



ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

**Our Mission**

*Growing Disciples - Making Christ Known*

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**DECEMBER 13, 2023**

**ADVENT MIDWEEK SERVICE OF WORD AND PRAYER**

***“PAUSE, PREPARE, PONDER”***

**7:00 PM**

*This year's Advent Midweek "Service of Word and Prayer" is adapted from All Creation Sings, a new worship resource of the ELCA. The theme of this year's Advent series is "Pause, Prepare, Ponder," a reminder that in the midst of the busy year-end season, Advent is an opportunity to prayerfully meditate on what God is doing through Christ in our lives.*

*Advent offerings may be placed in the offering plate at the entrance to the sanctuary.*

**GATHERING**

*The Holy Spirit gathers us into a community of prayer.  
**Bold responses are spoken by the congregation.***

**Prelude**

“Prelude on ‘People, Look East’”

French Carol BESANCON; Organ setting by Robert J. Powell

**Welcome**

Pastor Timothy McKenzie

*Please stand as you are able*

**Gathering Litany**

Blessed be God, the eternal ✝ One-in-Three,  
who was, and is, and is to come.

**Blessed be God forever and ever.**

As the world is groaning in pain and suffering,  
**we prepare and expect your appearing.**

Your Spirit has brought us to faith, and your Spirit sends us into mission.

**We prepare and engage in advocacy and justice-building.**

We who are baptized into Christ have been called to serve as Jesus' body in the world.

**We prepare and rejoice that you already dwell among us.**

Come, O Christ, and set us free.

**Come, Emmanuel, bring in your reign of justice and peace.**

We wait for a new heaven and a new earth,  
**where righteousness is at home.**

## Gathering Hymn

*The assembly joins together in the song below.*

### “People, Look East” ELW 248

BESANCON

Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881-1965; T&M © Miss E. Farjeon Will Trust, by permission of David Higham Associates; Music: French carol

1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the crown - ing  
2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is  
3 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the  
4 An - gels an - nounce with shouts of mirth him who brings new  
of the year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble,  
plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to nour - ish,  
bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y weath - er,  
life to earth. Set ev - 'ry peak and val - ley hum - ming  
trim the hearth and set the ta - ble. Peo - ple, look  
that in course the flow'r may flour - ish. Peo - ple, look  
bright as sun and moon to - geth - er. Peo - ple, look  
with the word, the Lord is com - ing. Peo - ple, look  
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Guest, is on the way.  
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Rose, is on the way.  
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Star, is on the way.  
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Lord, is on the way.

## Opening Prayer

Let us pray. Creating God, you make all things new and call us to prepare for the new heaven and the new earth breaking in all around us. Wake us from sleep; rouse us from apathy. Turn our praise into protest and our prayers into action, that your will be done and your kingdom come. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

*Please be seated.*

## WORD

### Silence

*During this time of silence we quiet ourselves, entering into the mystery of God's presence. The beginning and the end of this period of silence is marked with the sound of a bell.*

### First Reading **Philippians 4:4-9**

<sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup>Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup>Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all

understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. <sup>9</sup>Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

*The Word of the Lord.*

**Thanks be to God.**

**The Holy Gospel                      Luke 19:28-40**

*The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 19th chapter.*

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>28</sup>After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. <sup>29</sup>When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, <sup>30</sup>saying, “Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>31</sup>If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it.’” <sup>32</sup>So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. <sup>33</sup>As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” <sup>34</sup>They said, “The Lord needs it.” <sup>35</sup>Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. <sup>36</sup>As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. <sup>37</sup>As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, <sup>38</sup>saying, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!” <sup>39</sup>Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” <sup>40</sup>He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”

*Jesus said, “I am the light of the world.”*

**Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness.**

**Advent Reflection**

“Prepare the way - think and do”

Pastor Timothy McKenzie

**Hymn**

“Blessed Is the One” ACS 929 sing two times, from *All Creation Sings*

**BLESSED IS THE ONE**

Text: & Music: John Helgen, b. 1957 T&M © 2013 Augsburg Fortress

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

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

in the name, who comes in the name of the Lord.

## Prayers

(Pastor McKenzie, prayers)

*The congregation may kneel or sit for the prayers.*

In Christ Jesus we meet the God who is Emmanuel, God with us. Therefore, let us be bold as we pray, trusting that God draws near to those in any kind of need.

*“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice...The Lord is near.”* O Lord, lead your church to prepare the way of your Son’s advent into the world with prayer and acts of lovingkindness. Grant the church peace in every place that it might overcome anxiety and worry, division and mistrust with confidence and joy that you are always near to this world with compassion and mercy.

**We are waiting for and hastening the coming of Christ.**

*“Think about these things...do them, and the God of peace will be with you.”* O Lord, help us in our daily lives to think about whatever is true and honorable, just and pure, and grant us the strength and confidence to do these things that bring about your peace in this world.

**We are waiting for and hastening the coming of Christ.**

*“Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!”* O Lord, many wait for justice and liberation; many long for freedom and peace. Bless your people to go forth into the world with works of peace, comfort, and reconciliation that all might know that your mercy endures forever.

**We are waiting for and hastening the coming of Christ.**

*“Why are you untying it?” “The Lord needs it.”* O Lord, when the world asks, “Why?” When the events of life press upon us demanding, “Why?” — help us to untie our hearts, responding with open hands of mercy and compassion that declare your presence to all who suffer. We now lift our prayers before you, spoken and silent, for those concerns of the world and life that weigh upon our hearts.

*Silence*

**We are waiting for and hastening the coming of Christ.**

*“I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”* O Lord, many forces in the world attempt to silence your prophets and your people, while many in this world continue to cry out in distress for peace, food, shelter, care and welcome. Embolden your people, stirring our hearts from silence, cynicism, and despair, to cry out with voices of peace, sustenance, mercy, acceptance, and unity with all who suffer in need.

**We are waiting for and hastening the coming of Christ.**

Into your wide embrace, O God, we place all our prayers, spoken and unspoken, trusting that you will receive them into your heart of mercy, Jesus Christ, your Son and our Savior.

**Amen.**

## The Lord’s Prayer

*Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus teaches us.*

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

## SENDING

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

*Please stand as you are able.*

## SENDING BLESSING

Beloved of God, may the blessing of the holy and undivided  
+ Trinity rest upon you and remain with you this day and always.  
**Amen.**

## SENDING HYMN “We Are Waiting for Jesus” ACS 905 from *All Creation Sings*

### JESUS BRING PEACE

Text: & Music: John Helgen, b. 1957 T&M © 2013 Augsburg Fortress

1 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.  
2 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.  
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

Sun of jus - tice, shine up - on us; we are trust - ing in your prom - ise.  
Lov - ing Shep - herd, walk be - side us; stir our hearts, and gent - ly guide us.

We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.  
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

## Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is coming soon.

**Emmanuel is with us. Thanks be to God.**

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This service adapted/reprinted from *All Creation Sings*, “Service of Word and Prayer”, copyright 2020 Augsburg Fortress.

Worship Leaders: Pastor Timothy McKenzie; live streaming camera: A. J. Pridgen; musician: Lester Ackerman, Director of Music Ministry and Organist

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## Worship and Congregational Life

**Advent Midweek Prayer** Wednesdays (12/6, 12/13 & 12/20) during Advent, 7 pm in person and online on Facebook (SaintMarksCharlotte).

## Advent Schedule

12/15 Carolina Pro Musica Christmas, 7:30 pm, ticketed event, St. Mark's members receive 50% off  
12/17 Advent 3: St. Mark's Choir, St. Mark's Handbells, and Organ 10:30  
12/24 Advent 4: St. Mark's Choir, one service at 10:30

*During Advent, prepare your heart with prayer and song.*

## Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

12/24 at 8:30 pm at St. Mark's and live on Facebook at SaintMarksCharlotte.

Music begins at 8:00 pm

St. Mark's Choir, Brass Quintet, Vocal Soloists, and Organ

## 12/31/23 First Sunday of Christmas, 10:30 am service only

**"One in Christ Jesus!" 2024 Fall Stewardship Appeal** Faithfully and joyfully consider your pledge of support for St. Mark's in the coming year. The pledge form is included in the "One in Christ Jesus!" brochure, available in the Gathering Place. Your pledge of support is welcome at any time. An online pledge option is available from our webpage, or you may use the QR code (hover your phone camera to connect) for immediate access to St. Mark's website donation page.



## St. Mark's Prayer List

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, Nathaniel Coburn, Sarah Lindberg, Marilyn Denison, Eileen Dunlap, Jim Middleswarth, Christopher Shirley, Pat & Gary Ragsdale, Tanner Grant, Michael Frye, Ken Foust, and Gene Ellington.

Please email Pastor McKenzie with Prayer List and other prayer requests ([pastortimsmc@gmail.com](mailto:pastortimsmc@gmail.com))



Do you feel like you are in crisis? In Isaiah it is written, "Fear not, for I am with you; do not be dismayed for I am your God." Stephen ministers are here to show the Lord's love and comfort for you in times of trial. If you would like to confidentially speak to a Stephen Minister, please contact Pastor Tim ([pastortimsmc@gmail.com](mailto:pastortimsmc@gmail.com))



## *Our Ministers*

**All the people of God at St. Mark's**

**Rev. Dr. Timothy McKenzie, Senior Pastor**

[pastortimsmc@gmail.com](mailto:pastortimsmc@gmail.com)

**Lester Ackerman,**

**Director of Music Ministry, Organist**

[lackerman2@aol.com](mailto:lackerman2@aol.com)

**Sue Wadgyamar, Parish Administrator**

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**Jessie Craig, Financial Administrator**

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