16).

Held in the Undercroft, guests were greeted by the delicious aroma of hot chocolate, coffee and breakfast sandwiches, which were made to order in The Green Café, prepared by Allysa, Emily and Jasmine, all dressed in red and adorned with Santa hats. These busy super-elves were helped by Alex and Adam Amaya to feed the line of hungry neighbors who enjoyed a chance to get out of the cold and sit down and enjoy good food, good company in a warm inviting setting.

Sitting on the stage in front of a backdrop setting reminiscent of 2000 years ago, Anny Amaya read the true story of Christmas to the little neighborhood children while Santa Claus (Gary Nedd) graced the winged chair

next to the fireplace, beckoning little ones – and those not so little – to get a hug and to share their dreams.

Guests were even able to Christmas shop! One of St. Mark's women's groups, The Mustangs, were busy with a table offering inexpensive gifts for children and adults to buy for their own loved ones...most priced \$1 or less. Deb Richardson, Dana, Dottie Doane and Annette Skinner staffed the table, replenishing it and having friendly conversations with our neighbors. Items for the table were thanks to generous donations from our parishioners.

There were also tables offering FREE books and FREE stuffed animals and every child received a coloring book and crayons as well as a Christmas



cookie.

"Over 400 cookies and 35 loaves of bread were given to the clothes closet customers," Cheryl Neddo said. "Thank you Jackie, Eberline, Amy Lallier, and Joan Green for your donations of bread and cookies. Also to Jasmine, Alyssa, Kaitlyn and Emily for their help baking over 300 cookies and 30 loaves of bread."

During these festivities, down the hall of the Sunday school wing, the Clothes Closet was bustling, selling all items for just 25¢ each. In addition, tables of free coats, mittens and hats were set up for all who were in need. Donations for these items were a joint effort of a generous outpouring from our parishioners, other churches and the Hazard Branch Library, whose knitting and crochet group donated a large assortment of beautifully handcrafted hats, mittens and scarves.

"Most of the coats were donated by Vintage Faith Church in Cicero and most of the stuffed animals were donated by the United Methodist Church in Constanta," said Cheryl.

Food Sense also had a presence and saw six folks step up to the table, several for the first time, to learn about this cooperative buying program of the CNY Food Bank and to gladly place an order. They were excited about this new-found way to expand their food buying budget. Believe it or not, Food Sense at St. Mark has been in existence for four years, but the word is slowly getting around.

"This is what the UTO Undercroft renovation grant of 2014 was intended to be!" said Jim Miller, parishioner and one of the coordinators for the Food Sense program. "The pleasant cacophony of children's squeals and adult conversation warmed everyone. Fr. Adrian Amaya was feeling well and enjoyed conversing with our neighbors and parishioners, sharing what St. Mark the Evangelist is all about, a neighborhood resource committed to spreading Good's love and the good news of Jesus Christ."

Please note that this type of community gathering doesn't end at Christmas. Every second Saturday of the month (except July and August), the Clothes Closet and Green Café makes itself available to the neighborhood. Food Sense always joins in as well, ready and willing to answer questions, take orders and help anyone who would like to stretch their food dollars.

The next Clothes Closet takes place Saturday, January 13, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. To learn more about this important ministry and some behind the scenes insights, turn to page 12. For more images of this Christmas event, turn to page 8.



Jim Miller takes Food Sense orders while Father Amaya enjoys the festivities.

St. Mark's Christmas Scene



MINISTRY SCHEDULE FOR THE MONTH OF:

JANUARY 2018

	<u>7th</u>	<u>14th</u>	<u>21st</u>	<u>28th</u>
LECTORS	Nancy M. Kathi P. Kitty M.	Tom M. Kayley R. Sally T.	Jim O. Jim M. Warren O.	Forrest A. Alex A. Nancy M.
WORSHIP LEADER	Gary N.	Jim O.	Dana M.	Gary N.
CHALICE BEARER	Ethel A. Pat D.	Dana M. Gary N.	Nancy M. Ethel A.	Dana M. Jim M.
GREETERS	Jackie E. Phyllis H.	Phyllis H. Bob K.	Barb W. Sally T.	Ernestine L. Barb W.
USHERS	Marie B. Jim M.	Jackie E. Pat D.	Tom M. Tommy M.	Jackie E. Pat D.
PRESENTER OF THE GIFTS	Phyllis H. Leslie H.	Joan G. Forrest A.	Barb W. Ernestine L.	Marilyn G. Sally T.
ALTAR ASSISTANT	Forrest A.	Phyllis H.	Gary. N.	Jack O.
ACOLYTES	Alex A. Tate L. Hendrik L.	Adam A. Noah H. Marie B.	Alex A. Hendrik L. Noah H.	Adam A. Marie B. Tate L.
V.P.O.D.	Kathi P.	Barry G.	Debra R.	Dennis E.
ALTAR GUILD	Team A	Team B	Team C	Team D
COFFEE HOUR	Joan G. Jackie E.	OPEN	Barb W. Ernestine L.	Parish Luncheon

STUMP THE RECTOR!



Do you have a question of a liturgical nature? Perhaps why we do something the way we do? How effective is my prayer? How can I become better at prayers?

What would Jesus say if I....? Perhaps a historical question? There may be something bugging you—a Bible passage that doesn't make sense or a situation in your life for which you need a suggestion! If any or other questions pop up, we have a possible answer. You may e-mail the question/concern to the church at

stmarkssyracuse@gmail.com or write them down and mail them to the church. Fr. Amaya will respond to them in the next issue of The Way! Or, if the mailbox overflows, in a subsequent issue. We think that if you have the question, there are likely others who might also benefit from the response and be glad you had asked it!

You may identify yourself or send your questions in anonymously.



St. Mark's

**CLOTHES CLOSET IS OPEN
SATURDAY, JANUARY 13th**



From 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**Browse through men's, women's and children's clothing, shoes, jewelry, etc...
ALL FOR ONLY 25 CENTS PER ITEM!**



**The Green Café is open during Clothes Closet
with a free light breakfast for shoppers!**

*The Clothes Closet is open on the second Saturday of each month
(Closed July & August.)*

*Volunteers are needed between 9:45 a.m. and 1 p.m. +/-
There is a sign-up sheet in the Parish Hall.*



Keep those cans and bottles coming!

Thanks so much to all of you who have donated cans and bottle to St. Mark's Youth Group! The collection continues and there are two collections bins available for recycling—one in the Undercroft and one by the door going up to the Parish Hall.

You may bring them directly to church or you may contact Phyllis Honsinger at (315) 214-9847 for pick-up service at your home. Also, the redemption center that has the account is located in Western Lights Plaza. You can bring them there and just ask for the amount to be added to the account for **St. Marks**.

We thank you again for your past donations and look forward to your future donations. Please let us know if you need any assistance!

St. Mark the Evangelist Youth Group



BOTTLE AND CAN COLLECTION to benefit the Youth Group at St. Mark the Evangelist Church

Bring your empties to church and place in the collection bin or to schedule a pick-up call Phyllis Honsinger (315) 214-9847

Unscathed



Brothers and Sisters,

Science and statistics indicate that I shouldn't be writing this to you. No, really... There are many emotions and internal conflicts one faces when a near death experience is in the recent past. What actually happened? Why am I still here? What is my mission or purpose now? Why was I spared when so many others in similar circumstances were not?

On the way to visit family in the south for Christmas (leaving the north on one of our Syracuse self-proclaimed bad weather days), I encountered an invisible patch of black ice that sent my snow-tire-equipped vehicle careening off the road, into a ditch, and end-over-end in a dramatic roll-over accident. Yet, I write this to you completely unscathed; not a single scratch was detected upon my person! Not even an item in the packed car grazed me, though I was pulling grass and sticks from my hair and clothing.

I do not remember the entire accident; in fact, I predominantly recall a mental snap shot of the world upside down as seen from the driver's seat, but I can confirm - never in my life have I felt more at peace. Once I realized (after attempting to correct the vehicle's trajectory without success) that there was nothing more I could do, I must have subconsciously given the wheel to Jesus, as the country song proclaims; the greatest sense of peace I've ever known came over me. It was so incredible that I wonder if hanging upside down will bring it back. Perhaps I'm missing the point.

Nevertheless, I've been thinking about life, my purpose, and what He could have saved me to do. Is it to re-inspire you or just to live life happier and more grateful than I did before? I may not have the answers to the questions I've asked, but I am alive to ask them. Alive, unscathed, and totally without a scratch after rolling a vehicle down the side of a highway while luggage and contents were ejected onto the road.

Will you be aware of less dramatic / traumatic signs in your life to know that He actually really IS here and cares about you? Do we have to physically see guardian angels to believe they exist? Don't let life and petty transgressions keep your eyes veiled so that it takes rolling over in a car to wake you up.

HE really IS here, and he really does love us. Bad things do happen, but He is with us always. With that knowledge, could you possibly feel more flattered and supported to do great things? Now, what things are we meant to do? Ah, there's the question.

Meanwhile, please pray for our first responders; no matter the day or time, they find us at our most vulnerable and do not judge what they encounter. I'm sure not every crash site is as miraculous as mine, and it could have been very different.

Also, God knew I needed some answers as to what actually happened, and it turns out that a fellow parishioner witnesses my descent from the highway. What are the odds? Believe! And, reiterate the same to me should I ever (in a moment of human weakness) doubt again. We are human; it (like accidents) happen.

With blessings and love,

Kathleen O'Neil

‘Wonder’ Reveals the Face of True Human Strength

The God of Thunder’s return to the big screen strikes a timely balance between gravitas, humor, and big, dumb fun.



Image: Courtesy of Lionsgate

Wonder opens with a boy wearing a space helmet. August Pullman is a child who lives in his imagination—as evidenced by Chewbacca and Darth Sidious showing up from time to time in his classroom. He dreams of being normal and longs to be unnoticed.

In the opening scene, we see a montage of his ordinary life: August playing video games, riding on the merry-go-round at the park, jumping on the bed. In every shot, he wears the space helmet. When he finally takes it off in front of his window, we recognize in his reflection exactly why he longs to keep his face covered. The image that stares back at us is a face stretched and scarred, eyes that seem weighted downward, a nose that protrudes unnaturally, and a mouth that looks as though it’s been built by surgical procedures. His bulletin board—covered entirely with hospital bracelets—gives evidence of a lifelong medical struggle.

Based on the best-selling novel by R. J. Palacio, the family flick Wonder stars Julia Roberts, Owen

Wilson, and Jacob Tremblay as their son, the main character. The film netted \$27 million at the box office on opening weekend alone and has been accompanied by a popular social media campaign led by the Twitter hashtag #choosekind.

Although it’s never clearly stated in the movie nor in the book by the same name, Auggie likely has Treacher Collins syndrome. His older sister, Via, tells her boyfriend that both her parents carry the rare gene that, when combined, made his facial differences possible. “Auggie won the lottery,” she says.

Every child with a disability has won some kind of lottery. “The lottery” is how my husband and I have always talked about our son with Down syndrome, whose condition is much less rare than fictional Auggie’s but still remarkable (in both the positive and negative uses of the word).

Based on the biological and developmental conditions that might cause a human to emerge into this world both utterly unique and deeply

challenged, one can't help but think there is a miracle in all of it, a secret we have to dig deep to discover. Every family of a child with a disability is simultaneously carrying this secret joy and also digging for it. We see this same dynamic manifest in Auggie's family and in the lives of others who love him.

"Your house is the earth," says Via, quoting a friend. "It revolves around the son, not the daughter."

Alone in her journey and trying to navigate a broken friendship and first love, Via is the classic sibling of a child with special needs. She learned early on to not rock the boat. She also learned that her challenges would never be comparable to her brother's, so she keeps quiet and figures them out on her own.

Auggie's mother, too, has her own struggles. A flashback (before the birth of her son) shows Isabel completely devoted to her daughter. However, as Via tells us, Isabel "stopped a lot of things when [Auggie] was born." She gave up her dreams of being a children's book illustrator, left her thesis half finished, and somewhere along the way, lost her ability to care for her daughter in the same way she cares for her son.

I was moved to tears during much of the movie, but most intensely in the story of Auggie's mom. She's deeply wise and trying her best—even in her relationship with Via—but has a blind spot when it comes to Auggie's need for her. We watch her drop everything, even Via, the moment August needs her. And we watch Via suffer because of her mom's inability to see beyond her son's needs.

I, too, know the intoxicating siren call to my child with Down syndrome, the urgent awareness that there is always more to do—more developmental milestones I can help him reach, more skills to work on, more services I can find for him. He needs me. And as my older, more typical children grow, they need me less (it can seem).

In *Wonder*, the beauty of the relationship between Isabel and Via is the insistence that Via *does* need her mother—a reminder that we are all hurting, we are all weak, and we all need one another, whether our needs are ordinary or extraordinary.

This might be the most significant theme in the movie. Every person orbiting around Auggie

Pullman—from the bully to the new best friend at school—is flawed, in need, and struggling to navigate human community. His friend betrays him but then comes back to make things right with sincerity and humility. Other kids grow from repulsion of Auggie to love for him. A little girl takes a risk to sit with him at his table when no one else will (the sort of thing I pray my sons will be brave enough to do for someone else).

We also see the best side of educators, like Auggie's teacher, Mr. Brown, who instructs his classroom in the precept that we should all "be kind, for everyone is fighting a hard battle."

We see that hard battle in every character in this story, each of them—like Auggie—reflecting the image of God. The film is a reminder of the extraordinary gift of our humanity—both its brokenness and beauty. We are weak, caught up in our self-centered views of the world, often choosing our own comfort at the cost of those around us who long to be known and welcomed. And we are also beautiful, capable of great love and great acts of generosity. As Auggie reminds us, God's image in us is found not in our faces but in our ability to give and receive love. Like the characters in this film, we are all exquisitely ordinary, each of us "fighting a hard battle" and longing to cover our own vulnerability with a space helmet.

As I sat through *Wonder* with my six- and nine-year-old boys, I was reminded of how my child with Down syndrome reveals the depth of what it is to be human. Auggie's character does the same for us. After all, once that helmet comes off, it's not his vulnerability, but rather what the school principal describes as his "quiet strength" that instructs us in how no one is ordinary.

In the end, we all understand exactly what Auggie's dad means when he says to him, "I love it. It's my son's face. I wanna see it."

Micha (pronounced "MY-cah") Boyett is the author of Found: A Story Questions, Grace, and Everyday Prayer. She's passionate about ancient Christian spiritual practices and how they inform the contemporary life of faith. She writes about prayer, motherhood, and her journey with Down syndrome at michaboyett.com.

CLOTHING, FOOD, FRIENDSHIP AND MORE

The Story Behind St. Mark's Clothes Closet and The Green Cafe

St. Mark's Clothes Closet began 18 years ago when Michele Cuttler set up a table in the Undercroft with children's clothing for the students of Porter School.

"When she stopped doing it, I took it over with the help of Annette Skinner and June Dixon," said the current driving force of the Clothes Closet, Cheryl Neddo.

She said that later, Jackie Eberline took it over and when she decided to retire, Cheryl stepped back in.

"I felt it was too important a service to the community to let it close," she said.

The Clothes Closet offers a variety of items other than clothes, including shoes, belts, purses and whatever else is donated.

"When I first took it over, there was a great need for kids' clothes and sneakers," Cheryl noted. She said she and her granddaughters volunteer at a thrift shop at the United Methodist Church in Constantia and when she mentioned the need to Maggie Tryon, the woman who runs it, Maggie told her to "take whatever you need."

"And many times since then, she has filled the void," Cheryl said, adding that the Vintage Faith Church in Cicero also has made many donations.

A recent – and exciting – addition to the Saturday morning Clothes Closet has been the Green Café, operated by Cheryl's four granddaughters, Allysa (15), Kaitlyn (13) and Emily Doane (11) and Jasmine Neddo (16). The café serves up a hot, light breakfast to Clothes Closet attendees and as its name infers, is 'green,' using no paper products.

"We use real dishes and napkins to save money and it is better for the environment," said Jasmine.

But more importantly, all the girls point out, is the opportunity the café provides for people to relax, mingle with others and get to know their neighbors as well as members of the church.

"I feel like it's a good time for the people in our community to get together and get to know each other," Emily pointed out.

The girls said the idea for the café developed while the girls were hiking with their Nana Cheryl and brainstorming about other ways to reach out to the community during the Clothes Closet.

"The idea of a Green Café came up because we thought it would help strengthen the community and help those who need it," Jasmine said.

"And to have everyone come together to have a good lunch/breakfast," added Emily.

Some of the items prepared during the monthly café are breakfast pizza, sausage, egg and cheese with English muffins, oatmeal, muffins, bagels with butter and/or cream cheese and apple sauce. Diners can wash it all down with orange or apple juice, coffee, hot cocoa and water.



The Green Café is open during the monthly Clothes Closet serving up a hot, light breakfast to customers along with smiles and conversation. Above, are the young ladies behind the conception of the Green Café and who bake and run it along with their Nana, Cheryl Neddo, who heads up the Clothes Closet.

In addition to the food, the young women generally provide a table for the children to do seasonal crafts.

“For example, in the fall, we will decorate pumpkins with them and in the spring, we might make flowers,” Kaitlyn explained.

But no matter what the season, the girls all say it feels good to help make a difference and offering the café means the world to them.

“It means everything to me,” pointed out Jasmine. “I always change my schedule and make time because I care about being there and helping.”

“I love being able to do something for the community,” Alyssa said. “It makes me happy knowing someone got great new clothes or someone got a great meal that they sometimes don’t get. It also makes me happy that people meet new people and make new friends.”

When asked what they could use to help with this important mission, Cheryl and the girls all concurred one of the most important things anyone could do was personal involvement.

“Of course, we ask that everyone please keep donating clothing, etc.,” Cheryl said. “But we could also always use help sorting and hanging clothes.”

“It would also be great if more parishioners came to meet new people and to answer questions about the church that we might not be able to answer,” Jasmine added.

St. Mark’s Clothes Closet is open every second Saturday of the month (excepting July and August when it is open by appointment only). It runs from 10:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. In the summer, just before school reopens, the Clothes Closet hosts a huge back-to-school yard sale solely devoted to selling children’s clothes and accessories.

If anyone would like to help with this mission, there is always a sign-up sheet on the Parish Hall bulletin board. Monies earned through the Clothes Closet is used to fund the Green Café.



The monthly Clothes Closet/Green Café offers fun, seasonal crafts for the community children to do.

Below are scenes from a typical Saturday Clothes closet and Green Café (Cheryl Neddo is pictured on bottom left)



JANUARY 2018 FOOD \$ENSE MENU

Westside @ St. Mark's

Inquiries can be made at:

(315) 488-8511 or (315) 378-4908

Email: stmarkssyracuse@gmail.com

Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/StMarkTheEvangelistEpiscopalChurchSyracuseNewYork/)

[StMarkTheEvangelistEpiscopalChurchSyracuseNewYork/](https://www.facebook.com/StMarkTheEvangelistEpiscopalChurchSyracuseNewYork/)

January Package* \$20.50:

- Chicken Thighs, 3.5 lbs (avg.)
- Italian Meatballs, 1 lb.
- Haddock Fillets, 1 lb.
- Italian Sausage, 1 lb.
- Ground Turkey, 1 lb.
- Spaghetti Sauce, 26 oz.
- Cheese Ravioli, 13 oz.
- Pizza (Supreme), 20.6 oz.
- Strawberry & Blueberry Blend, 1 lb.
- Mixed Vegetables, 12 oz.
- Fresh Produce Item 1
- Fresh Produce Item 2

PLEASE READ:

We cannot hold food for you after the scheduled pick-up time. If there is a conflict, you may have someone else pick up your food for you. If you have any questions, please ask the volunteers when you sign up.

There are NO refunds or exchanges.
Any food NOT picked up on DEC. 20
will become a donation.

January Specials:

Chicken Breast Fritters: 5 lbs. for \$11.00 - The chicken breast fritters are breaded and can be used like a boneless chicken wing.

Stuffed Pork Chops: 2 lbs. for \$7.00 - The pork chops are stuffed with apples and cranberries.

Sea Scallops: 2 lbs. for \$11.00 - The sea scallops are individually quick frozen and there are 30-40 per pound.

Protein Box: \$12.00 - The Protein Box includes pork tenderloin (1.6 lbs. avg.), chicken drumsticks (3.5 lbs. avg.), ground beef (80/20; 1 lb.), breaded fish sticks (1 lb.), and fresh eggs (1 dozen).

Mozzarella Sticks: 2 lbs. for \$6.00 - The mozzarella sticks are par-cooked and ready for the oven.

Meatloaf: 2 lbs. for \$6.75 - The meatloaf is a traditional meatloaf made from 100% ground beef.

Breakfast Sausage: 3 lbs. for \$7.00 - The breakfast sausage is made locally in Utica, NY.

What is Food \$en\$e??

What is it? Food \$en\$e offers the opportunity to stretch your food budget by purchasing quality food at a discount.

Who is eligible? EVERYONE is eligible to purchase food from Food \$en\$e. No donated food is used in this program. It's a buying club -- so there is no income requirement.

How does it work? It's Simple. Order and pay in advance at our site.

Cost is ALWAYS \$20.50 per unit. Multiple units may be purchased, and/or single specials — YOU choose!

Cash or EBT are accepted. No checks. (EBT customers must bring card and sign a voucher).

When can I sign up?

**Sundays, Jan. 7 & 14
10am –12 noon**

**Wednesday, Jan. 10
4-6 p.m.**

**Saturday, Jan. 13
10:30am—12:30pm**



STOP BY

St. Mark's

**CLOTHES CLOSET
SATURDAY, JANUARY 13
From 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

Browse through
men's, women's and
children's clothing,
shoes, jewelry, etc...



ALL FOR ONLY 25 CENTS PER ITEM!

The Green Café is open during
Clothes Closet with a FREE light
breakfast for shoppers!

**YOU MAY ALSO PLACE YOUR
FOOD \$EN\$E ORDER
AT THIS TIME!**

Pick-Up Date & Time:

**Wednesday,
Jan. 24
12-2 P.M.**

FOOD \$ENSE – A Fun Way to Meet our Neighbors



Each month on a Wednesday morning (usually the third Wednesday), a small gathering of volunteers assembles in the Undercroft to await THE COMING! This happens every month...not just during Advent! Around 11 o'clock the big CNY Food Bank truck pulls up near the Undercroft red door and disgorges two pallets of fresh, frozen and packaged food. Usually the driver is Jim, a long time CNY Food Bank employee who spends 3 days each month delivering food to the 40+ Food \$en\$e sites in the Food Bank's 11 country area including the snow challenged North Country. Awaiting his arrival are Barry Guinn, Phil Buffham, our enthusiastic sexton, Bob Kraushaar, Jim Miller, Keith- a volunteer from ACR, and our staff of organizers- Marilyn Guinn, Kitty Miller, Sally Tullar, Nancy Morrison, and Phyllis Honsinger (when she's not subbing).

The unloading of the truck takes only a short time - ten or so minutes- thanks to the ramp door to the Undercroft. It is then a job of the "checkers"- the ladies mentioned above- to make sure we have the order accurately delivered. One time Andrew from the Food Bank rushed over to bring us one bunch of fresh celery! Once checked, counted against the invoice, Jim is off to his next stop. And we begin filling boxes and bags. The standard \$20.50 "unit" contains 12 items- always 2 fresh produce items, several frozen meat and fish offerings, and other staples and frozen items. On a separate table the "specials" are stacked up- larger quantity offerings that folks may buy or not. All orders have been prepaid by cash or EBT cards. Everyone then joins in assembly line fashion. Head checker, Kitty, double checks to see we've included all 12 items and inserts the next months offering flier in the boxes.

By 12 noon, we are ready for the "customers." Now in our fourth year, we have developed friendships with the regulars. Many arrive with carts; many have no car and then lug their orders home with their cart. We get to listen to the cares of folks who live in the neighborhood- sharing good news and not so good news. One woman shared the challenges of lupus, another with work related injury. They all receive friendly and cheerful greetings and many sit down and chat before returning to life's chores. We encourage folks to order for the next month thus saving them a separate trip to place it and pay for it.

We have set aside days and times that folks can count on. We have order hours on Wednesdays from 4-6, Saturday morning of the Clothes Closet, and always two consecutive Sunday mornings. During the summer months we add the Sundaes on Fridays dates as well. Deb Denny, our secretary, always does a magnificent job of producing the monthly flier, maintaining an e-mail list for alerting folks to the menu and dates and times for ordering. We distribute the fliers to the Brooklyn Pickle, the Byrne Dairy store, Colonial Laundromat, and Hazard Branch library. We also have flier holders attached to the hand rail of the Genesee Street entrance to the parish hall. Deb also e-mails it to Frazer and Porter schools and to our own parishioners. Finally, she sends the information to the Post Standard events calendars and that of the Syracuse New Times.

On our December Wednesday, we had four "customers." Two were new. One lady had spotted the flier as she was leaving the Byrne Dairy store and acted upon it. A second new person was a lady from Camillus who had seen it in the paper. They were both here at the same time, so we chatted. They were excited about the value as most are on fixed incomes. Two other young ladies came in who have been Wednesday regulars. One is the niece of a disabled gentleman from the neighborhood. She does the shopping for him. This month they bought the "unit" and all of specials but one! The fourth visitor is shopping with us regularly for her family. All were invited to the Friday Christmas concert in the Undercroft and to the Clothes Closet the following morning- with Santa, toys for kids, crafts, and...Food \$en\$e.

We continue to try and expand our reach. Please tell your friends. and even better, try a unit for a month or two...\$20.50 every time. You are invited to join us at the "round table" on delivery day. You'll enjoy the company - a rather painless way of sharing the good news and helping others to feed themselves.

Pledge Report—December, 2017

As of December 12, 2017, the total pledge amount received is \$46,496 with 26 pledges total, including two new pledges for 2018. Our goal is \$65,000. As you know, our Church counts on members to pledge for budget planning and help cover expenses. If you have not pledged in the past, we hope you consider it for 2018. No amount is too small and anything that you feel you can pledge for is welcomed.

Budget Report for January 1 thru November 30, 2017

	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Difference of of 11/30</i>
<i>Income</i>	\$152,440.00	\$136,248.53	-\$16,191.42
<i>Expenses</i>	\$225,496.12	\$199,854.09	-\$25,642.03
<i>Deficit</i>	-\$73,056.12	-\$63,605.56	+\$9450.56

“This report includes Income and Expenses and shows where we are at budget -wise through November 30, 2017. What this means that while income is down significantly we are also down in expenses which helps make up for it. If you would like an overall report, please email me at pdunn5@gmail.com and I will send you one.”

Pat Dunn, Treasurer



I would like to thank everyone who offered prayers and thoughts at the time of my Mom's passing in Buffalo and my cousin's funeral in Rochester, three days prior to Mom. I was there to witness Mom's last breath. The funeral director allowed me to participate in preparing her body and hair.

Once again, Thank You,

Forrest M. Antrum



St Mark the Evangelist Episcopal Church

1612 W. Genesee Street Syracuse, NY 13204

TO:

