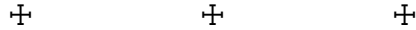




ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Our Mission

Growing Disciples - Making Christ Known



DECEMBER 17, 2023

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

10:30 AM SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

“Rejoice always,” is the message of the Third Sunday of Advent. Knowing that the Lord is near, we pray without ceasing, test everything, and hold fast to what is good. Christ stands among us, often as one whom we do not know. He is the silent companion on all our journeys and the light who guides us, always revealing himself to us in word and sacrament.

GATHERING

Bold responses are spoken by the congregation.

Prelude

“Angels We Have Heard on High”
Traditional French Carol GLORIA; Setting for handbells by Sandra Eithun

Please stand as able.

Processional Hymn

“Blessed Be the God of Israel” ELW 250

FOREST GREEN

1. Blessed be the God of Israel who comes to set us free
and raises up new hope for us: a Branch from David's tree.
So have the prophets long declared that with a mighty arm
God would turn back our enemies and all who wish us harm.
2. With promised mercy will God still the covenant recall,
the oath once sworn to Abraham, from foes to save us all;
that we might worship without fear and offer lives of praise,
In holiness and righteousness to serve God all our days.
3. My child, as prophet of the Lord you will prepare the way,
to tell God's people they are saved from sin's eternal sway.
Then shall God's mercy from on high shine forth and never cease
to drive away the gloom of death and lead us into peace.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944, based on Luke 1:68-79 © 1989 Hope Publishing company, Arr. Oxford University Press,
Music: English folk tune; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958

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.

Remembering the waters of Holy Baptism, let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

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.

Please stand as able.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray. Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Please be seated.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

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

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (ELW 257)

VENI, EMMANUEL

2. O come, O Wisdom from on high, embracing all things
far and nigh: in strength and beauty come and stay;
teach us your will and guide our way.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

Musical Interlude

“Ding, Dong, Merrily on High”

Traditional English Carol; Setting for handbells by Fred Gramann

WORD

First Reading

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Marty Schwartz, lector

¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. ⁸For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed. ¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Psalm 126

Jack Richardson, Bryan Stoenner , cantors

Psalm 126:3;(Mark Sedio); Refrain reproduced from *Psalter for Worship Year AB* © 2008 Augsburg Fortress



The LORD has done great things for us.

¹When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. ²Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.”

³The LORD has done great things for us, and we rejoiced. ⁴Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses in the Negeb. ⁵May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy. ⁶Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.

Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Marty Schwartz, lector

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil. ²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Please stand as able.

Gospel Acclamation

“Alleluia, Lord, to whom shall we go” from *ACS Holy Communion Setting Twelve*

Al-le-lu - ia, al - le-lu - ia, al-le-lu - ia.

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

Repeat alleluia

The Holy Gospel John 1:6-8, 19-28

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 1st chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” ²¹And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” ²²Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” ²³He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’” as the prophet Isaiah said. ²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?” ²⁶John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.” ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

Sermon

“Rejoice always”

Pastor Timothy McKenzie

Please stand as able.

Hymn of the Day “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light” ELW 815

HOUSTON

Text: Kathleen Thomerson, b. 1934; Music: Kathleen Thomerson; T & M: 1970, 1975 Celebration

1. I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to follow Jesus.
God set the stars to give light to the world. The star of my life is Jesus.

Refrain: In him there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

2. I want to see the brightness of God. I want to look at Jesus.
Clear Sun of righteousness, shine on my path, and show me the way to the Father. *Refrain*

3. I’m looking for the coming of Christ. I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run with patience the race, we shall know the joy of Jesus.
Refrain

The Apostles' Creed

Together, let us confess our faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed.

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.

The service continues with the Prayers.

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 Lord, bless your body the church in every place and language to rejoice always and pray without ceasing. Sanctify your people with your peace so we may hold fast to what is good and share this with others. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God of the wilderness, we praise you for the strength and renewal you continue to give in the wilderness and desolate places. Teach us to care for the wilderness, the oceans, and the skies that all we do might testify to your presence in all of creation. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Lord God, you love justice and promise your favor to those who are oppressed, brokenhearted, captive and in prison, and to all who mourn. May your Spirit be upon all leaders throughout the world to bring peace and good news to all who are refugees and displaced, and to the homeless and downtrodden of our community. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Holy Comforter, bless us to pray without ceasing for all who are in need, the sick and the dying, those who mourn, and all who are anxious. May our loved ones be kept sound, in body and soul, by your Spirit: 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, Danyne 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.

Sending God, bless the ministry of this congregation to cry out in the wilderness of this world with Christ's good news and good works of comfort for all who are lonely, grieving, homeless, recovering, or hungry. May all we do in our community testify to the light of Jesus Christ. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Holy Trinity, we give you thanks for the saints who prayed without ceasing and held fast to what is good. Bless and lead us that we also may be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord, upon whom we wait and hope. 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.
And also with you.

MEAL

Please be seated.

OFFERING

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

Anthem

“Come, O Long-Expected Jesus”

Michael Burkhardt

Come, O long-expected Jesus, born to set your people free; from our fears and sins release us; grant us peace and liberty. Refrain: Awake our hearts to receive you, transform our hearts by your grace, through our lives reveal your mercy, in this and ev’ry place. Born your people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king: born to reign in us forever, now your gracious kingdom bring. Refrain

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

Unison:

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

SATB (opt.):

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*

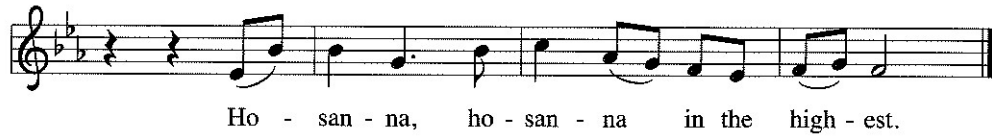
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and

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.



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 wafer and wine in a small cup or "Communion Kit." 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*

Traditional English Carol





“In the Bleak Midwinter”

Tune CRANHAM by Gustav Holst
Setting for organ by David M. Cherwien

“Come Unto Him” from *Messiah*

George Frideric Handel
Sue Ann Phillips, soprano

*Come unto him, all ye that labor, come unto him, that are heavy laden, and he will give you rest.
Take his yoke upon you, and learn of him; for he is meek and lowly of heart:
and ye shall find rest, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

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. 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

“People, Look East” ELW 248

BESANCON

1. People, look east. The time is near of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east, and sing today-Love, the Guest, is on the way.
2. Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there.
Give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flow'r may flourish.
People, look east, and sing today-Love, the Rose, is on the way.
3. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east, and sing today-Love, the Star, is on the way.

4. Angels announce with shouts of mirth him who brings new life to earth.
 Set ev'ry peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming.
 People, look east, and sing today-Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Text: Eleanor Fargeon, 1881-1965 ©Miss E. Fargeon Will Trust, by permission of David Higham Assoc.
 Arr. ©1999 Novello & Co. Ltd. London; Music: French carol; arr. Barry Rose, b. 1934

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the good news.
Thanks be to God.

Please be seated.

Postlude

“God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen”

Traditional English Carol
 Organ setting by Alfred V. Fedak

‡ ‡ ‡

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Worship Leaders: Pastor Timothy McKenzie (prayer assistant); crucifer/acolyte: Palmer Stevenson; lector: Marty Schwartz; live streaming camera: Ron Wenzel; soundboard: Alan Harms; ushers: Doug Milheim, Marc & Susan Ginns, Eddie Goodall, A.J. Pridgen, Sean Fielding; 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; musicians: St. Mark's Choir; St. Mark's Handbells; Jack Richardson, Bryan Stoenner, cantors; Sue Ann Phillips, soprano soloist; Lester Ackerman, Director of Music Ministry and Organist

Next Sunday Leaders: prayer assistant: Tom Tolbert; crucifer/acolyte am: Brady Ferner; crucifer pm: Michael Lakeman; acolyte pm: Maddie Thompson; lector am: Lisa Barnette; lector pm: Brooks Stevenson; live streaming camera am: A. J. Pridgen, streaming pm: Ron Wenzel; soundboard am: Kevin Feezor; soundboard pm: Alan Harms; ushers am: Team B; ushers pm: John Simon, Sean Fielding, Tom Sehorn, Dale Hopp; greeters: Patrick & Rebecca Huang; Dale & Mary Lou Hopp; communion assistants am: Alexandra Jacob, Jay Jacob, A.J. Pridgen; communion assistants pm: Cliff Edahl, Karen & Kevin Feezor, Jay Jacob, Gretchen Payne; communion helper am: Karen Covington; communion helper pm: Kay Finlon; tabulators: Kevin Feezor, Dawn Schwartz

‡ ‡ ‡



Advent
 Midweek Prayer –
 Pause. Prepare. Ponder

December 6, 13, and 20
 7 pm at St. Mark's
 (and live on Facebook)

All are welcome -
 Together we are the
 body of Christ!

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 the glory of God and in Memory of Ed Marz by his wife Joanne and children.

Baptism Today. (8:30 service) In Holy Baptism, we welcome with joy, Heidi Rose Holzinger, into Christ's body at St. Mark's. May God bless Heidi Rose, her parents Suzanna and Connor, and sister Helen. Heidi's sponsors are Marshall Payne and Sydney Payne.

Congratulations to Glen and Jacob Stone as they complete their respective majors 12/15/23. Glen Stone (Recreational Management WVU Tech) and Jacob Stone (Construction Engineering and anagement WVU Tech) would like to thank everyone for their prayers and support - including the

college pal boxes.

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

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'

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.

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 LUNCHESES. 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

"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.

"I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light" ELW 815 This hymn and tune were written by Kathleen Thomerson (b.1934). She considers this hymn to be a scriptural meditation and prayer on the subject of light. Revelation 21 is one example of a biblical passage with the theme of light: "And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light". **HOUSTON** is the tune, and takes its name from Church of the Redeemer in Houston, Texas, the first place this hymn was sung, and the family church of Kathleen Thomerson.

This Week: From the Lutheran Church Calendar

December 20, Katharina von Bora Luther, renewer of the church (1499-1552)

Born to an impoverished nobleman, Katharina (Katie) was five when her mother died, and she was sent to live in a convent. She later took vows as a nun, but around age twenty-four she and several other nuns who were influenced by the writings of Martin Luther left the convent. Six children were born to Katie and Martin, and she became a trusted life partner for Martin. She was so influential that Luther took to calling her "my lord Katie." Their marriage was a partnership in which Katie managed the family estate and administrated the household finances.

Adapted from "Sundays and Seasons"



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 (pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org)

Readings for 12/24/2023, Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Luke 1:46b-55
*You, Lord, have lifted
up the lowly. (Luke 1:52)*
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

Birthdays

12/18 Millie Cansler
12/19 Eric Timm
12/20 Carol Milheim
12/20 Warren Miller IV
12/23 Ben McCall



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 (pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org)

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Our Ministers

All the people of God at St. Mark's

Rev. Dr. Timothy McKenzie, Senior Pastor
pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org

Lester Ackerman,
Director of Music Ministry, Organist
les@saintmarkscharlotte.org

Sue Wadgymer, Parish Administrator
admin@saintmarkscharlotte.org

Jessie Craig, Finance Administrator
finance@saintmarkscharlotte.org