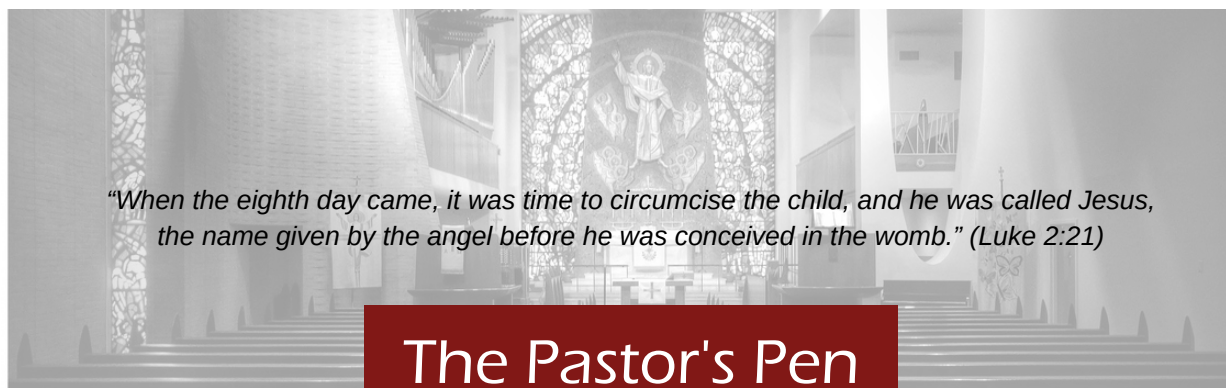


ReMarks

January 2024

St. Mark's Lutheran Church



"When the eighth day came, it was time to circumcise the child, and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb." (Luke 2:21)

The Pastor's Pen

Dear Friends in Christ,

Happy New Year! January 1st is the Name of Jesus, a commemoration remembering that the baby Jesus was named eight days after his birth. Every year on New Year's Day, we begin a new year in Jesus' name. This commemoration helps us see that our lives, with all our concerns, hopes and joys, are surrounded by the blessed Name of Jesus. While New Year's Day is often celebrated as a cultural holiday with many enjoyable customs, it also marks another year in the Name of Jesus. I pray that Jesus' name will bless and guide you in all you do this year!

Christian churches in different parts of the world have different customs and liturgical traditions for this day. When I was a parish pastor in Japan, a New Year's Day Service of Prayer remembering Jesus' name was a well-attended annual liturgical event. Though most people were busy with preparing New Year's foods and family gatherings, it seemed as if everyone paused to gather as Christ's body, giving thanks for the New Year.

On January 1st we continue our journeys, carrying our relationships and work, hopes and challenges into an unknown and uncharted calendar year. Jesus lives to share our humanity, opening us to God's sacred time and eternity. Beginning the New Year in Jesus' name is a way of knowing that my life shares in God's time and eternity. My life is the sacred time which has been given to me for a purpose. How will I live out the brief span of time which has been given to me? Do I see my struggles and hopes as an opportunity to seek the inspiration and guidance of his holy name?

The space and time in which our human journeys take place is sacred. We have created neither, and life's task is to give shape and meaning to the space and time which surround us. January 1st is a moment to remember that my life, whether it be short or long, can be lived in Jesus' name. To live in Jesus' name means when people meet me, they are also meeting Jesus who lives in me.

How will you live in Jesus' name in 2024? Knowing that he lives in and through you, how will you use the space and time given to you in his holy name? May we pray, "Lord, not in my name alone, but in yours also may I live." He is the eternal Word through whom time and eternity are created. Each life is sacred because each person is created through Jesus Christ the Word.

Live this year in Jesus' name so that everyone you meet will meet him in you.

Blessed New Year's greetings! Pastor Timothy McKenzie

December Council Highlights

On 12/5/2023, the congregational council held their annual retreat at Carmel Country Club.

From the Treasurer's Report:

- As of end of November, the church is in a positive financial position

From the Pastor's Report:

- 10/16 – 10/18 – Pastor attended continuing education event at Lutheridge
- 10/19 – Pastor gave Prayer of Invocation at Lifespan 50th Anniversary Event
- 11/3 – Pastor officiated the wedding of Nathalie Valverde and Ben Stephens
- 11/5 – All Saint's Sunday; Thank you, Jessie, for the temporary plaques to put on niches without permanent plaques
- 11/6 – Larry Dagenhart, Sr. and Pastor co-led a St. Mark's Symbolism Tour
- 11/26 – Baptism of Charles Hall Molan
- 11/29 – Memorial Service for Drew Robinson Smith
- 2/2-2/3/2024 – Call Committee will receive training from Synod Representative

Motions approved by Council:

- Replace roof above sanctuary using overage from loan from Men in Mission Fund
- Accept Jay Jacob as President, Chris Stevenson as Vice President, A.J. Pridgen as Secretary, and Cliff Edahl as Treasurer for 2023-24 Council

The rest of the meeting was dedicated to developing goals for 2024.

Peace,

A.J. Pridgen, Council Secretary

Congregation Council Retreat

Photo taken at the annual Council Retreat on 12/5 at Carmel Country Club. The new Council for 2023-2024 was installed on Christ the King Sunday, November 26. The newly installed council is: Lisa Barnette, Cliff Edahl, Jay Jacob, Michael Lakeman, Gretchen Payne, A.J. Pridgen, John Simon, Chris Stevenson, Nick Wartner, Betsy Wenzel, Kimberly Zimmerman, and Pastor McKenzie.



Annual Congregational Meeting Sunday, 1/28/2024

We will meet immediately following the 10:30 am service. Please plan to attend. The full printed report will be available to the congregation on Sunday, 1/14/24.

Around St. Mark's

Baptism of Heidi Holzinger



Heidi Rose Holzinger was baptized on 12/17 at the 8:30 service. Pictured here with parents Suzanna & Conner and sister Helen.



Another photo of the baptism of Charles Hall Molan on 11/26.

Christmas Eve Family Photos



Astrid & Mike Doyne's extended family from Sweden, the Sieurins, joined us for worship: (L to r) Mike Doyne, Kerstin, Linnea, Sven-Erik, Moa, (Pastor Tim), Astrid, and Kirsten Doyne.



Ella Puky First Communion 12/24
Tom and Dawn Puky's extended family also gathered to celebrate with us!

Lighting the Nativity Stable



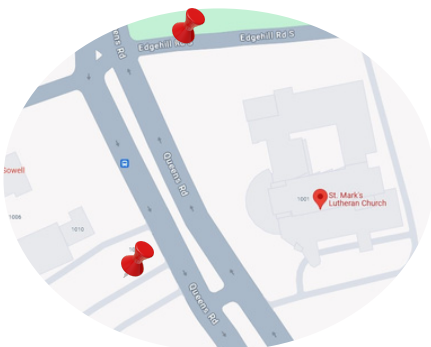
The Nativity Stable and the Christ Victor symbolize both Christ's humanity and divinity.

Around St. Mark's

Roof Repair Update



The sanctuary roof was replaced 12/6-8 due to improper installation of the previous roof, causing moisture above the sanctuary ceiling. The new installation was approved by the Congregation Council using remaining funding from the Men in Mission Fund loan.



Parking Request

To our able bodied members please park across Queens Rd in our church parking lot or on the side of the church along Edgehill Rd and come in side door, saving the parking lot by the church for less able bodied members. Thank you.

Around St. Mark's



Christmas Greetings from St. Mark's Kairos Prison Ministry

The Kairos team gives thanks to God for you in your support of this ministry at St. Mark's. With the shortage Correctional Officers, Kairos had to reduce the number of participants and also the number of team members. Since 2007 this event has meant so much to these men to have something special with which to celebrate Christmas together, and not in the mess hall. They can enjoy Christian fellowship, sing Christmas songs, pray together, and share the Christmas spirit with their Kairos family. John Simon said that the participants were overwhelmed with the meal of turkey and dressing, mac & cheese, green beans, and apple pie. In general, St. Mark's has had the most members of all churches. One last note concerning St. Mark's generous congregation, the meal was over a \$1,000 and St. Mark's donated \$500. Thank you!

May God bless you and your family.
Merry Christmas, Tom Sehorn

A message from the Kairos Team at Foothills Correctional Institute

The Kairos team held the December Reunion at Foothills Correctional Institute on Monday, December 11th. Following tradition, the Kairos team provided the participants with a Holiday Meal. There were 30 volunteers and 71 participants in attendance [including John Simon from St. Mark's]. The volunteers arrived at 12 noon to prepare the room and set up the meals. The participants arrived in the visitation room at 1:00 PM and after they were seated, George Carlisle welcomed the participants and provided a brief introduction of the day's agenda. Eddie St. Claire led the group in singing Christmas carols as the volunteers distributed meals to the tables. After the singing and before the participants began eating, Rev. David Hefner prayed for the fellowship and the food. After the participants finished their meals, C.D. Osborne delivered a message to the group that focused on the importance and meaning of the birth of Christ. Eddie St. Claire then led the group in the singing of two more Christmas carols. George Carlisle led the group in praying the Lord's Prayer before the participants were dismissed by Chaplain Turbeville.

From George Carlisle

Around St. Mark's

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." (Colossians 3:16)

New Member

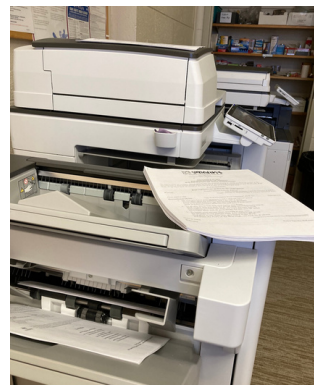
Wayne Webber was received into membership on 12/3 the First Sunday of Advent. We welcome Wayne into Christ's body at St. Mark's!



Christmas at St. Mark's



St. Mark's sanctuary was decorated with Christmas trees, poinsettias, the Advent Wreath, Nativity Creche, and aisle torches. Christmas wreaths also adorn the exterior doors. Thank you to all who helped decorate our church!



We are grateful for all who attended Advent Midweek Prayer, Advent services, and Christmas Eve. Christmas Eve worship was well-attended - we needed to print extra bulletins!

Congregational Life

Kay Sehorn Committee Chairperson

St. Mark's Men's Group



On 12/9 St. Mark's Men's Group installed new hinges on the Nativity Stable, making it easier to disassemble and transport in and out of the building. On the same day, the group also made a soup and sandwich dinner for Hospitality House Charlotte. We give thanks for their generous spirit!

Ethnic Restaurant Group

The Ethnic Restaurant Group will dine at Wan Fu Chinese Restaurant on January 16, 2024 at 7:00 PM. Wan Fu presents a lovely environment in which to enjoy their carefully crafted cuisine, starting with the exterior of the building (which resembles a Chinese temple) and definitely including the carved wood paneling inside the restaurant. This restaurant has weathered the economic storms of many years and produces beautifully presented dishes which range from simple and easily accessible to highly spiced and complex flavors. Wan Fu is located at 10719 Kettering Dr, Charlotte, NC 28226 (on the east side of Pineville, just north of NC-51 – Pineville-Matthews Road). Our group always enjoys visits at Wan Fu! Contact Tom & Judy Tolbert for seating by noon on Sunday, January 14.



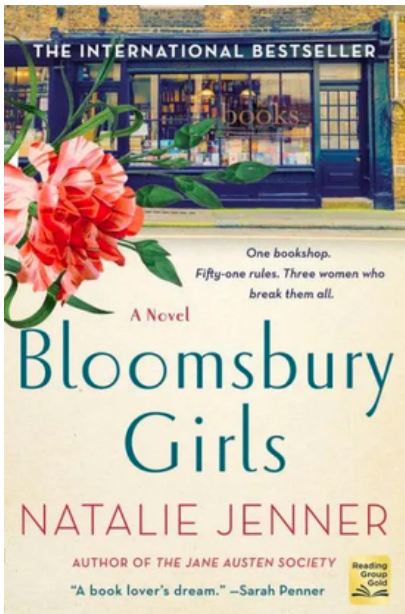
Congregational Life

Kay Sehorn Committee Chairperson



LOVE CIRCLE

Begin 2024 with the Love Circle members on
Wednesday, January 10 at 11:00 am. Come join us!!

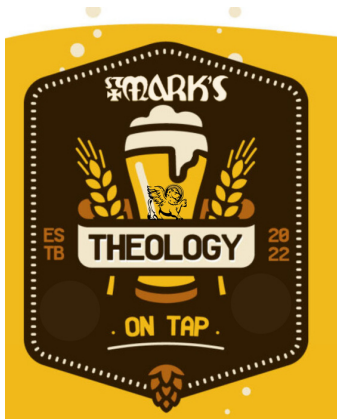


St. Mark's Book Group

The St. Mark's Book Study Group will meet on January 25, 2024, in the large conference room at 10 am and via Zoom. All are invited to participate. Our study this month is *Bloomsbury Girls* by Natalie Jenner. This historical novel is set in post-WWII London. Three women work in an old-fashioned bookstore run by men. There are 51 store rules, and the women break all of them. Having come through the war with all its restrictions, rules, and challenges, they are ready for a change. This delightful book shows how the women work to overcome adversity while battling misogyny and preconceived judgments. For more information, please contact Kay Sehorn or Judy Tolbert.

Family Ministry

THEOLOGY ON TAP



January 18, 2024 Theology on Tap it will be at
Edge City, 6209 Old Post Rd, Charlotte.
Everyone is welcome!



pictured: THOT 12/7 @ Brewer's at Yancy. We
even had a couple of our college kids home for
the holidays that were able to join us.

Gifts & Memorials

Jay Jacob Committee Chairperson

In Memory of Drew Robinson Smith

Miller D Knight, Jr. & Lisa Richey Combs -
Gifts & Memorials
Scott & Melody Howarth - Music Fund
Nelson & Carolyn Bass - Gifts & Memorials
Oda & Beverly Kelley - Gifts & Memorials
Joanne Marz - Music Fund
Doug & Carol Milheim - Soup Kitchen
Stan & Gloria Vaughan - Gifts & Memorials

In Memory of James Westbrook

Janet Smith - Gifts & Memorials

In Memory of Avery Grace Lepkowski

Michael & Rebecca Lepkowski - Gifts & Memorials

Social Ministry

Susan Ginns Committee Chairperson



Room in the Inn

We will be hosting 10 homeless men each Tuesday during January. Volunteers will be needed to supply a warm DINNER, BREAKFAST in the morning, and a BAG LUNCH to take with them. More information on these duties will be available soon in the gathering place.

If you are unable to provide any of these duties, there is something you can help with - BEDTIME SNACKS for our guests such as lunch size bags of pretzels, goldfish, or small bags of fruit snacks.

At this time we have enough of the items needed for the toiletry bags we offer - TRAVEL SIZE toothpaste, deodorant, lip balm, body lotion, and Kleenex packet and toothbrush. But after this year we will be out of everything, so don't hesitate to pick up any of these items when shopping Walmart or Target.

Here is a reminder of items we DO NOT NEED because of dispensers we added in the showers - soap, shampoo, and conditioner. And we CANNOT OFFER mouthwash as ordered by Roof Above, the parent of Room in the Inn.

Please drop off your bedtime snacks, or other donations, into the collection basket in the hall across from the restrooms. Thank you in advance for your participation in this outreach to the homeless in our community.

Please sign up to help as you are able in the Gathering Place.

Loaves & Fishes Donations

Dear Marc Ginns:

You are a true hunger hero! Your donation of 93 lbs of food to Loaves & Fishes/Friendship Trays helps provide groceries and meals to our neighbors in need. We truly appreciate your kindness and generosity.

In 2022, 106,547 people received nutritious groceries through our food pantries and our grocery home delivery program. Of those, 20,499 had their groceries delivered directly to their doorstep by volunteers through grocery home delivery. In addition, volunteers delivered over 86,000 prepared meals through our Meals on Wheels program, for those unable to obtain or prepare meals for themselves due to age, disability or illness.

We are so grateful for your support making it possible to nourish our neighbors with food and compassion.

Sincerely,
Lindsey Houser
Community Engagement Coordinator



Worship & Music

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson

Carolina Pro Musica Christmas



On 12/15 the Baroque ensemble, Carolina Pro Musica, performed a well-attended Baroque lessons and carols Christmas concert in the sanctuary.

The magnificent performance included period instruments, narration of the Christmas story, and audience singing of carols. Carolina Pro Musica calls St. Mark's home for their 2023-2024 season. Thank you to John Jacob for the photos.



Queen City Ringers Christmas Handbell Concert



On the evening of 12/3, the Queen City Ringers performed their annual Christmas concert, titled "Christmas Bells Are Ringing."



The concert was conducted by Laura Blauch, and featured a festive program that was enjoyed by many in St. Mark's sanctuary. The evening ended with time for children and the young at heart to ask questions and check out the bells. We are blessed to partner with the QCR who call us home! Thank you to Kevin Feezor for the photos.



Worship & Music

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson

December Worship Highlights



John Brumbaugh, cellist,
First Sunday of Advent



Christian Souza, Delenn Rumbolo,
8:30 Worship song leaders,
Second Sunday of Advent



Bibba Whitener, Assisting
Organist, Advent Lessons
and Carols



St. Mark's Handbells, Third
Sunday of Advent



Jack Richardson, Amy Woodall,
8:30 Worship song leaders,
Third Sunday of Advent



Third Sunday of Advent

Worship & Music

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson

We Sing the Faith

Historical and Spiritual Insight Into the Hymns We Sing
Reflections by Lester Ackerman

"People, Look East! ELW 248

This Advent hymn was written by Eleanor Farjeon (1881-1965), who is best known for writing "Morning Has Broken." ELW 556. "People, Look East" has been included in many hymnals since it first appeared in The Oxford Book of Carols in 1928. The depiction of Love as Guest, Rose, Star, and Lord is "on the way" is quite lovely, and sets "every peak and valley humming." The lively tune BESANCON is named for a city in eastern France where the French carol originated. Our choir sings a setting by English composer, conductor and organist Malcolm Archer (b. 1952).

"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" ELW 254

was penned by the great English hymn writer Charles Wesley (1707-1788). Charles wrote over nine thousand hymns and poems, with ten included in our Evangelical Lutheran Worship. Though included in the Advent section of most hymnals, this hymn was written as a Christmas hymn, and included in his collection Hymns for the Nativity of Our Lord (1745). Austin Lovelace writes: "Names given for Jesus: strength, consolation, hope, dear desire, and joy. Also note the use of the word Born three times to begin lines of poetry in stanza two. The hymn's ultimate emphasis is on the kingship of Jesus, closing with a prayer that Christ will rule in our hearts alone." This morning we sing this great hymn, set to the Welsh tune HYFRYDOL.

"Blessed Be the God of Israel" ELW 250

Carl P. Daw, Jr. (b. 1944), an American Episcopal priest, wrote this hymn in 1985 for a competition for new Advent hymns sponsored by The Hymn Society of America. It is a paraphrase of the Song of Zechariah in Luke 1:68-79, the Benedictus, the song of thanksgiving offered by Zechariah on the occasion of the circumcision of his son, John the Baptist. The canticle received its name from its first words in Latin ("Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel", "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel"). FOREST GREEN is an English folk tune, collected and notated by the great English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams (1871-1958), after he heard it sung by a man named Garman of Forest Green, near Ockley, Surrey.

"My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness" ELW 251,

is a paraphrase and musical setting of the passage from Luke's Gospel, the Magnificat, Mary's song of praise. This hymn was co-written by Martin Seltz (b. 1951) and Frank Stoldt (b. 1958), and first included in With One Voice (1995), the supplement to the Lutheran Book of Worship (1978). The tune KINGSFOLD was arranged by English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) from a folk tune he heard in a town named Kingsfold in Surrey, England.

Worship & Music

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson

We Sing the Faith

Historical and Spiritual Insight Into the Hymns We Sing
Reflections by Lester Ackerman

"The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came" ELW 265

265 This hymn has its origins as a Basque carol (Basque Country is an autonomous region in northern Spain on the border with France). This hymn tells the story that begins with the angel Gabriel's announcement in Luke 1:26, then summarizes Mary's song (Magnificat) in verses 46 through 55, with each stanza concluding with the single word "Gloria." The last stanza tells us that we are heading to Christ's birth on Christmas morning, though the focus remains on Mary and her song. GABRIEL'S MESSAGE is a Basque tune in a compound meter (three pulses to a beat) that possibly dates to as early as the sixteenth century.

"Joy to the World, the Lord Is Come!" ELW 267

had its first appearance in the collection Psalms of David, published in 1719 by the great English hymn writer Isaac Watts (1674-1748). This hymn was not written for either Advent or Christmas but is a paraphrase of the second half of Psalm 98. Watts gives it the heading "The Messiah's Coming and Kingdom". In our Evangelical Lutheran Worship "Joy to the World" is the last hymn for Advent, and in the Lutheran Book of Worship it was the first Christmas hymn. The tune ANTIOCH (named for the ancient Greek city near the current city of Antakya, Turkey) was composed by the early American church musician Lowell Mason (1792-1872). It was marked in his publication from 1836 Occasional Psalm and Hymn Tunes "arr. from Handel". It is possible he had two melodies from Handel's Messiah in mind: "Glory to God" and "Comfort Ye", which perfectly express the joy of Isaac Watt's hymn.

"The First Noel" ELW 300

is the last hymn in the Christmas section of our hymnal. The first few stanzas have the shepherds in the fields looking up at the star in the eastern sky (Luke 2:1-20), and then the wise men follow that star, which leads them to the baby Jesus (Matthew 2:1-12). We know very little about the origin of either the text or the tune, both English. We do know the text first appeared in print in 1823, Some Ancient Christmas Carols, a revised and second publication by Davies Gilbert. Sir John Stainer (1840-1901) composed a harmonization of the tune THE FIRST NOWELL in the late nineteenth century, the version that appears in our hymnal.

"Good Christian Friends, Rejoice" ELW 288

This Christmas hymn dates to the 14th century, and was translated into English by John Mason Neale (1818-1866), and included in his collection Carols of Christmas-tide (London, 1853). When a carol is written in two languages it is called macaronic. The original text was German with phrases of Latin to teach the Christmas story to folks of little formal education. Austin Lovelace says the music is "foot" music, and obviously was meant to be danced. The early church was more accustomed to austere plainsong and motets, and decided that popular music of the day was too good to miss as a teaching tool. As Martin Luther said, "Why should the devil have all the good tunes?" IN DULCI JUBILO (Latin for "in sweet rejoicing") is the tune name, and dates to 14th century Germany.

Worship & Music

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson

January Serving Schedule

Crucifer/Acolyte

1/7 C/A: Needed
1/14 C/A: Michael Lakeman
1/21 C/A: Needed
1/28 C/A: Brady Ferner

Sound System

1/7 Kevin Feezor
1/14 Alan Harms
1/21 Neil Dixon
1/28 John Brumbaugh

Tabulators

1/7 Doug Milheim
Diane Thomas
1/14 Janice Miller
Diane Thomas
1/21 Dawn Schwartz
Charles Lakeman
1/28 Kevin Feezor
Joe Barrett
Charles Lakeman

Ushers

Team C: Kenneth Williams, Larry Dagenhart, Jr., Alan Harms, Dale Hopp, Sally McCauley

Prayer Assistants

1/7 Mike Doyne
1/14 Melissa Smith
1/21 Maddie Thompson
1/28 Lisa Barnette

Lectors

1/7 Charles Lakeman
1/14 Kay Finlon
1/21 Meg Fielding
1/28 Karen Feezor

Communion Helpers

1/7 Sandy Rach
1/14 Catherine Metze
1/21 Kay Finlon
1/28 Karen Covington

Video Streaming

1/7 Joe Barrett
1/14 Joe Barrett
1/21 Charles Lakeman
1/28 Charles Lakeman

Greeters

1/7 Eileen Dunlap
Charles & Susan Lakeman
1/14 Neil & Charlotte Dixon
Ted Seman, David Thomason
1/21 Joanne Marz
Tom & Kay Sehorn
1/28 Gretchen Dodge
Michael & Tara Thompson

Communion Assistants

1/7 Charles & Susan Lakeman
Michael Lakeman, John Simon
Chris Stevenson
1/14 Barbara Baker, Flora chance
Nick Wartner, Betsy Wenzel
Kimberly Zimmerman
12/17 Barbara Baker, Rebecca Huang
Charles & Susan Lakeman
Michael Lakeman
1/21 Cliff Edahl, Rebecca Huang
Karen & Kevin Feezor
A. J. Pridgen
1/28 Lisa Barnette, Jay Jacob
Janice Miller, A. J. Pridgen
John Simon

January Birthdays

1/1 Brenda Durst
1/1 Fay Fisher
1/1 Andrew Puky
1/1 Robert Smith
1/4 Brady Ferner
1/4 Mary Lou Hopp
1/4 David Mathis
1/7 Virginia Stackel

1/7 David Platt
1/8 Diane Thornton
1/9 Michael Mobley
1/10 Steve McCall
1/13 Andrew Abbasi
1/14 Michael Huang
1/15 Jacob Wenzel

1/16 Melissa Lavoy
1/18 Jane Thompson
1/19 Genna Hurley
1/20 Tara Thompson
1/24 Mike Doyne
1/30 Janice Simpson
1/30 Christopher Miller