



Welcome to Pastor Annette and her husband, Tom!

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Pastor Annette and Tom. What a wonderful start to the new year!

Pastor Annette's first sermon was about times in our lives of being included. Yes, that is an invitation to each and every one of us to be included in St. Mark's.

Pastor Annette indicated on her call application that she believes in encouraging the culture of "care for each other" and that ministry is about all of us together. All are welcome.

Pastor Annette's Installation Service was held on Sunday, January 25th at 4:00 p.m. followed by sandwiches and squares with coffee, tea and juice.

Pastor Annette comes to us from Grace Lutheran in Eganville where she served as pastor since 2004. Her previous experience was at St. Matthew's Lutheran, Hanover; Lutheran Campus Ministry, Chaplain, London; St. Peter's Lutheran, Wiarton, and also, as a student at "the Chapel at Sauble Beach" where a number of our members will remember Pastor Annette and she them.

She is married with two adult step-sons (London and Kingston). Her mother, sister and brother and their families all live in Nova Scotia.

Pastor Annette is a creative and passionate organizer. She consults, shares leadership and is interested in youth and the community.

She is off to a great start: discussing Stephen Ministry and Confirmation Classes with Helen Weber. She has met with Pastor Jennifer about the visitation program of St. Mark's and our shut-ins. She has attended a Community Ministry dinner, a Worship committee meeting and Council Meeting and greeting old friends and new ones.

Pastor Annette has a welcome smile and a wonderful singing voice. Be on the look-out for new and exciting things at St. Mark's!



Of course, what is a party at St. Mark's without cake!

825 King St. W, Kitchener, ON N2G 1E3
(519) 743-6309
email: pastor@stmarkskw.org
web: www.stmarkskw.org

Pastor: **Pastor Annette Smith**
 Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Vernon Cronmiller
 Visiting Pastor: Pastor Jennifer Wirt
 Community Ministry Coordinator: Rev. Marilyn Burnard

Congregational Chair: Jim Oakley
 Music Director: Lilla Hall
 Parish Secretary: Nancy MacLean



Our church on the corner of Green and King

What's new?

"Hey, what's new?" Seems like an innocent enough question: a question frequently asked as a greeting. At this time however, it is a completely loaded question. "Hey, Pastor Annette, what's new?" Here's what's new!

- **New year**
- **New job**
- **New house**
- **New city**
- **New people**
- **New leadership team**
- **New workplace**
- **New health situation**
- **New routine of medication**

I could go on...suffice it to say that the one small word "New" can be provocative, challenging, frightening, overwhelming and downright exciting! Think of the possibilities:

a whole new series of stories to learn, people to meet and get to know, neighbours to greet and with whom to share time, a city with which to get re-acquainted, a ministry within which to serve and grow and learn.

"Hey, St. Mark's, what's new?"

It's a new year and we have a new pastor. Along with the good news of the gospel this will be provocative, challenging, frightening, overwhelming and downright exciting! The ministry and witness of St. Mark's is vibrant and speaks to the community with loving acts and compassionate gestures. It embraces those who have been here for many years and "new"-comers. The constant flow of faces and stories through this place means that St. Mark's is well acquainted with the newness and freshness that life in faith through the Holy Spirit breathes into our midst. So...

What really is new is the everyday expression of love, justice, peace and hope that our intersection with the living Christ offers us. You might think this is an old, old story, but what makes it new is our commitment and covenant to seek the path that Christ shows us this day and this year. My hope and prayer is that this new beginning will be pleasing to God and seek God's ways of being, of serving and of loving the world. I look forward in the midst of so many new things to sharing time, prayer, worship, study learning, and seeking together.

*Happy NEW year!!
Pastor Annette*

Dear Friends at St. Mark's,

I want to express my appreciation for the wonderful farewell celebration on the 28th. It was a truly thoughtful and well-planned event that hit "all the right notes", as one member phrased it. From Ralph's able and playful emceeing, to the various tributes, to the food, and gifts, I think it was just about as perfect as it could be – thank you so much. I was touched and humbled by your kind words and good wishes.

It was an honour to serve as your pastor during an important time of transition. St. Mark's is a very special community of faith, and I will miss you very much, but am so happy that Pastor Annette will be serving you with her energy, gifts, and creativity. All of you will remain in my prayers in the days ahead. May God continue to guide and bless you, Pastor Annette, and the various ministries of the church.

*With gratitude and love,
Pastor Claudine*



Christmas Pageant at St. Mark's!



An Accepting Church

by Stu Schellenberger

It's one thing to invite someone to church, to welcome that person and be friendly, but **what does it mean to truly be an accepting church?** We explored this question during an Adult Ed session in October.

Initially we identified some ways to be accepting of new people in worship, but we realized these were really more about making people feel comfortable – like allowing them to drink coffee during worship and not having any particular dress code. These kinds of things are nice, but not enough.

So what does it mean to be accepting?

Being accepting of someone means to be like Christ – to open our hearts and accept that person just as they are. Jesus spent much of his time serving and ministering to people on the fringes, the outcasts, the marginalized, sinners of all sorts, the sick, and people who were simply different from what was considered “acceptable” by mainstream society. We're called to do the same.

Being accepting of someone is far more challenging than simply saying “hello.”

As we got deeper into conversation, we identified some key points about what it means to us to feel accepted as we are:

- To enter into meaningful personal relationships (people get to know the real you)
- Connection to a community (feeling supported and loved by a community)
- People respecting your boundaries (knowing it's okay if there are certain things you don't want to talk about)



- No assumptions or judgments being made about you (we're all God's children)

Everyone has a different story, their own journey.

So when we see our fellow parishioners or new people entering our worship community, we should consider how we might go beyond the usual social pleasantries. How can we get to know them better, possibly be a bit more vulnerable and help them feel like they belong. The process requires time, persistence, courage, faith...but it's worth it. As Christians, it's what we're called to do.

Many churches, including St. Mark's, are careful to have a very broad and inclusive welcome statement. People are welcome regardless of appearance, intellect, political views, wealth, employment status, skin colour, sexual orientation, hygiene, volume, health, previous denomination, etc. But we should also strive to ensure that anyone welcomed to St. Mark's will also feel accepted by St. Mark's over time too.



Community Ministry/Food Bank Requests:

February – Canned Fruit
March – Cookies
April – Juice (powdered or cans)
May – Canned Beans



Three Churches Skating Party:
March 1st, 3-4 pm at Dom Cardillo Arena
(beside the Kitchener Auditorium).

Watch for the next Quilt Work meeting in April!

The Story Tellin' Man
Sunday, May 3rd

A “NEW ADDITION” TO ST. MARK’S

How many times (and for how many years) have you walked by the door with the sign ‘Library’? How many meetings have you attended in this room? Have you donated a book for its shelves? Perhaps you can answer one or all of these with, “I have”. Great...ask yourself, “when was the last time I borrowed a book”? St. Mark’s library is open for you and your family to discover and enjoy especially a “new addition”... **Heaven Is For Real by Todd Burpo and Lynn Vincent (2010, HIFR Ministries, Inc.)**

Here is a book report by Dilys Mieh.



HEAVEN IS FOR REAL

When four-year-old Colton Burpo made it through an emergency appendectomy his family was overjoyed at his miraculous survival. What they weren’t expecting, though, was the story that emerged in the following months – a story as beautiful as it was extraordinary, detailing their little boy’s trip to heaven and back.

This true story, retold by his father but using Colton’s uniquely simple words, offers a glimpse of a world that awaits us, where as Colton says, “*Nobody is old and nobody wears glasses.*”

There is the beauty that Colton reveals – the beauty that a child sees clearly.

“Colton spied a plastic horse among his toys and held it up for me to look. “Hey, Dad, did you know Jesus has a horse?”

“A horse?”

“Yeah, a rainbow horse. I got to pet him. There’s lots of colors.”

Lots of colors? What was he talking about?

“Where are there lots of colors, Colton?”

“In heaven, Dad. That’s where all the rainbow colors are.”

In another disclosure:

“Do you remember the hospital, Colton?” Sonja said.

“Yes, Mommy, I remember.” He said, “That’s where the angels sang to me.”

Colton reveals his experience in a child like, faith filled manner – in the purity and innocence that only a child can

describe. He states in a matter-of-fact manner “that Jesus’ chair in heaven is right next to his Dad’s – on the right side”. We are filled with wonderment. He speaks about sitting on Jesus’ lap with Jesus’ cousin on the right (John the Baptist). Colton reveals later that John was “nice”.

The impact and influence of Colton’s sharings is huge and continues to ripple – the family, his church family, the community and far beyond.

Lessons are learned, as Todd Burpo writes “I was reminded yet again that I could be real with God, I told my fellow pastors. I learned that I didn’t have to offer some kind of churchy, holy-sounding prayer in order to be heard in heaven. “You might as well tell God what you think,” I said. “He already knows it anyway.”

This book reminds us of the endless possibilities and beauty of God’s kingdom. Yet, this is an ordinary family with challenges faced by many. There are the arguments and frustrations. On deciding on a title for this book the suggestions were, *Heaven by Four (Todd, Colton’s dad), Heaven, According to Colton (Sonja, Colton’s mom), He’s Back, but He’s No Angel (Cassie, Colton’s older sister). Colton’s response was, “I want them to know that heaven is for real.”*

“In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith”. (Galatians 3:26 NIV)

“Heaven Changes Everything”

(book’s introductory page by Todd & Sonja Burpo)

To parents who have lost children, born
And unborn, may you find the
Comfort of heaven your child has found.
To all who are missing loved ones, may you find the
Assurance of the reunion awaiting you in heaven.
To the tired and sometimes forgotten
Children’s workers, may you hear
The applause coming from the throne of heaven.
To those who have been wounded and rejected, may you find
The healing and love that the Lord of
heaven offers you here and now.
And to anyone who is still uncertain
About heaven, may you discover
That God’s incredible gift is real and
That you can receive it today.

P.S. SEE THE MOVIE TOO!!!

Learning Committee

by Fay Albrecht

Welcome to 2015 !! We are trusting you are looking ahead to a year of peace and happiness.

So many unpleasant events happened in 2014. We lost 4 very faithful, long time members who have left us a big void. Let's try to meet their expectations as we start the new year with a new Pastor who is sure to challenge us.

Our children's Christmas program on December 21st was a highlight of the season. Much thanks goes to Helen, Tracy, Sharon and Lesley. To Carolyn and Steve for the music accompaniment.

Thank you to everyone who contributed knitted items for our "Mitten Tree"

We collected :

5 sets of hat, scarf and mitts

31 scarves

2 scarf and hat sets

39 hats

1 scarf and mitts sets

66 pairs of mitts

8 hat and mitts

8 pairs of slippers



Before we move ahead too quickly the season of Lent will be here. We will be gathering supplies for "**Learning and Living Kits**" for Canadian Lutheran World Relief for world wide distribution to children less fortunate.

We are going to set up a display in the showcase to help explain a little more about the kits, what they contain and where they will go. We are hoping for your support.

The confirmation classes will attend an area class once a month at St Matthew's in the hope of expanding their education in a more meaningful way with a larger group. It will be a good way for them to socialize with other Lutheran youth. Their leaders here will be accompanying them.

Thank you

to Jennifer Wirt, our visitation pastor for being willing to be on call for emergencies and visitations in January.

Have you ever considered being a Blood Donor??

Why not?

It is pain free, saves lives (at least three from one donation) and leaves you feeling good for helping someone else.

Giving blood is safe. You cannot get sick from giving or receiving blood. The blood goes through many tests before it is used. Hospitals require blood for surgical patients, the chronically ill and accident victims. Depending on the patient's condition he/she could receive several transfusions.

If you are 17- 71 years of age and in good health you could be eligible to donate. When you arrive at the clinic you will be asked many questions to determine your eligibility. A Registered Nurse will have a private interview with you.

Here in KW monthly clinics are held at Calvin Presbyterian Church on Westmount Road or Mennonite Brethern Church on Ottawa Street. There is a permanent clinic site at Bridgeport Road and Weber Street beside Sobey's. Call 1- 888-636-6283 to make an appointment at a date and time that suits you.

When you are finished and before you leave we'll treat you to juice and cookies. No need to rush away. Go with our thanks and come again.

Fay Albrecht

Donor Ambassador



“Lets Celebrate” Quilt

By Helen Weber

This year marks the 50th anniversary of our Canadian Maple Leaf flag. To celebrate this milestone, Diane Bonfonte has embarked on a unique project. It is the making of a banner consisting of representations of the flag done in piecework, in colours of red, blue and yellow. The hanging has been quilted and will be used as a visual aid in ceremonies, events and education about our flag during this year. Diane writes, “The multi-coloured panels represent Canada’s diverse landscape, seasons, and heritage of peoples and cultures. Every quilt tells a story and this quilt speaks for Canada’s flag to be an enduring symbol for Canadians of all generations.”

St. Mark’s members and friends who pieced and quilted this banner are: **Karen Cassidy-Small, Lilla Hall, Rowene Harlock, Darlene Reiner, Edna Shantz, Marlene Smith, Retia Starra, Carol Totzke and Helen Weber.**

This hanging will be blessed at St. Mark’s on Sunday, February 15, when all will then be able to see it.



Canadian Flag

By Diane Bonfonte

Sunday, February 15, 2015 in our liturgical calendar is Transfiguration Sunday – this Biblical event bridges the church’s seasons and deemed a Festival Sunday celebrating the vision of God’s glory revealed on Mount Tabor.

Sunday, February 15, 2015 is a memorable day in Canadian history. On this date 50 years ago, our present flag was raised at noon revealing it ‘officially’ for the first time on Parliament Hill (Ottawa).

Traditionally, we Lutherans don’t mix Sunday worship with secular events. For the flag’s 50th anniversary, perhaps the congregation or choir might sing ‘Sunrise East’ – song especially written to celebrate the 1986 merger of two Canadian church bodies that created today’s ELCIC. Similarly, the flag’s the single maple leaf design was chosen to symbolize unity – a strong message to convey for any nation and its peoples.

In fact, the Royal Coat of Arms of Canada display ‘Desiderantes Meliorem Patriam’ (“...they deserve a better county...” – Hebrews 11:16) and Canada’s Motto – ‘A Mari Usque Ad Mare’ (...“from sea to sea...” – Psalm 72:8) connect iconic national symbols with scripture.

In song and in prayer, with much thanksgiving, observe on Sunday, February 15th that our cherished flag will continue to wave as surely as the sun rises and sets over our great land “glorious and free”.



More Life at St. Mark's



Pastor Annette and Tom's first Sunday at St. Mark's



Friendship Circle Christmas Lunch

Pastor Claudine's last Sunday at St. Mark's. Lots of speeches and a great lunch.

Community Ministry

By Rev. Marilyn Burnard

I have often been asked about how successful we are at Community Ministry with the folks that come seeking help. Success can mean very different things to different people. Everyone's potential is different and while some may rise to high executive positions, others may be able to manage looking after themselves and accomplishing the tasks of daily living. For some, that can be a major success. For many of the folks we encounter at Community Ministry, success is being able to get to dinner every Wednesday. Coming to dinner gives them purpose and encourages them to get out and be with other people.



I jokingly said to him he could also pay for mine. His reply was, "I can do that now." He informed me he was now working a full time job, his health had improved somewhat and he was now able to care for himself without assistance. His is not a unique story but it is also more the exception than the rule. Most of our

Wednesday supper seems like family to many. We hear that often. It is a place that they feel welcome, that they can contribute in some small way to their community and it's a place they can make friends with a wide variety of people.

There are also many people who I have met over the years that I rarely see anymore. Some I don't know what has become of them and that is one of the challenges of this position. It is such a privilege to get to know people and when they disappear, I often think of them and wonder what happened to them. Sometimes, after many months and even years, they may reappear, sometimes with a positive story and sometimes not.

Recently, I was in Central Market picking up items for supper. In front of me in the cashier's line was a fellow who used to come and see me often. He used to help out with the cooking on Wednesday afternoons. As he paid for his groceries,

friends and neighbours who come looking for support, are successful just by reaching whatever their potential is. There are many grateful people in our gathering. Thankful that we are here, thankful as one woman put it to come and have a meal made with love, thankful that there are small ways they can give back to the community.

In Mary's song of praise, she sings of Jesus' calling to lift up the lowly and fill the hungry with good things. Jesus when he first starts his ministry recalls the words from the prophet Isaiah saying he has been chosen to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind and to set the oppressed free. As Christians in our choice to follow Jesus, we are the hands and feet of Christ in this time and place. It is our place to befriend those around us, to be their travel companions.

My favourite benediction says, **"We were made to know joy and be a blessing. We were created to experience love and to ease the burdens of those who travel with us. We were birthed to walk together – justly, humbly and lightly – upon God's earth."**

Financial Summary to December 31, 2014

In our Current Account, our envelope receipts increased by almost \$2,900 compared to last year. This is the first time since 2009 we have had an increase in envelope giving. We are grateful for those of you who were able to increase their support of St Marks in 2014. The level of support we received, however, was still less than we received in 1998 – 16 years ago.



While the Current Account finished the year with a reported deficit of \$11,700, the actual deficit, was in reality, closer to \$46,700. The actual deficit was reduced by transferring \$20,000 from the Reserve Account, a member, special contribution of \$15,000 to reduce the deficit and \$10,000 win-fall of former year HST rebates. Our expenses were \$10,000 more than budgeted.

On Dec 14, the congregation passed the 2015 budget, that, when amended during the meeting, increased the deficit for 2015 in the Current Account to almost \$60,000. While we have a substantial Reserve Account, given the past trend of declining revenues and increasing expenses, it is predicted that in 5 years, the annual deficit will be approaching \$100,000 and our reserves will be gone. **Consider what you can do to help keep our deficits in check.** In our Benevolence Account, envelope receipts were down by about \$2,000 from last year, which resulted in our remittance to the Eastern Synod being \$1,600 below budget. **Look for the full budget and financials in the Annual Report in February.**

WHETHER YOU'RE A, B, C OR X, Y, Z...
There's Something for You in
St. Mark's Adult Ed

By Harold Remus

Monday mornings, the Daily Discipleship group meets to ponder/reflect/take home whatever the Gospel for the following Sunday says to them about following Jesus that week – at work, at play, at home, morn, noon, or night. Come and see: **Church Parlour, 9:30-11:00.**

Yarning for fun and friendship? **Thursday mornings, Church Parlour, 9:30-11:00,** it's knit one, purl two, as the **Knitting Prayer Shawl Group** gathers to knit/crochet prayer shawls and exchange news of what happened the past week – and to pray about it.

Sunday mornings, 9:00-10:00, in the Church Parlour it's Adult Education Hour offering an array of topics and presenters on Bible, church within St. Mark's walls and beyond, social issues locally and globally.

TAKE A LOOK:

FEBRUARY

Feb. 1 • Anniversary Sunday: Windows on my life:

Canada, New York City, Overseas. My poetry and why I write it.
Bette Cronmiller, St. Mark's.

Feb. 8 • Chronic and degenerative illnesses and the grief they create. *Holly Mathers, St. Mark's, Hope for Families Counselling*

Feb. 15 • Romans 13 and war and peace: A Bible chapter that changed history! *Dr. Tom Yoder Neufeld, Professor Emeritus, Conrad Grebel University College*

Feb. 22 • My life in drama: actor, producer, director, designer, costumer. *Paul Bosch, Retired Campus Chaplain; Professor Emeritus, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary*

March

March 1 • St. Mark's Story Series: A lifetime in Kitchener-Waterloo and at St. Mark's. *Shirley Oakley, St. Mark's*

March 8 • A political Jesus? Money. Debt relief. Caesar. Taxes. The company he kept. *Dr. Alicia J. Batten, Conrad Grebel University College*

March 15 • Global needs, our global reach through Canadian Lutheran World Relief. *Jennifer Ardon, CLWR Church Liaison and Volunteer Coordinator*

March 22 • What Being Muslim Means for Me: Growing up in Colorado, Muslim Father (Iranian Ancestors), Christian Mother. *Religious Studies Professor. Dr. Meena Sharify Funk, Wilfrid Laurier University*

March 29 • What is your favourite hymn?
(Once again) *Lois Bergen, St. Mark's*

YOUTH TUBING
January 31, 2015

The four seasons are beautiful, and it is time to celebrate the 'coolest' of them all together! St. Mark's youth are invited to an afternoon of tubing at Chicopee .

When? Saturday, January 31 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Where? Chicopee Tube Park at 1600 River Road East

Cost? \$10 per person. We don't want this to stop anyone from coming. Let us know if the cost is a concern.

Other Information: We'll meet at the tube park. Remember to dress warmly! Talk to Julia or Jacob if you have any questions or concerns. Looking forward to a fun time together!

Julia and Jacob



(<http://www.chicopeetubepark.com/gettinghere.html>).

St. Mark's Showcase

Mid February – March 23rd

Learning: Kiddie Kits

Next Showcase

End of March - June

Liturgical Spring Seasons:
HOLYdays

Holy Week, Ascension, Pentecost

UPDATE ON THE ION (LRT Construction)

Jim Oakley received notification and is meeting with a representative about the next stage of the LRT.

To date we know that:

- Construction is Ahead: King West from Union to Victoria
- Beginning as early as February 2015, weather permitting, construction will begin on King West, from Union to Victoria to upgrade and replace underground services (e.g., water and wastewater) and to make way for ION. The planned construction will generally be carried out between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., Monday to Friday, although some Saturday work may be necessary. Major activities include the removal of trees, cutting with saws and removal of asphalt, excavation of soil, installation of new utilities, backfilling and asphalt restoration, and road reconstruction.
- In the spring of 2015, construction to build the King Street Underpass will begin. To complete this work, King West, from Wellington North to Victoria South, will be closed for up to 18 months.

More information can be found on the website at www.rideion.ca



Caring for our Earth

By The Confirmation Class

After discussing the first article of the Apostles' Creed, and considering that the earth is a precious gift from God, our confirmation kids came up with a list of suggestions on things we can do to better care for this earth which we all share. It is not an exhaustive list, but can serve as a reminder for us all to live mindfully.

- walk or bike instead of driving
- use transit
- combine trips and errands
- recycle
- compost/green bin
- reduce garbage
- use reusable bags
- want/need less
- turn lights off
- turn computers off
- print less
- buy fair trade
- give to thrift shops
- buy from thrift shops
- use toy libraries
- make gift tags from old cards

Our confirmands are: **William Nhanala, Emily Sauderson, Gordon Thomas, Cameron Brown, Amy Gillespie, Brandon Thomas.** Please keep these young people in your prayers.



Editing ReMarks – A Note from the Editors

Thank you to the Members of St. Mark's who so willingly share items for ReMarks. Articles submitted may be edited, always focusing on the information being presented. Pictures and graphics are used where possible to replace a myriad of words. The ReMarks Committee suggests 800 words as a maximum for submissions.

We encourage members to receive their copy of ReMarks

electronically via e-mail.

You can request this service at office@stmarkskw.org. An added benefit of receiving your newsletter via e-mail is that it is in full colour!

If an article is submitted late it may not be printed, articles may be edited – an article may be deferred to a later issue at the discretion of the Editorial Board.

2015 Newsletter Schedule

Month	Deadline Date
April/May	March 9
June/July/August	May 4
September/October	August 4
November/December /January	October 5