



ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Our Mission

*Growing Disciples - Making Christ Known*

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DECEMBER 20, 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**

*“What Is This Lovely Fragrance”*

Traditional French Carol; Organ setting by Paul O. Manz

**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 night grows longer, and the shadows settle in,

**we ponder your marvelous designing.**

When our hearts are wintering, weary with grief and woe,

**we ponder and seek your wisdom beyond our understanding.**

In each moment fleeting, each fragile life beholding, in each gift of your bestowing,

**we ponder and trust your promises fully.**

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.*

“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming” ELW 272 Stanzas 1 & 2

ES IST EIN ROSE

Text: German carol, 15th cent.; tr. Theodore Baker, 1851-1934, sts. 1-2; Harriet R. Krauth, 1845-1925, st. 3; John C. Mattes, 1876-1948, st. 4  
Music: *Alte catholische geistliche Kirchengesänge*, Köln, 15--; arr. Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621

1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom-ing from ten-der stem hath  
2 I - sai - ah had fore - told it, the rose I have in  
sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as  
mind; with Mar - y we be - hold it, the  
seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, a -  
vir - gin moth - er kind. To show God's love a - right, she  
mid the cold of win - ter, when half - spent was the night.  
bore to us a Sav - ior, when half - spent was the night.

## Opening Prayer

Let us pray. O God, majestic and mysterious: Morning and evening, summer and winter, each beginning and every ending is within your great design. Be present in our joys and in our sorrows; make us to marvel at your wisdom and to trust your loving care for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Emmanuel.

**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

#### Revelation 21:1-6

<sup>1</sup>Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup>And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; <sup>4</sup>he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.” <sup>5</sup>And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” <sup>6</sup>Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the

beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

*The Word of the Lord.*

**Thanks be to God.**

**The Holy Gospel                    Luke 1:26-38**

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

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He 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. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup>The 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. <sup>36</sup>And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup>Then 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.

*Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."*

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

**Advent Reflection**

"Ponder - nothing will be impossible "

Pastor Timothy McKenzie

**Hymn**

"We Are Waiting for Jesus" ACS 905 from *All Creation Sings*

**JESUS BRINGS 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.

## 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.

*“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.”* O Lord, as humanity longs for a new heaven and a new earth, help your church to be a living sign of unity where there is division, hope where there is despair, and joy where there is weeping.

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

*“And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See I am making all things new.’”* Lord, you are the beginning of all life and the source of every moment of renewal. Like Mary and Joseph, renew our vision and hope to see beyond the present, always envisioning the new creation you are working in us.

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

*“Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.”* Lord, we know you are with us, but often we struggle, perplexed by fears and self-doubt. Help us to trust your presence in our lives, in our relationships, and in your unfolding plan for this world that we might act boldly with faith and love for others.

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

*“It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.”* Lord, as another year draws to a close and so much work for peace, unity and reconciliation among communities and nations remains unfinished, help us to place our trust in you as the ground and goal of history, and strengthen us to work for good while there is time. We now lift our prayers before you, spoken and silent, as we remember our concerns and all that weighs upon our hearts.

*Silence*

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

*“For nothing will be impossible with God.”* Lord, the angel witnessed to Mary of your unlimited possibility. Help us to ponder and to act, risking ourselves for the sake of your gospel of love for this world. When peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation seem far away, walk with us and lead us into the marvelous possibilities of your kingdom of grace.

**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

“It Came upon the Midnight Clear” ELW 282

CAROL

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876; Music: Richard S. Willis, 1819-1900

1. It came upon a midnight clear, that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:  
“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav’n’s all-gracious king.”  
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.
2. Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled,  
and still their heav’nly music floats o’er all the weary world.  
Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hov’ring wing,  
and ever o’er its babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

## Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is coming soon.  
**Emmanuel is with us. Thanks be to God.**

✙                      ✙                      ✙

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: Elizabeth (Bibba)  
Whitener, Guest 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

**12/24 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 ([pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org](mailto:pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org))



*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](mailto:pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org))*



## *Our Ministers*

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

**Rev. Dr. Timothy McKenzie, Senior Pastor**  
[pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org](mailto:pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org)

**Lester Ackerman,**  
**Director of Music Ministry, Organist**  
[les@saintmarkscharlotte.org](mailto:les@saintmarkscharlotte.org)

**Sue Wadgyman, Parish Administrator**  
[admin@saintmarkscharlotte.org](mailto:admin@saintmarkscharlotte.org)

**Jessie Craig, Financial Administrator**  
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