

St. Mark's Remarks

Seek God ♦ Serve Others ♦ Transform Lives

Services: 10:00 am-Praise Service/Choral Holy Eucharist Rite II on alternating Sundays.— Spanish 8:00 am Sunday School 9-9:45 am Lion's Den 9:00 am Wed. 10 am-Healing Service

OCTOBER 2017

Blessing Our Pets: In The Spirit Of St. Francis And Judaism . . .

By Jon M. Sweeney



On Sunday, Oct. 8, churches around the world will celebrate something that St. Francis of Assisi started almost 800 years ago: blessing our animals. It was Francis who first introduced the idea that human beings are only one of a myriad of creations of God and all are blessed in God's "eyes." The feast day of St. Francis (the day that he died) is celebrated every year on October 4, and blessing of the animal services are usually scheduled for the Sunday closest to that day.



Whether you realize it or not, you probably know something about St. Francis. He is the most popular Catholic saint in the world. He is the one who preached to the birds; blessed fish that had been caught, releasing them back into the water; communicated with wolves, brokering an agreement between one famous ferocious wolf and the citizens of a town that were terrified of it and used real animals when he created the very first, live, Christmas nativity scene. As a result of these, Francis is the patron saint of animals and the environment.

The first blessing of the animals happened like this: One warm afternoon early in his ministry (sometime between 1210-15), Francis wandered outside of Assisi, full of self-doubt, asking God if perhaps everything he had done until that point had been for the wrong reasons. Francis wondered if he should have simply gotten married and raised a family as his father wanted him to do. It was while he was praying alone to God that Francis glimpsed some birds along the path. He paused and began to speak to them as if to equals. Soon, he began to "preach" to them about God's glories and all the reasons why both humans and birds should be grateful. That day marks the beginning of the environmental movement, the beginning of the era when we begin to understand ourselves as intrinsically connected to all of creation.

He exhibited a sensitivity to the living and organic things around him that sets him apart from other people of his day and the saints who came before him. He even cared for the inanimate objects of creation with a sensitivity that is similar to Buddhist teachings about kindness toward all sentient beings. One of the most beautiful paragraphs of "The Golden Legend" by Jacobus of Voragine (a late medieval text about the lives of the saints) explains:

The saint would not handle lanterns and candles because he did not want to dim their brightness with his hands. He walked reverently on

(Continued on page 2)

Schedule of Sunday Services...

8:00 AM — Spanish Service
9:00 AM — Sunday School
9:00 AM — Lion's Den
(Fellowship Hour)
10:00 AM — Praise/Choral
Holy Eucharist Rite II

Blessing of the Animals...

October 8th . . . 10 am . . .
Knight Hall

Cursillo Ministry...

Bring your plastic bags to Church with you every Sunday and donate them to the Cursillo Ministry — Donation Box in Narthex.

Divine Diners...

Fall Groups have been selected. Contact Carolyn Morgan at gcmorgan41@aol.com or 817-266-8016 if you have questions.

All Saints Day...

October 29 . . . 10 am
Potluck to follow . . .

Advent Contemplative Retreat...

November 4th
9:30 am

Don't forget to buy your ticket(s) for ECW&M's Annual Spaghetti Dinner and the Advent Contemplative Retreat

stones out of respect for him who was called Peter, which means stone. He lifted worms from the road for fear they might be trampled underfoot by passersby. Bees might perish in the cold of winter, so he had honey and fine wines set out for them. He called all animals brothers and sisters. When he looked at the sun, the moon, and the stars, he was filled with inexpressible joy by his love of the Creator and invited them all to love their Creator.

This connection between St. Francis and animals is the single fact about him that most people know. He emphasized that creation includes more than humankind. He always called creatures his brothers and sisters and he worked to further widen the fraternity to link humans and creatures in the same relationship with God. But was Francis really the first person to bless the animals? It appears not. Judaism, long home to blessings of all kinds, may have come first.

Many synagogues now have their own blessing of the animals ceremonies, and, they say, the idea originated in ancient Judaism. Without reference to Francis of Assisi (but occasionally, with a passing reference to him), the Jewish ceremony is often performed on the seventh day of Passover (in the spring) as a celebration of the Hebrews' (and their animals') emancipation from slavery in Egypt more than 3,000 years ago. Why not exult in the freedom of all creatures from bondage, and not just the humans? Such an occasion reminds humans to care for their pets as if they are more like companions than slaves.

Also, at this time of year, many Jewish congregations schedule blessings of the animals after

the High Holy Days, centering their ceremonies around the second weekly Torah portion of the Jewish Year cycle: Parashat Noach, the portion about Noah and the ark. Way back then, God promised never to destroy the earth again

— and both humans and animals were understandably joyful. On this occasion, animals are blessed as creatures, reminding humans how we share that essential quality with our pets. This October 28-29, the story of Noah will be read in synagogues around the U.S. for Shabbat Noach — and more synagogues than ever before will include an animal blessing in their services that would make a Franciscan feel at home.

I happened to be at Congregation Beth Simchat Torah in Greenwich Village a few years ago on Shabbat Noach. They had a special blessing for animals (mostly dogs) that day—something that they do every year. People and pets crowded the aisles and everyone who had a companion with fur in their lives received a ribbon attachable to a collar. It wasn't quite the Cathedral of St. John the Divine on the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi, but it was terrific nonetheless.

In both the Christian ceremony performed in early October and in Jewish ceremonies later in the month, the message to those of us with animal companions is the same: take care of them as you would take care of yourself. Show gratitude; they are gifts from God.

Jon M. Sweeney is the author of "The St. Francis Prayer Book" and "Light in the Dark Ages: The Friendship of Francis and Clare of Assisi."



Join us every Sunday morning in our Lion's Den Café, Knight Hall, at 9 am for welcoming fellowship, a cup of coffee and a variety of tasty treats.



St. Mark's Episcopal Church Annual Spaghetti Dinner



Dinner and Concert

Featuring the East Valley Barbershop Harmonizers

Saturday, October 28, 2017

Dinner

5:00 pm (Knight Hall) Accompanied by an East Valley Barbershop Quartet

Concert

7:00 pm (Sanctuary) Entire East Valley Barbershop Harmonizer Chorus
(free will offering will be collected during the concert)

Tickets: \$20 per person
\$10 children 12 or under

Tickets Go On Sale October 1st

Limited Seating — Buy Your Ticket Early



- ♦ Spaghetti Dinner w/thick meat sauce
- ♦ Salad/Bread/Dessert/Beverage
- ♦ Wine Bar (Minimum \$5 donation per glass)
- ♦ Exquisite Silent Auction
- ♦ 50/50 Raffle

[Click here & Buy Now!](#)

In Memoriam . . .



"Give rest, O Christ, to your servants, **The Rev. Carl R. Bloom and Carol S. McLean Cooper**, with your saints, where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting." Amen.



Homeless Project . . .

Members of our Cursillo group and assistant parishioners are crocheting mats for the homeless, using plastic shopping bags. They need a plethora of bags and are hoping that **EVERYONE** will gather up all of the bags they are storing at home and donate them to this very worthy cause. There is a box located in the Narthex for you to drop your donation.

*Thank
You*



Advent Contemplative Retreat

Come for a time to prepare for Advent and the birth of Jesus the Christ

November 4, 2017

9:30 AM- 2PM

at

**St. Mark Episcopal Church
Knight Hall**

\$15.00 per person

Lunch included

All adults are invited

Sign up in Narthex
or call

Sally Worthington 480-290-4321

Sponsored by Daughters of the King
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
322 N. Horne Street
Mesa, Arizona 85203
480-964-5820
www.stmarksmesa.org

Kid's Korner . . .

Sunday School . . . Off to a Great Start!

23+ Registrants . . . Marvelous!

9:00 am every Sunday



Divine Diners and "Night at the Outback" . . . September Fellowship . . .



Cursillo To Host Ultreya December 2, 2017 . . .

All are invited to the Cursillo Ministry Pot Luck and Ultreya scheduled for Saturday, December 2, 2017, at 1:00-3:00 PM, in Knight's Hall. We'd appreciate any musician available to join us -- and play! We'll be singing favorites such as the ones Chris Perry leads at the "Contemporary" service. We'll have small group talks, a surprise witness speaker; and prayers for those in need.



St. Mark's Celebrates Social Media Sunday . #SMS17

We had an awesome crowd on Sunday, September 24th — almost everyone with their Smart Phones and Tablets in hand. Digital technology is truly a wonderful gift of God that enables us to become that "one great fellowship on earth" by expanding our communication horizons to an nearly infinite degree. What an exciting opportunity for the church! Join us on the Web, Facebook and Twitter—to see more pictures . . .



*Christ has no online presence but yours,
No blog, no Facebook page but yours,
Yours are the tweets and posts through which
love touches this world,
Yours are the posts through which the
Gospel is shared,
Yours are the updates through which
hope is revealed.
Christ has no online presence but yours.*

--Meredith Gould

ECW&M News . . . (for all the women and men at St. Mark's)

We are seeking teapots, models and table hosts for our upcoming *"Dressed to a Tea Party"* event on February 3rd 2018. It is going to be a GRAND event — one you don't want to miss. If you would like to volunteer to be a table host, you can show off your "very best" china and/or tableware and you will be responsible for your table during the event. We have a full set of instructions to help you get an early start on your planning. I have a boat load of Apple Franciscan Ware that I will be using and Eric Hultquist has agreed to co-host with me — we hope you will be thinking about how you can use your "special" tableware to host a table too. We are also looking for teapots — preferably ones that you've had your eye on for several years to discard — and volunteers to model our MarkDowns' "the cream of the crop" clothing and accessories. If you have questions or need more information please contact Judy Hossack and/or Jeanne Buckingham and/or Kathy Cheatham. Buy your ticket early for this event. . . It's going to be a sell out! *TIP— A "ticket" to this event would make a mighty fine gift for a special person in your life, don't you think? — Christmas is just around the corner.



Upcoming Events . . .

October 8 — Blessing of the Animals — Knight Hall 10 am
October 14 — Celebration of Life for Carol S. Cooper — 11 am
October 15 — ECW&M Meeting — Conference Room following the 10 am Service
October 28 — ECW&M's Annual Spaghetti Fundraising Dinner & Concert — East Valley Barbershop Harmonizers
October 29 — All Saints Day — Potluck to follow 10 am service
November 4 — Contemplative Advent Workshop — 9:30 am—2:00 pm (See Flyer)
December 2 — *Cursillo Ultreya* (See Article)
January 16, 2018 — Ministry Council Meeting — 7 pm
February 3, 2018 — Dressed to a Tea Party — Buy Your Ticket Now!
Lion's Den Café — Open every Sunday between 9-9:45 am
Baptism/Confirmation Class — Every Sunday — 1:30 pm
Follow the Calendar on the Web Site for updates and additions
Room Reservation Forms are available in the Church office
Jr. Warden Schedule — 1st & 3rd Tuesdays 8-10 am — Fridays 7-11 am
Wednesday Night Bible Study — Contact Mary L. Burgess at mburg37114@aol.com or 480-218-5434



All Saints Day Celebration . . .

October 29, 2017 — 10 am

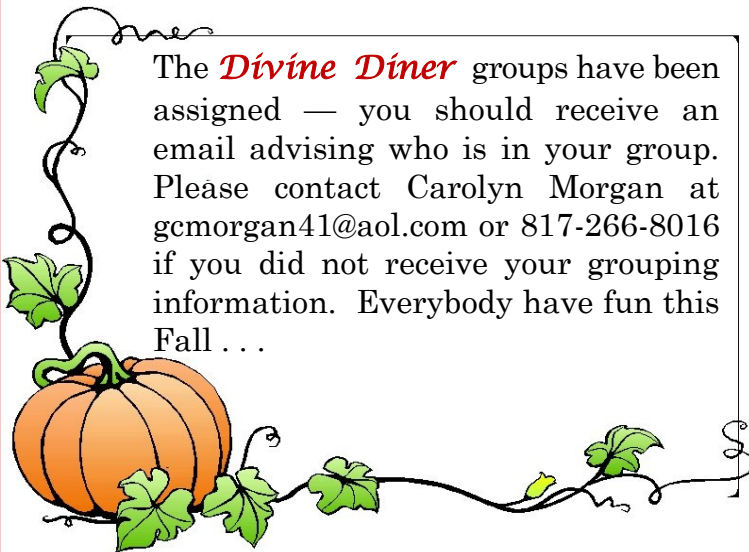
Potluck to Follow

In our Baptismal Covenant we, along with traditional Christians around the globe, profess in the ancient Baptismal Creed the words: "I believe in... the communion of saints, ... the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting." (Book of Common Prayer, page 304)

In our annual observance of All Saints' Day, and the Commemoration of All Faithful Departed on the following day, we make those words a tangible reality in the here and now by recognizing and celebrating our relationship, not only with those around us today, but also with all those who have gone before us in all times and places.


One of the important functions of religion is building and maintaining "Holy Community," which is a concept that is severely threatened in our modern world. This has been done in the Judeo-Christian tradition by "remembering," not nostalgic "looking back," but by "making present" the greatness of God's goodness and love in our lives today. This is done by means of story and ritual, as our Jewish friends do principally at Passover and we Christians do at Easter and, indeed, every Sunday in our celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

These celebrations are also tied to the natural cycle of the year as we experience them in the Northern Hemisphere. Just as Passover and Easter reflect the phenomenon of rebirth in spring, autumn naturally turns our thoughts to death and eternity. As the days shorten and the growing darkness overcomes us, our common ancestors marked this season with various rituals centered around fire, food gathered at the harvest, and being conscious of those who had gone before us. So this season of year is a natural time for the Church to remember her, and our, loved ones who made us who we are today.



The *Divine Diner* groups have been assigned — you should receive an email advising who is in your group. Please contact Carolyn Morgan at gcmorgan41@aol.com or 817-266-8016 if you did not receive your grouping information. Everybody have fun this Fall . . .

Parish Directory

The Rev. Gerardo Brambila	Vicar
The Rev. Steven Ford	Assistant Priest
	
Chris Perry	Director of Music
Gloria McManus	Parish Administrator
Deb Cannon	Licensed in Children's Ministries
Terry Gordon	Senior Warden
Bob Cheatham	Junior Warden
Al Rausch	Treasurer

Bishop's Committee Members

Caleb Collins	John Ddamba
Judy Hossack	Anali Perry
Paige Stalcup	Charles Vaughn

Ministry Leaders

Acolytes	Paige Stalcup
Altar Guild	Terry Gordon
St. Mark's Singers & Musicians	Chris Perry
Christian Formation for Youth	Deb Cannon/ Dianne Nunez
Communications	Kathy Cheatham/ ML Burgess

Ministry Leaders(Cont'd.)

Cursillo	Monica Larsen
Daughters of the King	Marge Fountain
Divine Dinners	Carolyn Morgan
ECW&M (Women's & Men's Ministry)	Jeanette Rogers
Food Pantry	Penny Place
Greeters	Judy Hossack
Hispanic Ministry	Fr. Brambila
Liturgical Arrangements	Viviana Brambila
Ministry Counsel	Terry Gordon
Office Angels	Gloria McManus
Pastoral Care	Elaine Austin
Scriptorium	Deb Cannon
Sunday Lay Ministries	Fr. Brambila/ Gloria McManus
Thrift Store	Sally Worthington
Ushers	Kathy Smith

Join us at www.stmarksmesa.org and on Facebook at St. Mark's Episcopal Church-Mesa, AZ for updates and more news!

Dressed to a Tea Party



St. Mark's Episcopal Church

322 North Horne Street, Mesa AZ

February 3, 2018

1:30 — 4:30 pm



St. Mark's ECW&M Presents . . .

Fashion Show — (Hosted by MarkDowns Thrift Store)



*Afternoon Tea — featuring delicious edibles and a collection of elegant
tea-time amenities*



Entertainment by the Uptown Angels



The Uptown Angels
Mandy, Candy & Brandy)
bring audiences back in
time with their sassy energy
packed show. The delight-
ful trio performs popular
songs from the 20s, 30s, 40s,
50s and 60s in the style of
comic sister acts (Andrews,
McGuire & Lennon). Their
spot-on act features toe-
tapping choreography, vin-
tage costumes and wonder-
ful 3-part harmonies.



Wine Bar, Door and Raffle

Prizes, Silent Auction, Shopping

& Much More . . .

\$25 Per Person

Space Limited — Reserve Early

Gift Certificates Available

Contact Kathy Smith for Tickets —
480-962-6875 or 1kathysmith@cox.net

*Great Gift Idea . . .
Holiday? Birthday?
Anniversary? . . .*

Buy Now!





Web Site: www.stmarksmesa.org
 E-Mail: office@stmarksmesa
 (480) 964-5820
 Office Hours: Tues — Fri: 9 am-1 pm
 322 North Horne Street, Mesa, AZ 85203



St. Mark's Episcopal Church

This section of the Newsletter is provided for Parishioners to advertise their business. We will print a copy of your business card for a period of three (3) consecutive Newsletters. Rather than assess a fee for the publication, we are asking for a monetary donation to help defray the cost of printing the Newsletter. Currently, the Newsletter is distributed to all of our parishioners and guests — approximately 200 copies per edition. At the end of the three printings, you may renew your business card along with an additional monetary donation. Contact Mary Lou Burgess at mburg37114@aol.com or 480-218-5434 for further information.

Mail & More

1106 N. Gilbert Rd. Suite 2
 SW Corner Brown & Gilbert
 Mesa, AZ 85203

Phone: (480) 844-0079
 Fax: (480) 844-0048

info@mailandmoremesa.com
www.mailandmoremesa.com



Randy Rogers
 Owner

Space available . . .

PAIGE STALCUP
 Desert *Pinyon* Partners

480.227.4166
PAIGE@DESERTPINYON.COM

kw KELLER WILLIAMS REALTY
 EAST VALLEY

WWW.DESERTPINYON.COM

Desert *Pinyon* Partners
 Offering Valley and White Mountain Properties

kw.
 Farm and Ranch
 DIVISION

YOUR REFERRALS ARE THE
 HEART OF MY BUSINESS.
 THANK YOU!

PAIGE

2077 E. Warner Rd. #110, Tempe, Arizona 85284

Each Office Independently Owned & Operated

