

THE LION'S ROAR

August – September – October – 2023

From Fr. Robert Magoola

Dear St. Mark's Family,

Despite whatever difficulties we might encounter, I always remember you with joy. This tells me that we have a thriving relationship. And that is what our common Christian relationship is all about. May God continue doing so.

Thank you all for your moral support, words of encouragement and prayers as Monica and I attended her mother's funeral. It was sad to lose Mama Gladys to pancreatitis, yet we bless the Lord for so many wonderful testimonies of her accomplishments in 85 years of life. At the same time, we are saddened to know that our dear Susan Robinson has recently passed. Susan was credited for being the longest standing member of our congregation, always worshipping with us and making her contribution to the well-being of our beloved church. Details of Susan's funeral will be announced soon. May all our recently departed rest in peace and rise to life in Christ.

Thank you also for supporting us through the process of hiring new staff. The Personnel Committee worked tirelessly to help me find the best matches for our needs. If you haven't done so already, please help me welcome our Office Administrator, David Bloomquist; our new Music Director, Casey Behm; and two Recital Monitors, David Pira and Bryce Hayes. We are grateful to Ross Mosier for his hard work among us and wish him well in his academic career.

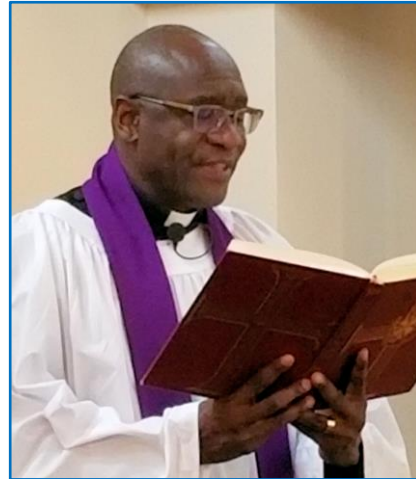
Continuing to keep in touch with one another, finding out how each one is and looking to assist them in any way possible is a sign of a healthy church! It reminds me of the Early Church (see Acts 2:42-47)! Yay! If any pastoral or other concerns arise, please let me or the office know asap so we can respond to situations in a timely fashion.

This fall we are introducing a monthly Saturday night service, starting with August 26 at 5:00 pm. Due to annual celebrations towards the year's end, we will stagger the dates on which the Saturday service is held. Watch for information in the *Lion's Roar*, as well as email and announcements. This Saturday service is in addition to our existing service schedule.

My God's abundant grace and comfort console us in our losses, lead us in our efforts and sustain us when weary. See you soon!

Rev. Robert Magoola, Rector

Robert +



From Deacon Rich

Several years ago, Verneda and I decided that we would take a trip to Ireland. We renewed our passports and talked about all the places we'd like to visit. My great grandfather had been born in County Roscommon around 1850 and family legend has it that he stowed away on a ship to America when he was fourteen. I couldn't confirm the date that he arrived in America since a fire at Ellis Island destroyed the records prior to mid-1920's.

When we were finalizing our travel plans, COVID hit! Our plans went on the back burner. Then, this spring, we started talking about what we would do to celebrate our Silver Anniversary, Verneda's birthday in September, and my birthday in July. Verneda insisted that we take that trip to Ireland; she really wanted to go. I was undecided for three or four weeks; it would cost too much, what would we do with our dog and cat, who would look after the yard and garden?

I woke up one morning with an epiphany that the march of time had become more of a double time for me than a march. That morning during a break from my school bus routes, I went on-line and purchased two round trip tickets to Dublin, Ireland.

The flight was noneventful. I hadn't been on commercial flight since 2011 when Verneda and I traveled to the Dominican Republic. A lot has changed! The planes carry a lot more passengers and the spaces between seats and the aisles are cramped by any standards. Thankfully, in our 3-seat section there were just the two of us. Nevertheless, that was perhaps the longest eleven hours of my life, except maybe my first night at boot camp in the Marines.

Our first stop, where we stayed four days, was in Strokestown, in County Roscommon about 30 miles from Dublin. It was quite an experience for me driving on the left side of the road! On our first day, we found our way to the National Irish Famine Museum about half a mile from where we were staying. The Museum documents the famine of 1847. For me, the Museum was most memorable for several reasons.

The impact of the famine on individuals was recorded in personal letters, death records and other documents. Working our way through the museum brought both of us to tears as we watched videos of actors reading the letters and other personal documents which recorded the personal impact of the Great Hunger on the population of Ireland.

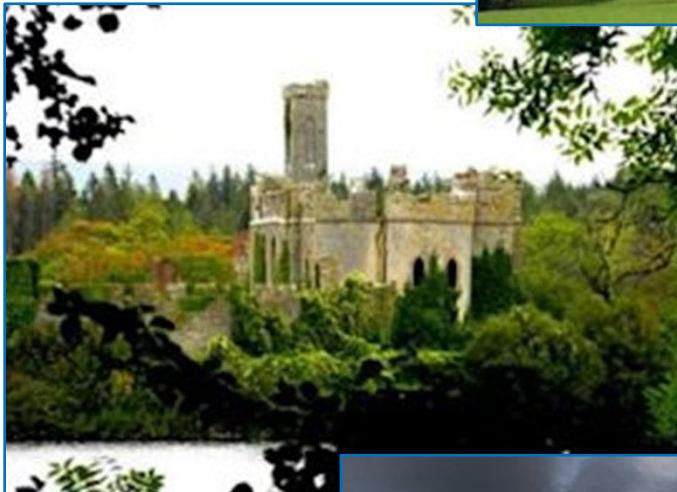
Mothers carried the bodies of their children to the cemeteries and dropped them over the fences hoping that someone would bury their babies in hallowed ground. The bodies piled up in the streets because there simply weren't enough people to bury the dead in a timely fashion. I can only imagine what my great grandfather's family must have experienced that compelled him to travel to America as a teenager.

The Irish Potato Famine began in 1845 when a mold caused a destructive plant disease that spread rapidly throughout Ireland and Europe. The infestation ruined up to one-half of the potato crop that year, and about three-quarters of the crop over the next seven years. Because the tenant farmers of Ireland—then ruled as a colony of Great Britain—relied heavily on the potato as a source of food, the infestation had a catastrophic impact on Ireland and its population. Before it ended in 1852, the Potato Famine resulted in the death of roughly one million Irish from starvation and related causes, with at least another million forced to leave their homeland as refugees. Ireland lost nearly half of its population the Great Hunger in just seven years.

We spent fourteen days touring Ireland in our rental car, visiting more than a dozen different tourist attractions. I've included pictures of some of those attractions. Everywhere we traveled we met wonderful, friendly people. We worshiped in a small Irish Anglican Church the last Sunday on our trip. Verneda led Morning Prayer. I even ran into a possible distant cousin (a Kelly!) whose family was from Roscommon County.

If you have ever thought about traveling to Ireland, Verneda and I highly recommend the country and its people.

Balentuber Abbey - Verneda was inspired to step-up to the altar and celebrate a mass. Fortunately, no one caught us!



*Lough Key – McDermott Castle
Land controlled by McDermotts in the 17th century. Irish force of around 300 ambushed and defeated an English army numbering around 5,000. The bishop was said to have been buried with his sword instead of his scepter.*

*Cliffs of Mohr
We walked along the cliffs among the sheep for 10 kilometers. It was a challenging, nearly 3-hour hike up and down the path. Our guide was especially interesting with stories of local interest.*



Farewell Letter from Ross

Dear St. Mark's Family,

I'm safely moved down to Lawrence, and I have (mostly) gotten my apartment unpacked. I think next time, I'm going to hire people to do that!

I want to thank the entire St. Mark's family for a WONDERFUL two and a half years while I was there. I've made so many great memories and friendships during my time as the organist and in the office. St. Mark's and everybody there will always have a special place in my heart. I also must thank the congregation and the church leadership for your wonderful parting gifts and send off. I absolutely love the quilt that Connie made for me. It is a very treasured gift.

When I began, we were still in Covid protocols, only doing services virtually. Then we began to do small services inside the Parish Hall, and next in the Courtyard.

Meanwhile, the church was undergoing some major renovations in the Sanctuary and to the roof. That was such a great show of faith and dedication to St. Mark's many future years! Similarly, the replacement of the church's security and access control system will serve the church for many years, making the building safer for all who enter.

During the Parish Hall and courtyard services, I began to get to know the choir members one-on-one when we did solos instead of choral pieces. This was such a wonderful way to get to know each choir member well, and we became a tight-knit group. I very much enjoyed my time with the music program at St. Mark's! We sang so many great pieces, and due to generous giving, we were also able to bring in friends to help us out with larger works, such as Allegri's *Miserere* on Good Friday. St. Mark's is very lucky to have the strong voices it has in the choir, as well as a music-loving congregation.

One great example of the dedication to music -- both for worship and the wider community -- is the acquisition of the Yamaha 7 foot grand piano. Many pianists in the community have said that it is one of the best in town (second only to the Steinway concert grands at the Lied and the UN-L School of Music!) So many great recitals and concerts (and many more to come) have happened at the church. The wonderful acoustics, the piano, and the wonderful organ have helped make it one of the most desired concert venues in the city. Additionally, almost every performance there has been livestreamed, showing how much people appreciate that capability at the church, thus not having to haul their own equipment and worry about it whilst performing.



Connie began working on a quilt for Ross in late 2022, not knowing he was planning to leave in the summer of 2023. The quilt is black and white for piano keys and with just a hint of red on the back to represent the life blood engaged with his passion for music.

It was a great pleasure to be a part of the transitions St. Mark's has seen over the past almost three years. I know that the church and congregation will continue their fantastic work for the community and continue to be a notable place of worship and service.

My personal contact information is in Realm if you need to reach out to me. I will continue to receive the Weekly Minder so that I can stay up to date with the goings on at St. Mark's! I will also be sure to send any major updates that happen on my end during my studies.

With extreme gratitude,

Ross

Report from the Personnel Committee

In the interests of transparency, we present this summary of the procedures that resulted in the successful hiring of a new Office Director and Music Director. Todd Sneller led the Personnel Committee, aided by Anne Puls and Jeanine Jewell.

Office Director

- Based on Ross's update of the job description, the Committee developed an ad that was distributed to all Episcopal churches in Lincoln as well as to the job-search site *Indeed*.
- The Committee developed a list of questions to ask in initial interviews. Questions covered topics such as time management, experience with building operations, interactions with a variety of people, and office skills.
- The committee interviewed all applicants and recommended two for second interviews.
- Fr. Robert, with Jeanine representing the Wardens, met with the recommended candidates.
- Fr. Robert and the Committee agreed to hire David Bloomquist.

Music Director

- Ross and Jeanine developed an ad, which was approved by the Committee.
- Ross distributed the ad through the Lincoln chapter of the AGO, the UNL School of Music, and other channels.
- For the purposes of this hire, the Committee delegated interviewing responsibilities to Pippa Lawson and Jeanine Jewell.
- Auditions were held; the auditions required playing two organ pieces, accompanying the choir in two hymns, and leading the choir in a rehearsal of a selected piece of music.
- Pippa, Jeanine, and Fr. Robert conducted interviews immediately following each audition.
- The choir met; they and Fr. Robert all agreed on hiring Casey Behm.

Recital Monitors - The new position of Recital Monitor provides SMOC with dedicated personnel to set up for recitals and concerts, record and/or stream these events, and close the church properly after events.

- An ad was designed which Ross distributed at Kimball Hall.
- Ross, Todd, and Jeanine interviewed candidates.
- Two candidates were hired: David Pira and Bryce Hayes.

Jeanine

Introducing New Staff!

Casey Behm, our new **Music Director**, is a current doctoral student in choral conducting at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Casey taught public school choral music and received his previous education in North Dakota. In addition, he served as a church musician for several years, filling roles as accompanist, singer, and teen worship director. Of his new position at SMOC, Casey is excited to begin his music ministry with us and to provide music that enhances the worship experience.



David Bloomquist, our new **Office**

Administrator, has held several administrative support roles in his past employment, including customer service, medical billing and records, and running his own powerlifting gym. In addition, he is a certified lay preacher through the Bishop Kemper School for Ministry and about to become a brother in the Anglican Order of Preachers. His service as the vestry clerk at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church also will benefit our own vestry and the parish. David told this reporter, "What I've noticed in my first week is how much the people here love and support the church and are willing to support it in so many ways!

I'm looking forward to meeting and getting to know everyone and to assist in the ministries of the church."

Recital Monitors -- Among the many jobs Ross did was coordinating recitals held at our church. This included set-up (moving the piano, setting up music stands, etc.); arranging guest access to the space; and recording of each recital. Per Ross's suggestion, we have established the position of Recital Monitor, following the example used by Kimball Hall for their own recital setups.

Two Recital Monitors have been hired, who will be scheduled by David, the Office Administrator. You might not often see them, because they will be working when a recital is booked. **David Piro** is a recent graduate of UNL's Doctor of Music program in cello performance, and **Bryce Hayes** is a junior in the School of Music, focusing on music composition. Both David and Bryce have previous experience with and knowledge of music technology.

Please welcome all our new staff members to the St. Mark's family!

Fall Adult Forum

The Adult Forum meets every Sunday from 9:30-10:15 AM in the Fellowship Hall. We are looking forward to two interesting programs this fall.

- **Bob Stock** will lead us in a five-week presentation/discussion of *The New Testament as Literature*. This series will begin September 10th and run through October 8th.
- **Steve Shively** will present a four-week series on *Religion in the Life and Works of Willa Cather*. This series will begin October 22nd and continue through November 12th.

Please consider joining us for coffee and a lively discussion!

Coming Events & Activities

- * **Soup Sundays:** Soup Sundays are starting again! This semester, Soup Sundays will be on the 2nd Sunday of the month starting in September. We will be seeking soup and dessert volunteers for September 10, October 8, November 12, and December 10. On those Sundays, activities begin with Inclusive Bible Study at 5:00 pm, followed by the free soup supper at 6:00 pm. Both students and congregation members are welcome to attend!
- * **Saturday Services:** This fall we will be adding a monthly Saturday evening Eucharistic Service, starting on August 26th, at 5:00 pm. Depending on the weather, this service may be in the courtyard or the parish hall. It will not be live-streamed or recorded, but it will include joyous guitar music and singing! Mark your calendar for September 23 – the October and November dates are TBA.

Regular On-Going Activities

- * **Sunday Worship:** We worship at **8:30 am** and **10:30 am** on Sundays. This includes in person in the church and (at 10:30) via [Facebook Live](#). Later that same day, the video can be viewed on our [YouTube](#) channel (search for **SMOC Lincoln**) and linked from our [website](#). And, once a month, we are adding a **Saturday, 5:00 pm** service (see page 5 for details).
- * **Adult Forum:** Meets at 9:30 am on Sunday mornings, in person, in the Parish Hall. Come enjoy the discussion over a cup of coffee or tea. See page 6 for October & November topics!
- * **Healing Service:** Deacon Rich leads a Healing Service at 9:00 am on the first Saturdays of the month. All feeling a need for healing of any kind are welcome.
- * **Mondays** are Fr. Robert's day off.
- * **Church Office hours** are Monday through Thursday, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.
- * **Communications Committee:** Meets via Zoom on first and third Thursdays at 2:00 pm. Contact Opal Doerr or the [Church Office](#) (or 402-474-1979) for the link. ***This is a new day and time!***
- * **Vestry:** The Vestry meets monthly in person in the Allington Room at 12:15 pm, usually on the 1st Sunday of the month. Meetings are open to all parishioners via MS Teams. If you would like to attend a vestry meeting, contact David for the link.
- * **SMoC choir practices** will start again August 30. They will resume singing at the 10:30 am Eucharists on September 10. Practices are on Wednesdays, from 5:30 – 6:30 pm, in the Sanctuary. If you are thinking of joining, drop in, check it out! After all, choir gets the best seat in the house on Sundays!

Doors and Windows Update

As you may have noticed (or not!) our security system has been updated. The new system can be remotely operated. Now we can open our facilities for outside groups without driving downtown and we can be sure that our facilities are locked afterwards. There is also now a

camera on the outside courtyard, so we will know how that space is being used when we aren't physically present. The system can be set by the SMoC Office Manager to automatically unlock and lock at specific times. For example, after Sunday services and coffee hour, the doors automatically lock at 12:30 pm unless manually set otherwise. Of course, you can always exit! People who need regular access at odd hours have an electronic key fob to swipe, instead of a physical key and a code to manually (quickly) disarm the alarm.

This fall some interior doors will be replaced -- specifically the door from the hallway to Fr. Robert's office, the door into the vesting/bookkeeper's room, and the door between the office and Fr. Robert's office. The new doors will be solid core and have windows. The solid core will provide better sound proofing for the room occupants and the windows will improve lighting. The doors will be replaced as soon as the new doors are delivered -- which should be soon!

We thank everyone who is working on and contributing to the care of our church.

– Wardens & Vestry

Justice in Action

At Justice in Action's Nehemiah Assembly last May, we asked County Commissioner Rick Vest to invest in expanding our community's successful diversion programs. He told us that "when the time is right, the money will be there."



Lancaster County is considering a \$1 million budget increase for the County Jail to support boarding contracts to house people in custody in jails outside of Lancaster County, putting people even farther from their support systems. JIA's criminal justice team and other JIA members attended the County Commission meeting in July to voice support for investing in diversion and treatment, **not** jail. Approximately one hundred JIA members attended the meeting, and many provided compelling testimony to the Board. News coverage of the JIA commentary and a related story were reported by several media outlets.

JIA will continue to press the County Board to fund a county-wide assessment of mental health resources. JIA is asking the Board to take a leadership role in funding and coordinating a meeting with mental health providers and advocacy organizations. The goal is to use a dashboard approach to design a more responsive and efficient approach to mental health services. This approach has been used successfully in other states. Current research clearly shows that more efficient delivery of services is possible if a coordinated effort is used on a county-wide basis.

On a related note, the criminal justice committee has opened an ongoing dialogue with the Lancaster County Attorney (CA) on diversion alternatives for consideration. Additional research and communications with the CA are part of an ongoing process this summer.

Because seeking justice through diversion reforms and access to mental health services is an ongoing process, JIA is making plans for the coming year. Dates have been set for JIA events during the second year of the justice initiative. The mental health and criminal justice teams are continuing research meetings and continuing to meet with key decision makers. Fund raising

efforts are continuing, with a focus on corporate entities that support JIA's efforts. Fr. Robert will continue to serve as JIA board chair.

- ➔ Coming very soon: You will be invited to a house meeting/listening session hosted by one of the SMOc team leaders,
- ➔ Monday, November 6th: Annual Community Problems Assembly, 6:30 pm, Eastridge Presbyterian Church,
- ➔ Thursday, November 30th: Team kickoff for anyone wishing to serve on a Research to Action team, 6:30 pm, location TBA,
- ➔ Monday, April 8: Solutions Briefing Rally, 6:30 pm, location TBA,
- ➔ Thursday, May 2: Nehemiah Action, 6:30 pm, location TBA, and
- ➔ Monday, June 10: Celebration, 6:30 pm, location TBA

Several SMOc members are active on the criminal justice and mental health committees. Please call on any of us for updated information. Thank you for your support and participation in JIA this year. *For more information, contact Mark Musick, Lucy Webster, Todd Sneller, Jeanine Jewell, or Fr. Robert.*

Farewell, Friend...

Our dear sister, Susan Robinson, 78, passed away on August 12th. Susan began attending St. Mark's on the Campus as a teenager and she was our longest time member. She was diligent in attending church services, interacting in fellowship, and making regular financial contributions. Her death occurred following a period of illness. May her soul rest in peace and rise to glory.

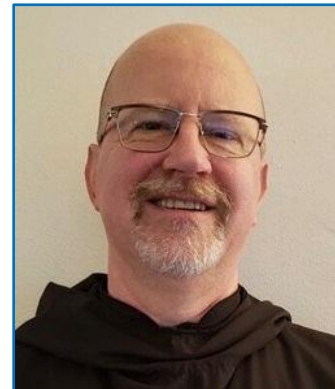
Since Susan will be cremated, her funeral arrangements are yet to be determined.



Brother Jerry News

God willing, on Friday, September 15, the Superior of the Incarnation Monastery, and the Benedictine Way will receive the solemn profession of his monastic vow by Brother Jerry Thompson, OSB. This will take place at Trinity Cathedral, 113 N. 18th Street, Omaha, NE during the 6:00 pm Holy Eucharist. Your prayers and presence are requested. Food and festivities to follow.

September 15 is also the fifth anniversary of the founding of the Incarnation Monastery and the Benedictine way in the Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska. *(Photo from St. James Episcopal Church, Fremont, NE)*



The Diocesan Annual Council will be in North Platte, on October 26 – 28, 2023. The three delegates are John Flint, Opal Doerr, and Steve Shively. Alternate delegates are Andrea Nelson and Sara LeRoy-Toren.

Schedule – August 21 – October 30

See Page 7 for additional regular & ongoing activities not listed here.

Sat	Aug 26	1 st Saturday Evening Eucharist	Courtyard	5:00 pm
Sat	Sept 2	Healing Service	Sanctuary	9:00 am
Sun	Sept 10	Vestry Meeting	Allington Rm	12:15 pm
Sun	Sept 10	Inclusive Bible Study	Rector Office	5:00 pm
		▸ Soup Supper	Parish Hall	6:00 pm
Fri	Sept 15	Bro. Jerry – Monastic Vow	Trinity Cathedral, Omaha	6:00 pm
Sat	Sept 16	National Federation of the Blind	Parish Hall	9:00 am – Noon
Sat	Sept 23	Saturday Evening Eucharist	Courtyard	5:00 pm
Sun	Sept 24	Welcome New Staff/Students (tentative)	Parish Hall	11:45 am
Sun	Oct 1	Vestry Meeting	Allington Rm	12:15 pm
		▸ Blessing of the Animals	Courtyard	TBA
Sat	Oct 7	Healing Service	Sanctuary	9:00 am
Sun	Oct 8	Inclusive Bible Study	Rector Office	5:00 pm
		▸ Soup Supper	Parish Hall	6:00 pm
Sat	Oct 21	National Federation of the Blind	Parish Hall	9:00 am – Noon
Thur	Oct 26	Diocesan Annual Council begins	North Platte	thru Oct 28



Photos from our 2023 Parish Picnic on July 23rd!

Yummy food, lively music, and shared fun!



The Lion's Roar is the quarterly newsletter of St. Mark's on the Campus Episcopal Church at 1309 R Street, Lincoln, NE 68508. This is the August-September-October 2023 issue. For information about items in the newsletter or to include an item in the next newsletter, contact the editor, Opal Doerr, at odoerr811@gmail.com, or the church office, smoc.office@stmarks-episcopal.org. Photo credits: Craig Lawson, Opal Doerr, Rich Kelly, Ross Mosier, Casey Behm, Jeanine Jewel, Nita Sipple, and St. James Episcopal Church-Fremont.