

The Spirit of St. Mark's

O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. Psalm 63:1 (NRSV)

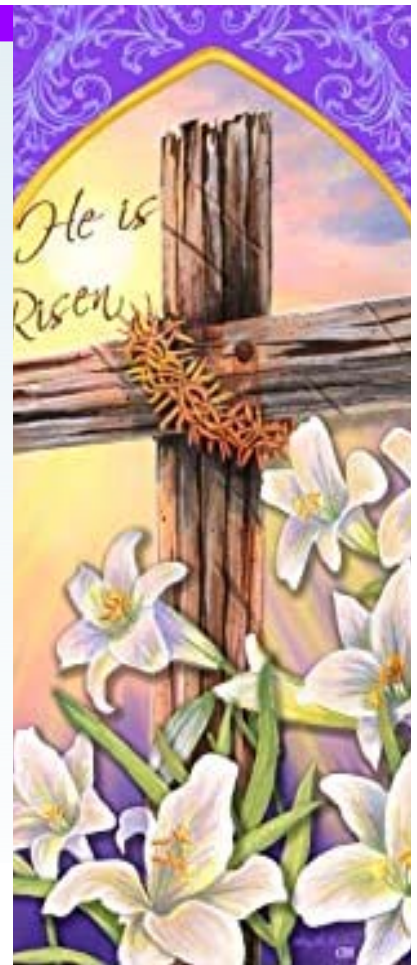
We have all been thirsty. We have all felt the physical dryness of our mouth, accompanied by the deep biological need for something to drink. It is a powerful desire and need. Our body needs water to function, and if we go without water for too long we can die. It is a source of life from which we must draw from regularly and daily.

It is not surprising then that water plays such an important symbolic role in God's story. We see it in the quote above from Psalm 63 and throughout the Good News God revealed in Jesus in the gospel stories. In John's Gospel for instance, the theme and important symbol of water weaves its way through, from the waters of baptism (Jn 1:33), the transformation of the water into wine (Jn 2:9), Jesus at the well with the Samaritan Women (Jn 4:14), walking on water (Jn 6:19), and right up to Jesus's crucifixion when his side was pierced and water came out (Jn 19:34), water is a powerful symbol entwined with earthly life, death, and eternal life.

In the story of Jesus meeting the Samaritan woman at the well, we read on the third Sunday of Lent, Jesus makes the distinction between the gifts of physical water and spiritual water. In that story in John chapter 4, verse 10, Jesus says to the woman, *"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."*

In most of our lives today, living in Canada, we rarely find ourselves without easy access to water to drink that satisfies our physical body's need for water, but the secular world we live in has certainly found its way to make a profit from selling us water.

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Home communion is available for those who have been unable to attend worship services. Please contact the church office if you would like someone to visit.

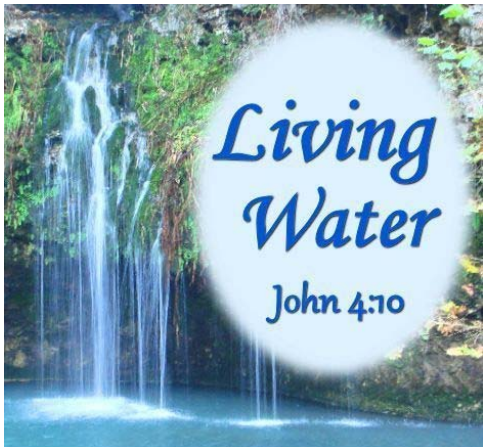
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Water is metered service or bottled for sale. More and more the water we need for our physical life has an increasing monetary cost. Our world's earthly powers are cunning and too often shameless when it comes to finding ways to gain earthly profit.

"Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." - John 4:13-14

Jesus says this because he wants the woman at the well, and us, to understand that God works differently than our earthly structures. We as Christians know that God loves all of God's creation, and because of God's love for us, God sent Jesus to point us back toward God's self. Jesus reminds us that the "living water," the spiritual water that sustains our soul, is not something that can be bought.

The "living water" that Jesus Christ brings to us and to our world is good news. Easter Day then and now is a celebration of the truth of that most amazing gift. No amount of money can buy it, but it is offered free to those who choose in their heart to receive it.



The living spring of life giving water that Christ gives to us as we live each day comes from our relationship with God through Christ is what quenches our deep desire for true connection and belonging that satisfies us in a way that is lasting and nurturing. It helps us to live our daily life in a way that not only gives us life individually, but gives each of us an abundance to share with those around us.

None of this would have authority in our lives today, if not for Christ's Resurrection. Jesus' teaching and example were proven in God's demonstration that the Good News that God gave us in Jesus was stronger than all our world could bring against Christ, even death.

Our yearly Easter journey and the celebration of Christ's resurrection is about making real of God's promise of life over the power of death.

As we approach this year's celebration of Jesus' resurrection, God's great example, the triumph of life and Christ's victory of death, we are invited spiritually to drink the living water that will satisfy our deepest thirst for living in the new life of Christ. A living water which fills us with an abundance that overflows and pours out into the lives of those around us.

Our faithfulness in following Christ on this yearly spiritual journey brings us each to that source of spiritual source of living water and invites us to drink.

Our participation in the worship and celebration of our Christian faith along with our faith community is like the cup that helps us drink from that living water.

I invite you to join with your community, in person or online, in the celebration of God's life changing and life giving gift.

Rev. Rob Park

Refugee Sponsorship



In 2021, St. Mark's applied to sponsor a refugee family originally from Syria. The family arrived on February 9, 2023.

Kamal, Thanaa, and Lina have now been in Canada for just over a month. They are well settled in their apartment. They are very comfortable and appreciative of the support we have been able to provide. On the downside, the elevator at the apartment building has been broken for at least three weeks, and the company is having difficulty finding replacement parts. Walking up four flights of stairs is quite difficult especially for Thanaa.

The newcomers have family in Brantford so there have been several social occasions, including the other sponsors. Bob and Mieke Schroeder have helped them set up bank accounts, get their social insurance numbers and apply for their Ontario health cards. Derek Marchewka, from St. Mark's, has also reached out to Kamal. Kamal took the initiative to apply for a driver's licence. He now has his G1. Kamal and Lina both speak English and have already applied for jobs and hope to be working soon. Thanaa is eager to improve her English.

The monthly living costs are being covered by family members and private sponsors. St. Mark's along with Grace, St James, Brantford and St. James, Paris and community friends donated most of the furniture and household goods for the apartment. The family is thankful for all the donations.

Donating to St. Mark's

The Christian Generosity team would like to remind everyone that there are many ways to support St. Mark's ministries financially. You are now able to give through e-transfer directly from your bank and you can set this up to be automatic each month. If you prefer, pre-authorized debit is available and all you have to do is fill in the PAD form which can be found on our website. If you already use PAD and wish to update your donation, this does not require you to fill in any forms. All you need to do is contact the envelope secretaries with your change by emailing walker.anne@rogers.com.

Waypoint Kids

All children ages 3 and up are invited to join our staff of volunteer teachers in Munro Hall on Sunday mornings at 10:30. Our new programme teaches children about Jesus and God through hands-on-activities and answering their many questions.

We hope that your child will join us, as together, we learn about God's love and care in a positive place for them to love, laugh and learn.

You are invited to join others at St. Mark's on Thursday, March 30 at 1:00 p.m. to make palm crosses. No experience is needed; just bring a pair of scissors.

Easter Garden Flowers

We invite you to use one of our Easter Flower envelopes located in the pew envelope holders to give thanks or to remember loved ones by making a donation towards the flowers in the Easter Garden.

All dedications will be published on Easter Day.



Amazonia Report

The Companion Diocese committee of Huron and Amazonia held our first meeting since February 2022, on the 28th of February 2023. It was held on Zoom. Bishop Todd joined us, and Bishop Marinez joined us from Amazonia. Bishop Marinez had just returned from Tanzania.

We focused on future planning for our companion dioceses in 2023 and 2024 and our work together. We are looking at post-pandemic as an opportunity to set goals on the horizon. Stay tuned.

St. Mary's Anglican Cathedral in Belem has a new dean. His name is Rev. Ives Vergara Nunes and can be seen conducting Monday morning prayers on Facebook.

We have been asked by Bishop Todd to continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Amazonia.

Paz
Nigel.

It's Tax Season! Read all about the Donation Tax Credit

In general, the first \$200 of charitable donations claimed on our tax returns will bring about a 15% federal tax credit, and donations above that amount will bring about a 29% federal tax credit. The comparable Ontario tax credit adds 5.05% and 11.16% respectively. That means the combined Donation Tax Credits are about 20% for the first \$200 of donations claimed and 40% for the rest.



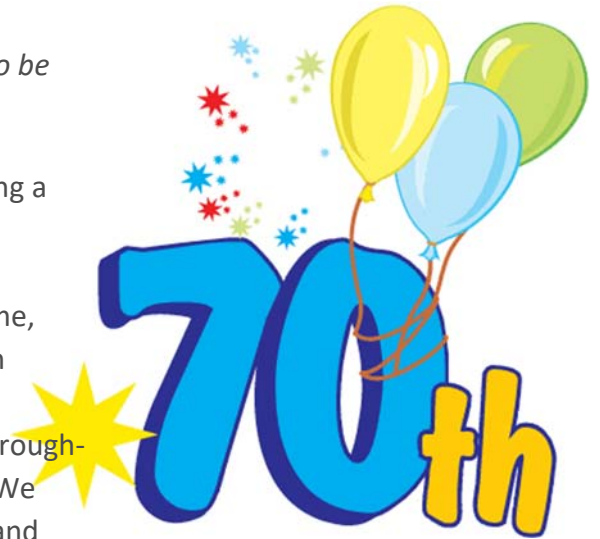
Donation tax credits are “non-refundable” meaning they can reduce tax payable but don't generate a refund where there is no tax to offset. Donation Tax Credits, calculated on donations to St. Mark's and others, are a silver lining in that dark cloud of having to prepare our Income Tax Returns!

These credits can help us support the financing of more good works through St. Mark's for 2023. Our goal is a 5% increase in envelope donations for 2023, for parishioners who can do that, to help reduce our increased costs.

70 Years of Generosity

Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 1 Timothy 6:18

This year marks St. Mark's 70th anniversary. 70 years of being a community of believers dedicated to God's service in our community. The Christian Generosity committee has historically reminded us about how we give through our time, talent and treasure. Throughout the year, we hope to again highlight the many ways we answer God's call to be a generous people. We are going to look back at our roots throughout the year to see who we were and who we've become. We hope to highlight those things for which we give gratitude and thanks to God and hopefully hold a reunion event to celebrate our 70 years.



It's a funny thing about life, once you begin to take note of the things you are grateful for, you begin to lose sight of the things that you lack.

Senior Service and Luncheon

Wednesday, April 12
11:00 a.m.

Please join us for worship beginning at 11:00 a.m. followed by a lunch provided by members of St. Mark's.

This is a great opportunity to share in a worship service and enjoy some fellowship with others attending this event.

If you plan to attend, please register by calling 519-752-6451 or emailing office@stmarks.on.ca.



A New Flower Ministry

If you enjoy working with flowers, you might want to participate in a new initiative at St. Mark's.

With the rising cost of floral arrangements, St. Mark's is planning to offer instructions on flower arranging and preparing flowers for the altar. By doing this, we will have a group who can arrange fresh flowers in-house and make it more affordable for our members to put flowers on the altar as memorials or in thanksgiving.

If you are interested in learning more about this new initiative, please speak with Rob Park or Christine in the church office.

Upcoming Fundraising and Social Events



Saturday, May 6 - Quarter Auction

Save your quarters and get ready for loads of fun as you bid on numerous items up for auction.

Sunday, May 7 - Coronation High Tea

Share in a fun afternoon with friends for a delicious high tea menu of sandwiches and desserts. There will be limited seating; tickets must be purchased in advance.

Sunday, June 10 - Strawberry Social

Get ready to sample a variety of strawberry desserts made from fresh Ontario strawberries.

For more information about these events, contact the church office at 519-752- 6451.

The efforts of one person can't move mountains. It's the strength of us all working together that makes a change.

The last Soup and Sandwich lunch until the Fall is on March 26.

On Sunday, April 30, we will offer beef-on-a-bun and coleslaw.

A lunch (TBD) will be available on May 28.



Good Grief Widows and Widowers' Group

The Good Grief Widows and Widowers' group meets every second Wednesday at 6:30 in St. Mark's hall. To date, we have had card and games nights and one guest speaker. Once the weather is nicer, we plan to have some outdoor activities. At the end of the evening we have refreshments and socializing.

Attendance has been 10 to 12 each week but we would love to have more people join us.

Volunteers Needed

We are looking for volunteers to assist with planning, preparing lunch, setup and cleanup for the Senior Worship and Luncheon on Wednesday, April 12.

If you are interested in helping, please sign the sheet on the Information Table or call the church office and leave a message.

Holly Jolly Handmade Market

Date: Saturday, November 18th, 2023

We will be having the following tables at our Holly Jolly Handmade Market.

Bake Table - cookies, squares, pies and other sweet treats
Knitting Table - hats, mitts, socks and other knitted treasures
Preserves Table - homemade relishes, pickles, jams, jellies etc.
Jewelry Table
Sewing Table
Gift Baskets
Silent Auction

How can you help?

- Donate items for one or more of these tables.
- Provide leftover Easter grass for filler for the gift baskets.
- Donate gift baskets that you no longer use.
- We could use any mason jars that you do not need.
- Contribute new and nearly new (appropriate for gifting) items for our gift baskets and silent auction.

If you have an item or items that you would like to donate, please speak with Christine in the office.

Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things.

Parish Council for 2023

Wardens

Vicki Corke, Cindy Taylor, Sharon Bliss and Ralph Storey

Lay Delegates

Nigel Challen, Janet Vickerman, Elizabeth Stone

Alternate Lay Delegates

Sheri McIntyre, Christine Hazell

Members at Large

Kathe Hill, Jason Hutton, Charles Ruff, Rob Burtch,
Joe Colaiacovo and Thomas Kuttickal

Each month, excluding July, our Parish Council meets on the third Tuesday of the month to discuss the care and maintenance of the church, congregational life, the financial affairs of the church and explore new opportunities to fulfill our mission.

The Holly Jolly Handmade Market is an all-parish members' event.

Please consider a way that you could help to make this a success.



Waypoint Kids will join the procession of the palms on Palm Sunday and then proceed to Munro Hall with their teachers.

Regular classes will be held in Munro Hall on Easter Day.

