



ST. PATRICK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

February 2025

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Breaking Bread

Elsewhere in this issue of Shamrock we are happy to present a look back at our doings in Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. In addition to a joyful Christmas Eve service, we reached into our community with in-kind collections for the holidays, and for good measure held a successful annual meeting to get the Vestry off to a good start in the new year.

I'd like to use the rest of my article to look ahead, since the season of Lent is coming soon. Ash Wednesday (when Lent begins) is on the late side this year, March 5. Easter Day is also on the late side, falling on April 20. The weeks in-between are when the church calls for special focus on our spiritual lives, with the three traditional practices of prayer, charitable giving, and self-control. To some these practices sound dreary, but I don't see it that way. Deepening discipleship is a good thing. It is what Jesus calls us to do. I believe that the parish should help things along by providing a little structure.

Last year we had a lovely prayer focus, using the traditional form called, *lectio divina*, or holy reading. Ann LePage led us in this on Sunday mornings. I've asked the Epiphany book group for help in figuring out what to do this Lent, by way of a spiritual program. I can't yet say what form it will take, but stay tuned. I can promise that St Patrick's will do something to support and encourage our personal prayer lives.

It is becoming ever more clear to me that the disciplines of charitable giving and self-control work best if they work together. It's fine to "give something up for Lent." For instance, maybe someone decides not to eat any donuts for forty days. But it would be even better if the money saved on donuts is shared with those in need. This is why we will once again provide opportunities to support groups that do good works, both at home and abroad.

Here are the groups the vestry has agreed to support with special Lenten collections in 2025: the ACES after-school program; the Bigfork Food Bank; Valley Neighbors refugee ministry; the Warming Center homeless ministry; the Episcopal hospital in



Gaza City. All of these reach out to the kinds of people Jesus did, and I am happy to offer them for your support.

As for Sunday worship, please note we will once again use the traditional language of Rite I for Holy Eucharist. This language is unfamiliar to some, but for others it is what they grew up with and enjoy hearing again. The change gives an interesting contrast to what we are used to. We have to think a little and stay alert to find our way through the prayers. Thinking a little and staying alert are good things in their own right, in my view.

Last but not least, our annual festival in honor of Patrick will be Sunday, March 16. We suspend Lent for a day to honor our patron saint, and remind ourselves of his story. Plan to be on hand for a little merriment as we make our way (solemnly for the most part) to the glories of Easter Day.

Advent and Epiphany Highlights :

Advent offerings

This year St. Patrick's congregation planned to focus our giving on the following causes:

December 1: Bigfork Food Bank—canned Mandarin oranges and cranberry sauce for pies

Giving totaled 101 lbs of canned food

December 8: Flathead Spay and Neuter Taskforce-- dry food for cats and dogs

Giving totaled 827 lbs of dog and cat food / treats

December 15: Valley Neighbors (homeless/refugee ministry) (collection of linens)

Giving totaled 15 full shopping bags of linens



December 22: Christmas presents for a Bigfork Schools family.

Giving totaled 26 wrapped gifts

December 24: Cash collection was given to support the Sparrows Nest teen homeless ministry

Giving totaled \$675.00 for cash collection

As we started working with the local school system to identify the family that we would be helping with Christmas gifts, it came to our attention that the family that was selected for us was about to lose their housing in December. The congregation was made aware of this need, and came to their aid and provided a place to stay for December and the beginning of January. Then as the family decided to move out of state, there were congregation members who supported the family in their relocation. Reaching out and helping those in need is a real honor and helps us to remember the true meaning of Christ's birth and His ministry on earth.

Advent and Christmas services





Dorenda and Bill Kramp Departure:

On January 12th, Dorenda and Bill Kramp were honored with a nice send-off to their new Texas home by the worshipers at St. Patrick's. Bill and Dorenda have been active members of the congregation. Our first annual summer picnic took place at their home in 2022.

Bill continued to travel to his job in Alaska, but participated in various service capacities for the church when he was home.

Dorenda was a constant presence at the church, and could be found hosting coffee hour monthly, serving on the vestry, working on cooking at the Annual picnic and providing a place for the Bishop and her husband to relax and enjoy the Valley during their annual visit. Dorenda was one of the driving forces behind making our congregation more safe by ensuring that we put together a fire plan, and enacted a fire safety drill in 2024.

Both Bill and Dorenda will be greatly missed, but they have opened up their hearts and home to host anyone who wants to visit them at their new home in TX. Careful what you ask for!





Annual Meeting

The church's annual meeting was held on January 26, 2025. The Annual Report was presented. Each year two vestry terms expire and need to be replaced. This year the terms that ended were those that were filled by Nancy Winder and Tom LePage. Nancy was not eligible for re-election, since she had completed two consecutive terms, but Tom was eligible and agreed to run again. Jerry Southwood agreed to run to fill the spot left open by Nancy's departure. Needless to say, both Tom and Jerry were elected by acclamation.

Delegates to the Diocesan Convention will be Beth Schomber and Anne LePage. Reports were written by different committee heads to give a full accounting of church activities and finances over the last year. A new directory was also made available at the meeting, as well as copies of the 2024 Annual Report.



Candlemas Service

On February 2, the congregation celebrated the presentation of Christ in the Temple. There were elders who recognized this child as the son of God, and were blessed in seeing prophecy fulfilled. A Candlemas Procession was held to commemorate this momentous occasion of Christ coming into our world and providing us a Light to enlighten the nations. We lit candles to help reinforce our commitment to let His light shine in our lives and in our world.



New Pictorial Directory

"A picture is worth a thousand words" or so the saying goes. We want to ensure that we are presenting our congregation in the best and truest light, and having an up-to-date pictorial directory can help all of us join together better. If you just cannot remember that person's name in the next row, and they are not wearing a name tag, it is a wonderful asset to have the directory, and be able to connect with each person by name. Please consider updating your picture if you have not done that recently. You can see Karla or Greg to get a new picture taken at the end of a service or to submit a new picture for the upcoming pictorial directory.

Memorial Wall

Over the last twelve months, Greg Thigpen has helped turn the vision of a Memorial Wall into a reality. We are planning to showcase different pictures of departed members of the church, who have been with us in recent years, but have passed on and our memory of them is still fresh. The pictures are a great reminder of those who we miss but are not forgotten. Thank you for those who have supplied pictures, and if there is someone that you would like to see memorialized who has been a previous member of the church, but is not on the wall, please let Donnel know.





Upcoming Services:

As we get closer to the Lenten season and Easter, we are preparing our hearts and minds to be receptive to the great sacrifice that Christ made. With that in mind, we want to showcase different speakers during Lent to remind us that there are many needs in the world and ways that we can help our companions on our earthly journey. As Donnel mentioned in the



breaking bread section of our newsletter, there are many worthy causes that the Vestry has decided to focus on during this season. Look online (www.Stpatricksbigfork.org) and in our weekly correspondence to see what preparations we are making for those speakers and giving opportunities leading up to Easter.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays:

<i>February</i>		<i>March</i>		<i>April</i>	
Gene Gribben	13	Tom LePage	1	Karla Smolen	6
Simon LePage	20	Fr. Donnel O'Flynn	1	Bruce Cutshall	28
Mark Smolen	21	Dick Carter	10		
		Caroline Knapp	16		
		Patty Blonda Saville	17		

Anniversaries:

February

Jerry and Jeanne Southwood 10
 Jackie Mckennan and Scott Waldo 14

March

Dick and Susie Carter 8

April

Buz and Carole Meyer 9



Contact Us

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St. Patrick's Vestry 2023:

Tom LePage, Sr. Warden

Peter Robinson, Jr. Warden

Jerry Southwood, Treasurer

Pam Robinson, Assistant Treasurer

Nancy Winder, Clerk of the Parish

Dorenda Kramp

Beth Schomber

Sara Sheffield

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