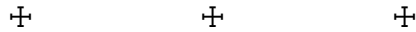




ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Our Mission

Growing Disciples - Making Christ Known



DECEMBER 3, 2023

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

10:30 AM SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

Psalm 80 reads, "Stir up your power, and come!" And Isaiah writes, "Tear open the heavens and come down" - themes reminding us of God's advent in Jesus Christ. On this first Sunday of a new church year, Jesus call us to keep awake as we anticipate God's in-breaking into human history with restoration and reconciliation.

GATHERING

Bold responses are spoken by the congregation.

Prelude

'Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

15th century German Carol; Setting for Cello and organ by Michael Bedford

Please stand as able.

Processional Hymn

"Hark, the Glad Sound!" ELW 239

CHESTERFIELD

1. Hark, the glad sound! The Savior comes, the Savior promised long;
let ev'ry heart prepare a throne and ev'ry voice a song.
2. He comes the pris'ners to release, in Satan's bondage held.
The gates of brass before him burst, the iron fetters yield.
3. He comes the broken heart to bind, the bleeding soul to cure,
and with the treasures of his grace to enrich the humble poor.
4. Our glad hosannas, Prince of peace, your welcome shall proclaim,
and heav'n's eternal arches ring with your beloved name.

Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702-1751; Music: Thomas Haweis, 1734-1820

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.

Please stand as able.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray. Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection save us from the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father 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

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

WORD

First Reading

Isaiah 64:1-9

Larry Lippert, lector

¹O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence— ²as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil— to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! ³When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. ⁴From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. ⁵You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. ⁶We have all become like one who is

unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. ⁷There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. ⁸Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. ⁹Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Christian Souza, Amy Woodall, cantors

Psalm 90:12:(Thomas Pavlechko); Refrain reproduced from *Psalter for Worship Year A* © 2007 Augsburg Fortress



Let your face shine up - on _____ us, and we shall be saved.

¹Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth ²before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might, and come to save us! ³Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved. ⁴O LORD God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers? ⁵You have fed them with the bread of tears, and given them tears to drink in full measure. ⁶You make us the scorn of our neighbors; our enemies laugh among themselves. ⁷Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved. ¹⁷But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one whom you made strong for yourself. ¹⁸Then we will never turn back from you; give us life, and we will call on your name. ¹⁹Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Larry Lippert, lector

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— ⁶just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— ⁷so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

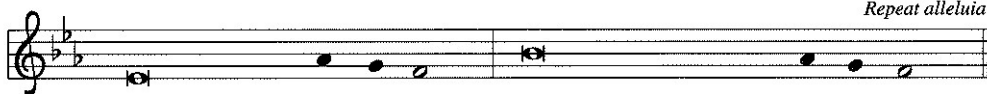
Please stand as able.

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

Mark 13:24-37

The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 13th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²⁴“But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. ²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

Sermon

“Keep awake”

Pastor Timothy McKenzie

Please stand as able.

Hymn of the Day

We Are Waiting for Jesus” from All Creation Sings

JESUS BRINGS PEACE

Text & Music: John Helgen, b. 1957 © 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.

Reception of New Members

The pastor invites new member to come forward.

Today we welcome Wayne Webber into membership, and pray God's blessing upon his continued journey with Jesus Christ and his body, gathered together in the power of the Holy Spirit at St. Mark's Lutheran Church.

The pastor addresses the new member.

Wayne, we welcome you as a member of St. Mark's Lutheran Church to join with us in word and sacrament ministry. Together, we worship God, hearing the Word, sharing in the Lord's Supper, and proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ through word and deed, as we serve all people, and strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

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.

Let us pray. Merciful God, we give you thanks for this new brother in Christ, whom you have made your own by water and the Word in Holy Baptism. You have called him in Christ and enlightened him with the gifts of your Spirit, and you have nourished him at Christ's holy table. Uphold this your servant, and all of your servants gathered here, in the gifts and promises of baptism, and unite the hearts of all whom you have brought to new life in Christ. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Let us rejoice with this new brother in Christ!

We rejoice with you in the life of the baptized.

Together, we will give thanks and praise to God and proclaim the good news to all the world!

The service continues with the Prayers.

Prayers of Intercession

(Dave Dunlap, 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.*

We pray for the ministry we share in Christ's name. Open our hearts to your call for justice, peace, and healing. Draw near to us, inspiring your church in all the world to the needs of peace and reconciliation among all nations and people. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Heavenly Father, you sent Abram out to make a great nation. Today, our national and world leaders need

your guidance to deal with war in Gaza Strip, Ukraine, and Sudan. The issues of war, famine, and natural disaster are numerous. Please help our leaders to find peace, release hostages, care for the ill and injured, feed the hungry, and house the homeless. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for this planet in need of restoration: for devastated habitats, polluted waters, thawing ice, blazing fires, swelling floods, and long-lasting droughts. Renew the face of the earth and our relationship to it. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Healing God, as we continue into colder weather and more time indoors, help us to remember how to protect ourselves from the invisible enemies of flu, RSV, and COVID. Guide doctors, nurses, and other caregivers in protecting, caring, and healing; and be with the sick, to ease their burdens, protect them, and reassure their families. Grant strength and hope 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, Mark Thornton, Ben Watson, Louisa Coburn, Mindy Curley, Danye Olin Bragdon, Sarah Lindberg, Marilyn Denison, Eileen Dunlap, Jim Middleswarth, Christopher Shirley, Pat & Gary Ragsdale, Tanner Grant, Michael Frye, Ken Foust, the Tanabe Family, and Gene Ellington. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great

We give thanks for the great cloud of witnesses who kept awake while waiting and working for peace, justice, and reconciliation. Sustain us all as we yearn for the completion of your redeeming work in Jesus Christ. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Loving God, help us to show Your love to those facing adversity, unfairness or injustice based on their race, religion, gender or sexual identity, age, or disability. Diversity is a building block of a strong society. We must all learn from each other to become better people. Our biases are often unconscious, but they are still real. Please help us to follow Your commandment and show each other love in thought, word, and deed. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

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

“An Advent Carol”

Jody W. Lindh

All the earth is waiting for the birth of God's Son, soon the celebrating will bring honor to the Holy One. Sing with joy your carols here, soon the Christ Child will appear! How do we wait? How do we get ready for the coming of God's Son? How do we wait? How do we get ready for the birth of the Holy One? Be ready, be strong. Keep awake, it won't be long! Be patient, always pray, do what is good, prepare the way!

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
SAIB (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.
 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.

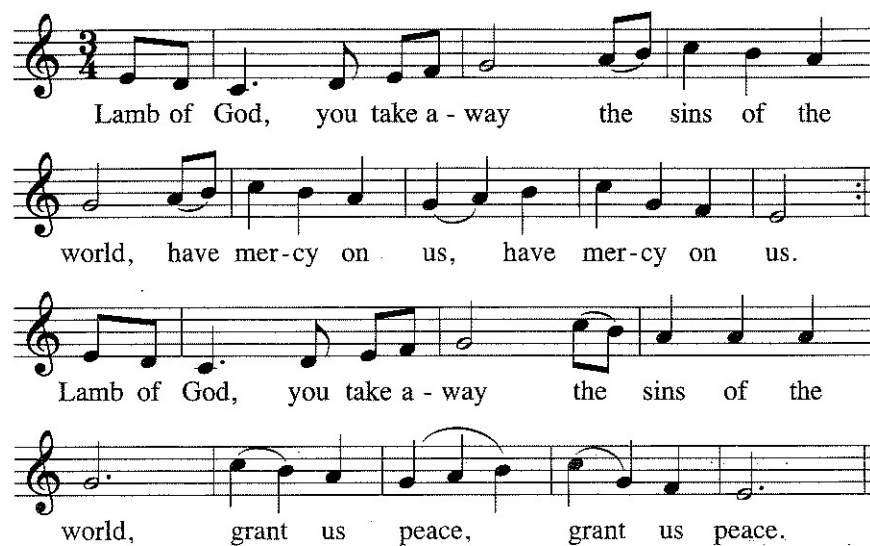
Distribution of Holy Communion

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



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.

"In the Bleak Midwinter"

Tune by Gustav Holst

Setting for cello and organ by David M. Cherwien

"Comfort Ye" from *Messiah*

George Frideric Handel

Christian Souza, tenor

Comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardon'd. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

“Savior of the Nations, Come”

Tune by Johann Walter
Setting for organ by Robert J. Powell

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

“Savior of the Nations, Come” ELW 263

NUN KOMM, DER GEIDEN HEILAND

1. Savior of the nations, come; virgin’s son, make here your home.
Marvel now, O heav’n and earth: God has chosen such a birth.
2. Not by human flesh and blood, but the mystic Breath of God,
was the Word of God made flesh, fruit of woman, blossom fresh.
3. Wondrous birth—oh, wondrous child—from his throne, a virgin mild!
Very God, and Mary’s son, eager now his race to run!
4. From God’s heart the Savior speeds, back to God his pathway leads;
out to vanquish death’s command, back to reign at God’s right hand.
6. Praise we sing to Christ the Lord, virgin’s son, incarnate Word!
To the holy Trinity praise we sing eternally!

Text: Mary A. Thomson, 1834-1923; Music: James Walsh, 1837-1901

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God.

Please be seated.

Postlude

“Savior of the Nations, Come”

Setting for organ by Paul O. Manz

† † †

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Worship Leaders: Pastor Timothy McKenzie; prayer assistant: Dave Dunlap; crucifer/acolyte: needed; lector: Larry Lippert; live streaming camera: A. J. Pridgen; soundboard: Neil Dixon; ushers: Doug Milheim, Marc & Susan Ginns, Eddie Goodall, A.J. Pridgen, Sean Fielding; greeters: Tom & Kay Sehorn, Michael & Tara Thompson; communion assistants: Barbara Baker, Flora Chance, Janice Miller, A. J. Pridgen, Betsy Wenzel; communion helper: Kay Finlon; tabulators: Charles Lakeman, Diane Thomas; musicians: St. Mark's Choir; John Brumbaugh, cellist; Christian Souza, Amy Woodall, cantors; Christian Souza, tenor soloist; Lester Ackerman, Director of Music Ministry and Organist

Next Sunday Leaders: prayer assistant: Pastor Tim; crucifer: Michael Lakeman; acolyte: needed; lector: Cindy Little, Jonathan Lakeman, Flora Chance; live streaming camera: Ron Wenzel; soundboard: Kevin Feezor; ushers: Team B; greeters: Gretchen Dodge, Jackie Ellington; communion assistants: Jay Jacob, A.J. Pridgen, John Simon, Chris Stevenson, Kimberly Zimmerman; communion helper: Catherine Metze; tabulators: Carol Goodall, Karen Feezor



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

Welcome! (10:30 service) Today we welcome Wayne Webber into membership and pray God's blessing upon his continued journey with Christ's body at St. Mark's. Please take a moment to welcome Wayne into our fellowship!

Handbell Concert Today! Queen City Ringers present "Christmas Bells Are Ringing" at 5pm. Admission free, donations welcome.

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.

St. Mark's Men's Group All interested men of St. Mark's are invited to participate in our Men's Group meeting in the Fellowship Hall at 9 am on Saturday, December 9. This meeting will include activities supporting St. Marks as well as the Hospitality House of Charlotte (HHOC). For the church we will be slightly modifying and erecting the existing manger scene backdrop, making it more stable (no pun intended), easier disassemble / reassemble and to move around. If you are good with a drill, screw driver and/or saw please consider joining us. Probably about one hour worth of work.) Simultaneously we will be preparing / cooking a meal in the church kitchen for delivery to the Hospitality House of Charlotte (HHOC) on Scott Avenue around noon that same day. The meal will consist of of home-made vegetable soup, a variety of meat and cheese sandwiches, fruit cups and cookies. We will need a group of guys to make the sandwiches and a second group to make the soup. We will then pack it up and deliver it to HHOC. (Probably about 1-2 hours worth of work.). This meal is being made possible by the financial support of Thrivent and the volunteer efforts of St. Mark's Mens Group. Questions? Email Mike Doyne.

Carolina Pro Musica Christmas Concert 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.

Theology on Tap Thursday, 12/7 at 7pm at Brewers at Yancy, located at 4001 Yancy Ave. Everyone is invited!

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.

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".



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!



Advent &
Christmas
at St. Mark's

ALL ARE WELCOME!

12/3 FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT -
WITH ADVENT BAGS & ADVENT DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET
12/3 QUEEN CITY RINGERS - CHRISTMAS CONCERT 8 PM
12/6, 12/13, 12/20 MIDWEEK ADVENT PRAYER
7 PM IN PERSON & ONLINE
12/10 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT - "LESSONS & CAROLS"
12/16 CAROLINA PRO MUSICA CHRISTMAS CONCERT 7:30 PM
12/17 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
12/24 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT 10:30 AM ONLY
CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP 8:30 PM
MUSIC BEGINS AT 8:00 PM
12/31 FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS
ONE SERVICE AT 10:30 AM ONLY
1/7/2024 EPIPHANY SUNDAY

Music Notes

"Savior of the Nations, Come" ELW 263, comes to us from Ambrose of Milan (340-397 A.D.), who is often referred to as the father of Latin hymnody or church song. Paul Westermeyer writes: "Ambrose was not the first to write hymns, but his hymns were the first ones the church found worth keeping." This hymn rings the keynote for Advent, with six stanzas providing opportunity to proclaim God's purpose in sending the Messiah and our response to this Good News. The hymn was translated into German by Martin Luther in 1523 and the translation begins, **NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND** (the tune name). Martin Luther is certainly revered for his reforming activities, writing, teaching and work as a pastor, but he also wrote and adapted many hymn tunes to accommodate his hymn texts, this hymn being a probable collaboration with publisher and colleague Johann Walter (1496-1560)

This Week: From the Lutheran Church Calendar

December 3, Francis Xavier, missionary to Asia, (1506-1552)

A native of the Basque region of Spain, Francis Xavier was one of the initial seven, and a co-founder of the Jesuits, that formed around Ignatius de Loyola in 1534. Ordained a priest in 1537, Xavier was a missionary to Goa, India, Southeast Asia, and Japan. He was appointed Apostolic nuncio to the East. Xavier is remembered for his evangelistic work among indigenous peoples and children. He set the course for mission in Asia and Japan, which was radical at the time, emphasizing learning local languages for preaching and catechetical work.

December 4, John of Damascus, theologian and hymnwriter (c.675/676-749)

Born to a wealthy family in Damascus and well educated in Greek and Arabic, John followed his grandfather and father into a career in finance and government, later leaving this to become a monk in an abbey near Jerusalem. John wrote many hymns as well as theological works. Foremost among the latter is a work called "The Fount of Wisdom," which touches on philosophy, heresy, and the orthodox faith. Drawing upon the teachings of Nicene and post-Nicene theology, it is a summary of the Christian faith that remained influential for centuries.

December 6, Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, (270-342)

Though Nicholas is one of the church's most beloved saints, little is known about his life. He was a bishop in what is now Turkey, and is reported to have been at the Council of Nicaea in 325. Stories that surround Nicholas tell of his love for God and neighbor, especially the poor. Nicholas' legendary habit of secret gift-giving became the model for Sinterklaas, or Santa Claus.

December 7, Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, (c.340-397)

Born into a Christian family, Ambrose had not yet been baptized while serving as Roman governor in northern Italy. As governor, he traveled to Milan to quell conflict in the church, and was seen as a moderating force, to such a degree that both sides called for him to become the next bishop of Milan. Thinking himself unworthy, Ambrose fled and hid, but after encouragement by Emperor Gratian, he was baptized and then consecrated bishop of Milan. Ambrose became a champion of Nicene trinitarian theology, and an opponent of Arianism. Ambrose was bishop when another young seeker, named Augustine, arrived in Milan. Ambrose's preaching is credited with leading Augustine to the Christian faith. Ambrose is credited with authorship of three ELW hymns, including the Advent hymn, *Veni redemptor gentium* ("Savior of the Nations, Come" ELW 263).

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, Mark Thornton, 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, Gene Ellington, and the Tanabe Family.
Please email Pastor McKenzie with Prayer List and other prayer requests (pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org)

Readings for 12/10/2023, Second Sunday of Advent Lessons and Carols (10:30 am)

Isaiah 40:1-8 Cindy Little
Jeremiah 23:5-6 Cindy Little
Zechariah 9:9-10
Haggai 2:6-9
Isaiah 35:1-6
Luke 1:26-35, 38
Mark 1: 1-15 Pastor Tim McKenzie

Birthdays

12/5 Judy Cox
12/5 Ann Danello
12/7 Marty Schwartz
12/7 Grey Hamilton
12/8 Jay Jacob
12/8 Tara Davenport



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
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Lester Ackerman,
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Sue Wadgyman, Parish Administrator
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