



ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Our Mission

Growing Disciples - Making Christ Known

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DECEMBER 10, 2023

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

LESSONS AND CAROLS

10:30 AM SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

Today's "Service of Lessons and Carols" (see the "Music Notes" on page 18) is a St. Mark's tradition that reaches back into 19th century England with the singing of carols and the reading of lessons in preparation for the season of Christmas. During today's service, may you hear again the grace of the good news expressed through the richness of word and music. May we prepare the way of the Lord as we sing, "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"! This is the season of joy and promise.

GATHERING

Bold responses are spoken by the congregation.

Prelude

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

15th century French tune VENI EMMANUEL

Setting for handbells by Cynthia Dobrinski

Please stand as able.

Processional Hymn

"Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers" ELW 244

HAF TRONES LAMPA FARDIG

1. Rejoice, rejoice, believers, and let your lights appear;
the evening is advancing, and darker night is near.
The bridegroom is arising and soon is drawing nigh.
Up, pray and watch and wrestle; at midnight comes the cry.
2. The watchers on the mountain proclaim the bridegroom near;
go forth as he approaches with alleluias clear.
The marriage feast is waiting; the gates wide open stand.
Arise, O heirs of glory; the bridegroom is at hand.
3. The saints, who here in patience their cross and suff'rings bore,
shall live and reign forever when sorrow is no more.
Around the throne of glory the Lamb they shall behold;
in triumph cast before him their diadems of gold.
4. Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear;
arise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this benighted sphere.
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see
the day of earth's redemption that sets your people free!

Please be seated.

Welcome

Pastor Timothy McKenzie

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Holy One,
Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Gracious God,
have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

Amen.

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ †, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray. Stir up your power, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

As the pastor lights the Advent wreath, verse six of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" is sung.

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" ELW 257

VENI, EMMANUEL

6. O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer; O Sun of justice, now draw near
disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

Text: *Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. Composite; sts. 2-7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress; Music: French processional, 15th cent.

WORD

First Lesson: *The prophet proclaims good news to a people in exile.*

Isaiah 40:1-8

Cindy Little, lector

¹Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. ²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. ³A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." ⁶A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

Anthem "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"

17th century French folk tune PICARDY

Setting for handbells by Julie Turner

Second Lesson: *The Lord promises to send his people a righteous branch.*

Jeremiah 23:5-6

Cindy Little, lector

⁵The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness."

Anthem "Of the Father's Love Begotten"

13th century plainsong DIVINUM MYSTERIUM

Setting for choir and handbells by John Erickson

*Of the Father's love begotten, ere the world's began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega, he the source the ending he;
of the things that are, that have been, and the future years shall see
evermore and evermore.*

*Christ, to thee with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to thee,
hymn and chant and high thanksgiving, and unwearied praises be:
honor, glory, and dominion, and eternal victory,
evermore and evermore.*

Third Lesson: *The Lord promises that the King will come to Israel in peace.*

Zechariah 9:9-10

Jonathan Lakeman, lector

⁹Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. ¹⁰He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

Anthem "People, Look East"

French carol BESANCON

Setting for choir and organ by Malcolm Archer

Fourth Lesson: *The Prophet foretells the advent of the desire of all nations.*

Haggai 2:6-9

Jonathan Lakeman, lector

⁶For thus says the Lord of hosts: Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land; ⁷and I will shake all the nations, so that the treasure of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with splendor, says the Lord of hosts. ⁸The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the Lord of hosts. ⁹The latter splendor of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the Lord of hosts.

Anthem “Lift Up Your Heads, O Ye Gates” Op. 44, No. 2
William Mathias

Fifth Lesson: *The Prophet foretells the redemption of Israel.*

Isaiah 35:1-6

Flora Chance, lector

¹The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. ³Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart, “Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.” ⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.

Anthem “Every Valley Shall Be Exalted”

John Ness Beck

*Ev’ry valley shall be exalted, and ev’ry mountain made low;
and the crooked made straight, and the rough places plain.
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together;
for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*

Sixth Lesson: *The angel Gabriel foretells the birth of Jesus to Mary.*

Luke 1:26-35, 38

Flora Chance, lector

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” ³⁴Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” ³⁵The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁸Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

Anthem “A Virgin Unspotted”

Tune JUDEA by William Billings

*A virgin unspotted by prophet foretold, should bring forth a Savior which now we behold,
to be our Redeemer from death, hell and sin, which Adam's transgressions involved us in.*

Then let us be merry, put sorrow away, our Savior, Christ Jesus, was born on this day.

*God sent down an angel from heaven so high, to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lie, and made them no longer in
sorrow to stay, because that our Savior was born on this day.*

Please stand as able.

Seventh Lesson: *Jesus proclaims the nearness of the kingdom of God.*

Mark 1:1-15

Pastor Timothy McKenzie

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; ³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'" ⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." ⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." ¹²And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. ¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

Please be seated.

Anthem "Thou Shalt Know Him When He Comes"

Hal H. Hopson

*Thou shalt know Him when He comes, not by any din of drums nor the manner of His airs,
nor by anything He wears; thou shalt know Him when He comes, not by His crown or His gown, but His coming known
shall be by the holy harmony which His coming makes in thee.*

Sermon

"Prepare the way"

Pastor Timothy McKenzie

Please stand as able.

Hymn of the Day

"Wait For the Lord " ELW 262 Sing three times

WAIT FOR THE LORD

Text: Taize Community Music: Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994 T&M© 1984 Les Presses de Taize, GIZ Publications, Inc.

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the hymn "Wait For the Lord". The first staff is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, followed by a whole note G4. The lyrics "Wait for the Lord, whose day is near." are written below the notes. The second staff shows the chord progression: Em, D, G, Am, B, Em. The melody continues with quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, followed by a whole note G4. The lyrics "Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!" are written below the notes.

The Apostles' Creed

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

(Pastor McKenzie, prayer assistant)

The congregation may kneel or sit for the prayers.

With hope and expectation of Christ's coming, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration. *A brief silence.*

Merciful God, inspire your church to prepare the way of your coming into the wilderness of this world. Send your people out by the power of the Holy Spirit that they may proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Creator God, through the abundance of your hand the desert blossoms, fields bloom abundantly, and all creation sings with joy. Bless the nations and peoples of your pasture to care for and sustain this planet home you have created. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Almighty Father, you promise to shake the nations that they might offer their treasure to you. Bless the nations and their leaders to work together for peace where there is war; for justice where there is oppression; and for mercy where there is poverty. May Christ rule the nations with righteousness and peace. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Beloved Healer, you promise to open the eyes of the blind; unstop the ears of the deaf; and give song to the speechless. May your healing and grace be with the sick, the dying, and with all in distress. Grant the shalom of healing and peace to: Jay Harbinson, David Mathis, Virginia Stackel, Joseph Tolbert, Robert Shirley, Rachel Fulp, Danielle Clausen, Carl Sepmeyer, David Kutscher, Vann Milheim, Oakley Coburn, Arlene Fielding, Sergei Kobiakov, Bill Schwartz, Jimmy Schwartz, Roxi Tolbert, Shirley Larson, Ingrid Keiris, Martha Stackel, Tina Wiland, Ben Watson, Louisa Coburn, Mindy Curley, Dannye Olin Bragdon, Sarah Lindberg, Marilyn Denison, Eileen Dunlap, Jim Middleswarth, Christopher Shirley, Pat & Gary Ragsdale, Tanner Grant, Michael Frye, Ken Foust, and Gene Ellington. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Holy Comforter, grant patience, hope, and strength to all who wait for you this season. Give hope to those seeking employment; bring reassurance to those awaiting diagnoses and treatments; and watch with those who keep vigil at the bedside. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Lord of Hosts, we give you thanks for the saints of ages past who prepared your way; bless and inspire us to also prepare your way into human hearts so that all people might know that your kingdom has come near in Jesus Christ. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Peace

Please stand as able, sharing the peace of the risen Christ.

The peace of Christ be with you always.

MEAL

OFFERING

(Offerings for the mission of the church are gathered by the ushers.)

Please be seated.

Anthem

“And the Glory of the Lord” from *Messiah*

George Frideric Handel

*And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*

Please stand as able.

Offertory

(The offering is brought forward by the ushers.)

“Tidings of Comfort and Joy” stanza 1, from *Light the Candle*

Traditional English Carol; Setting for choir and congregation by Michael Burkhardt

Verses: Michael Burkhardt © 2020 Birnamwood; Refrain: Traditional English carol; Tune: GOD REST YE,

1. I - sai - ah, proph - et, seer of old, re - spond - ing to God's
call, pro - claimed the com - ing of the Lord to
peo - ple, great and small. Now on this day we
hear God's word: de - clare good news to all! O
tid - ings of com - fort and joy, com - fort and
joy, O tid - ings of com - fort and joy!

Offering Prayer

Let us pray. God our provider, by your hand abundance springs from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Holy Communion

The Great Thanksgiving

Holy Communion Setting Four

S 152

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Proper Preface

Sanctus

“Holy, Holy, Holy” from *All Creation Sings, Holy Communion Setting Twelve*

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and

God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your

glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the

Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Words of Institution

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
Broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

The Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Invitation

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Please be seated.

Distribution of Holy Communion

Holy Communion is offered continuously in front of the freestanding altar, or at the rail of the high altar in two ways, by "Communion Kit" or wafer and wine in a small cup. Please follow the ushers' prompts, walking forward to the desired communion station, and returning via the side aisles. If receiving a "kit" please seal the used utensils in the zip-lock bag, placing the bag after worship in the marked bowl in the Narthex. Gluten free wafers and grape juice are also available.

Communion Music

"Lamb of God" from *Christmas Carol Mass*

Carroll Thomas Andrews

Setting for choir and congregation by Carroll Thomas Andrews

English Carol, Original adapt Carroll Thomas Andrews, 1918-2014, Adapt. John T. Kyler ©1966, 2022 GIA Publications, Inc.

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the
world, have mer-cy on us, have mer-cy on us.
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the
world, grant us peace, grant us peace.

“Savior of the Nations, Come” BWV 659

Johann Sebastian Bach

“Lo, How A Rose E’er Blooming”

16th Century German Melody, Arr. Michael Praetorius

*Lo, how a Rose e’er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse’s lineage coming as men of old have sung. It came, a flow’ret bright,
amid the cold of winter, when half-spent was the night.*

Please stand as able.

Post-Communion Blessing

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and keep you in his grace.

Post-Communion Prayer

Let us pray. Let us pray. Generous God, In bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

SENDING

SENDING BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

Amen.

Recessional Hymn

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” ELW 254

HYFRYDOL

1. Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel’s strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of ev’ry nation, joy of ev’ry longing heart.
2. Born thy people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king;
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788; Music: W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God.

Please be seated.

Postlude

“Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella”

French carol UN FLAMBEAU, organ setting by Keith Chapman

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Worship Leaders: Pastor Timothy McKenzie (prayer assistant); crucifer: Michael Lakeman; acolyte: needed; lectors: Flora Chance, Jonathan Lakeman, Cindy Little; live streaming camera: Ron Wenzel; soundboard: Kevin Feezor; ushers: Doug Milheim, Marc & Susan Ginns, Eddie Goodall, A. J. Pridgen, Sean Fielding; greeters: Gretchen Dodge, Jackie Ellington; communion assistants: Jay Jacob, A. J. Pridgen, John Simon, Susan Lakeman, Kimberly Zimmerman; communion helper: Catherine Metze; tabulators: Karen Feezor, Carol Goodall; musicians: St. Mark's Choir; St. Mark's Handbells; Elizabeth (Bibba) Whitener, assisting organist; Lester Ackerman, Director of Music Ministry and Organist

Next Sunday Leaders: prayer assistant: youth; crucifer/acolyte: needed; lector: Marty Schwartz; live streaming camera: Ron Wenzel; soundboard: Alan Harms; ushers: Team B; greeters: Evelyn Gerdes, Eddie & Carol Goodall; communion assistants: Barbara Baker, Rebecca Huang, Charles & Susan Lakeman, Michael Lakeman; communion helper: Sandy Rach; tabulators: Karen Feezor, Charles Lakeman

Parish News

From the pastor -

"Watch, Prepare, Rejoice, and Behold" are the four themes we think about and dwell upon in worship during Advent this year. Week 1 in Mark, Jesus tells us to "Watch" as we wait for the coming of the Son. Week 2, Isaiah writes that we are to "Prepare the way of the Lord" making straight paths for him in this world. Week 3 in 1 Thessalonians, Paul writes "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing." And Week 4 in Luke, the angel Gabriel says to Mary, "Behold, you will conceive and bear a Son, and you shall name him Jesus." These themes of Advent encourage us to be attentive and awake to Christ's ongoing advent in our lives and relationships. These themes encourage us to be prayerful and alert, always ready to point to Christ's ongoing presence in this world. I encourage you to take time for quiet and prayer during this busy season, that your hearts might be open to Jesus Christ raised and alive in your life and through you in this world.

In the peace and light of Christ,
Pastor Tim McKenzie
pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org

Coming Up at St. Mark's

Worship and Congregational Life

Altar Flowers today are given to in honor of Jonathan Lakeman's birthday.

Financial note: To ensure that your 2023 donation/gifts/contribution are received and processed for this tax year, contributions must be received by noon on Wednesday, Dec. 27. If you have not done so, please consider making a pledge for 2024. Thank you for your faithfulness to Christ's ministry at St. Mark's!

Advent Mid-Week Prayer, "Pause, Prepare, Ponder" (7 pm Wednesdays 12/6, 12/13, 12/20)

Poinsettias and Wreaths The cost will be the same as last year at \$12 per plant for honorium/memorial. In addition, someone may sponsor a door wreath with an honorium/memorial as well. The deadline for the Christmas Eve bulletin is Tuesday, 12/19. Order forms are in the Gathering Place.

Carolina Pro Musica Baroque Christmas on Dec. 15 at 7:30 pm. Tickets for this event are available at www.carolinapromusica.org/schedule. Half price tickets for SMLC! Enter SMHalfOff on CPM website.

ROOM in the INN is just around the corner. We will

be hosting 10 homeless men each Tuesday during January. Volunteers will be needed to supply DINNERS, BREAKFASTS and bag LUNCHES. Especially needed will be NIGHT SITTERS and VAN DRIVERS. Look for more information and a signup poster in the gathering place. Another way to help is to donate BEDTIME SNACKS for our guests such as lunch size bags of pretzels, goldfish, chips; granola bars (preferably without nuts); small bags of fruit snacks. Reminder - We DON'T NEED soap, shampoo or conditioner as we have dispensers in the showers. We CANNOT OFFER mouthwash as ordered by Roof Above. A collection basket is in the hall across from the restrooms. We thank you in advance for your participation in this outreach to the homeless in our community.

St. Mark's Ethnic Restaurant Group will dine at Waldhorn German Restaurant on December 19, 2023 at 7:00 PM. Waldhorn German Restaurant is located at 12101 Lancaster Hwy, Pineville, NC 28134. There is plenty of parking at the restaurant. Waldhorn is the place to go in the Charlotte area for a wide variety of German-inspired dishes presented by Germans whose family also has a restaurant in Germany. The extensive menu is sure to please! We are limited to 18 reservations as a group, so RSVP to Tom and Judy Tolbert for a table reservation by noon on December 15th. Plan now to add a classic German dinner to your Weihnachten seasonal celebrations.

Thinking of joining St. Mark's? Please see Pastor Tim to set up a time to talk. All people are welcome at St. Mark's!

Rehearsals! Wednesdays at 6 pm Handbells and 7 pm Choir. Come play and sing!

The Christian Education Hour is at 9:30 am on Sundays. Please join us as you are able in the Large Conference Room for "New Testament Lessons."

Online worship continues to be streamed every Sunday at 10:30 am on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/SaintMarksLutheran/>).

Ushers for Sunday Worship The ministry of ushering is a crucial part of worship because it is one of the most visible ministries in the Church. Please volunteer by contacting the church office or John Simon.

St. Mark's email list If you are not receiving emails from St. Mark's, we may not have your correct email address. Please contact the church to let us

know. We send at least 2 emails every week.

Family Ministry

Nursery: A fun-filled nursery, staffed by volunteers, is located downstairs. An usher is available to show you the way. Our safety protocols offer peace of mind so you can worship without worry.

Youth Classes

Sundays at 9:30: Youth Group in the Youth Room. Godly Play has been temporarily paused.

Confirmation Class meets every Sunday at 9:30.

Stewardship 2024

Sharing our gifts is important to St. Mark's ongoing mission. A pledge is a prayerful commitment to giving in response to God's grace. A pledge may be offered at any time, but pledges help a congregation establish a responsible budget for the coming year. Please consider making a financial pledge to St. Mark's. Brochures are available in the Gathering Place. Thank you for your faithful gifts to St. Mark's ministries. An online pledge option is also available from our website, or you may use the QR code.

You may use the QR code at left (hover your phone camera to connect) for immediate access to St. Mark's website donation page. Pledges and donations for Altar Flowers may also be made using this code.



2024 Altar Flower Sponsorship If you would like to sponsor live flowers for our Sunday worship service, please sign up on the calendar by the mailbox room or contact the church office.

Social Ministry

We continue to remember the hungry and homeless through our social ministries.

LOAVES & FISHES The baker's rack is a permanent collection location for **NON-BREAKABLE NON-PERISHABLE** food. And remember, all families need condiments, salt & pepper and sugar, along with basic food.

Soup Kitchen St. Mark's Soup Kitchen is serving lunch in the Fellowship Hall every Thursday for our neighbors. If you would like to serve, please contact us. You may also support the Soup Kitchen through financial donations sent to the church, or through St. Mark's online giving portal. Help us share God's love!

Announcements

AA meets in the Fellowship Hall: Monday nights "Third Tradition", 7 p.m.; Wednesday nights "Just the

Basics", 7:30 p.m.; and Thursday nights "Not a Glum Lot", 6:30 p.m.; in Room 210: Saturday morning 10:30 a.m. "SLAA".

Music Notes

The **Service of Lessons and Carols** tradition was established toward the end of nineteenth century England by Reverend G.H.S. Walpole in Truro, Cornwall. The first festival was held at 10:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve 1880. It is said the church at Truro had a tradition of its choirs caroling throughout the town, singing carols at residences of members of the congregation. At the request of parishioners, "an ordinary carol service" was born. A local newspaper announced the new service, noting that a like service has been instituted in other cathedrals and large towns, and has been much appreciated."

Advent Carol Services were created especially for schools and colleges, where it has been frowned upon to celebrate Christmas while classes were still in session and the church calendar was still of Advent.

"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**.

This Week: From the Lutheran Church Calendar

December 13, Lucy, martyr (283-304)

The historical details of Lucy's life have been lost, and much of what is remembered about her is legend. Lucy was probably a young Christian from Sicily who was martyred in the persecutions under Emperor Diocletian in the year 304. Her Latin name is *Lucia*, meaning "light." Legend is that in martyrdom she lost her eyes and ability to see, and hence also became the patron saint of the blind. This image is evocative of one who, even without the light of eyesight, possessed an inner faith to truly see God. Coinciding with the winter solstice, Lucy is also venerated in Scandinavia as *Sankta Lucia*, the bearer of the light of Christ during the Advent season.

December 14, John of the Cross, renewer of the church (1542-1591)

John was a monk of the Carmelite order who met Teresa of Avila when she was working to reform the Carmelite order and return it to a stricter observance of its rules. He followed Teresa's lead and encouraged others to follow her reform. He was imprisoned when he encountered opposition to the reform. Like Teresa, John was a mystical theologian, and his writings are thought of to be the peak of mystical Christian writing. John's drawing of the Crucifixion inspired Salvador Dali's 1951 painting "Christ of Saint John of the Cross."

Adapted from Sundays and Seasons

