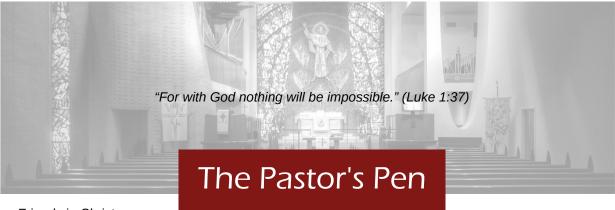


December 2023

St. Mark's Lutheran Church



Dear Friends in Christ.

The Advent theme of waiting seems at odds with the world. Perhaps it always has, but today it seems we just can't wait for Christmas. We begin our celebration of Christmas earlier and earlier every year. The season of Advent seems like the relic of a bygone era, superseded by the cultural Christmas season. Just what are we waiting for during Advent?

As the angel Gabriel suggests to Mary, we are waiting for the advent of something seemingly impossible: the coming of Christ into human history. We are watching for God's Kairos moments, the in-breaking of Christ into human lives that more and more doubt God's presence.

If all our technological advances suggest anything, we are people who don't like to wait. We can find and order presents quickly with certainty of delivery. We call delivery "fulfillment" and the point of origin for goods, "fulfillment centers." The good news announcement (Mk. 1:15), "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand," seems to have been overcome by our own ability to fulfill the impossible.

Yet Advent's purpose helps us better understand how God fills time with meaning. God is waiting for us to fulfill time with works of faith and love in this world. Not understanding completely, yet believing, Mary and Joseph waited upon and trusted unreservedly in the impossible possibility of God's promise. To wait upon God is to be open to God's fulfillment of time in my life. The time within which we live is a brief moment of fulfillment and meaning within God's vast eternity.

The world may say, "Waiting is a waste of time," yet Advent teaches us that waiting has purpose as an act of hope in the future. We are on human journeys not always knowing where we are going but trusting that God fulfills time and the times in which we live. To be a person of faith is to be curious about where and when God will next fulfill the impossible.

We do not make the Advent journey alone. As a church we wait together; we sing, pray, and serve together. We aren't waiting for a perpetual baby Jesus, rather, we await and watch for the Savior of the nations, crucified, risen and alive. He is the Great Healer (Mk. 2:17) who helps humanity overcome its sinful brokenness and divisions, its war and suffering.

Active waiting is to be fully present in the moment. To wait is to know the fulfillment of God's time that begins in my own life. Mary and Joseph, Zechariah and Elizabeth, the shepherds, and the Magi were all present in God's moment. May you also know that nothing is impossible for God. Watch and prepare, God is fulfilling time and revealing the kingdom through you.

In the light and peace of Christ, Pastor Tim McKenzie

On 11/13/2023, the congregational council held their monthly meeting in the choir room.

From the Treasurer's Report:

- The church continues to be in a relatively good financial situation
- On 11/22 the church will close on the loan for the roof replacement

Other topics during meeting:

- Thank you to Property Committee and Cliff Edahl for the hard work put into the roof replacement.
- Thank you to the congregation for meeting your 2023 pledges.
- Council motioned to accept Wayne Webber as a member.
- 11/26/2023 (10:30 am Service) = Installation of 2023/24 Council
- By 12/31/2023 = Committee Chairs will submit year end reports to Sue (admin@saintmarkscharlotte.org)
- 1/28/2024 = Congregational Meeting
 - o Any questions for council, please submit ahead of meeting to Sue (admin@saintmarkscharlotte.org)

Peace,

A.J. Pridgen, Council Secretary

2024 Giving and Qualified Charitable Distributions

- Do you financially support St. Mark's and its missions?
 - Are you over 70.5 years of age?
 - Do you take RMD's from an IRA?
 - Do you need to reduce your taxable income?

If you answer yes to all of the above, please consult your CPA and/or tax advisor and learn how a QCD "Qualified Charitable Distribution" can benefit both you and St. Mark's. A QCD is one of the relatively few tax deductions you can utilize while still using the standard deduction. A QCD sends money directly from your traditional IRA to St. Mark's and because that money is going directly to St. Mark's, it isn't considered taxable income, and you won't pay taxes on the amount you donate. Please contact your CPA or tax advisor for more details.

"One in Christ Jesus" -Your pledge of support is welcome at any time. Brochures with pledge information are available in the Gathering Place. You may send your pledges to St. Mark's church office by mail or through online giving. For more information go to (http://saintmarkscharlotte.org/stewardship/do-you-wish-to-make-a-donation/) or use the QR code. "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17)



around St. Mark's

Baptism of Charles Hall Molan, November 26, 2023







Surrounded by parents, sponsors and the body of Christ, we welcomed Charles Hall Molan into the church through the sacrament of Holy Baptism. May God bless Charles Hall, his parents Virginia and Brendan and brother Wells!

New Congregation Council Installation



The new Council for 2023-2024 was installed on Christ the King Sunday, November 26. The newly installed council is: Lisa Barnette, Cliff Edahl, Jay Jacob, Michael Lakeman, Gretchen Payne, A.J. Pridgen, John Simon, Chris Stevenson, Nick Wartner, Betsy Wenzel, Kimberly Zimmerman, and Pastor McKenzie.

Zimmerman Family



It was wonderful to have the full Zimmerman family together in worship on 11/26!

around St. Mark's

Roof Repair Update

The new flat roof is installed and ready for the rains to come! Thank you to Property Committee for getting this project done on time and slightly under budget.

However, we now have an unexpected additional roof project. The Sanctuary roof was scheduled for sealing of gaps and replacement of cracked shingles as part of the flat roof replacement. Upon further inspection of the Sanctuary roof and attic, water penetration was found along with multiple gaps and cracks, making a repair a short-lived Band-Aid. Therefore, it has been determined that a complete reroof is the best fix for the Sanctuary roof and Council will be voting on that project at its December meeting. The Sanctuary roof replacement will cost approximately \$26,000-\$27,000 assuming no issues with the roof decking. This project will include Leaf Guard gutter helmets that will prevent clogs from the surrounding trees, saving future gutter cleaning expense.

The good news is that with your help, most of the church building will have new roofing with 20-year guarantees. Property Committee has been outstanding stewards of church funds as it appears that both roof projects will cost about \$170,000 --- less than the \$200,000 originally anticipated and approved for just the flat roof.

The not so good news is that for the first time in over 15 years, the church has had to borrow money to maintain our building, albeit at a very attractive 4% fixed interest rate. We would like to get this debt eliminated as quickly as possible and ask that you prayerfully consider a donation to the newly created Capital Fund. Age is quickly catching up with our building and there will be additional capital projects just to maintain the integrity of our building, so again, any donation to the Capital Fund will go a long way to maintaining the building and reducing debt.

Thank you for continuing to be faithful stewards of St. Mark's!













around St. Mark's

11/6 Symbolism Tour





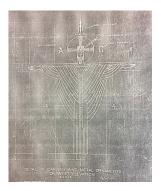




On 11/6, thirty people took part in a Symbolism Tour of St. Mark's led by Larry Dagenhart, Sr. and Pastor McKenzie. A group came by bus from Southminster and members and friends of St. Mark's also took part.









The tour focused on the sanctuary, its stained glass, reredos, high altar and font. Les Ackerman gave a brief recital and answered questions about the organ and its history. Historical materials were also on display from the archive.







After touring the Tryon Chapel, the group enjoyed a light reception with fellowship and conversation. We look forward to another opportunity to welcome others into this magnificent space. Thanks to Andrea Long for the group photos.

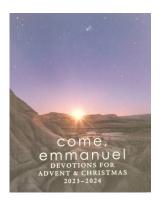
Coming up at St. Mark's

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." (Colossians 3:16)

Advent Bags

This year the Congregational Life Committee has again prepared Advent Bags to be distributed on 12/3, the First Sunday of Advent. A devotional book is included in each of the bags. Thank you to Susan Lakeman, Jane McCall, Kay Sehorn (and Joe), Sarah Storrs, Dianne Thomas on their efforts for so many.







Advent Midweek Prayer



Please consider taking time for prayer in the beauty and quiet of St. Mark's sanctuary during Advent.

Christian Education



Faith Forum in January

Join us at 9:30 in the Large Conference Room for "Other Scriptures". We'll discuss the lost texts of other early Christians based on Bart D. Ehrman's writings. Dr. Ehrman is the James A. Gray Distinguished Professor at UNC Chapel Hill.



Congregational Life

Kay Sehorn Committee Chairperson



Altar Flowers

FOR 2024

The 2024 calendar is up! 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. Remember a loved one or commemorate an event by donating altar flowers.

Poinsettias and Wreaths



If you would like to sponsor a poinsettia or wreath with a memorial or dedication, you may do so by contacting the church office and providing the information, or flyers are in the Gathering Place. The cost for poinsettias is the same as last year, \$12.00. Please have your information and payment to the church office on or before December 19th to be included in the bulletin. Flyers are in the Gathering Place. Poinsettias may be picked up after the Christmas Eve service or by calling the church office to schedule an appointment.



Congregational Life

Kay Sehorn Committee Chairperson



LOVE CIRCLE

We will meet at Firebirds Wood Fired Grill at Stonecrest (7716 Rea Rd) on Wednesday, December 6 at 11:00 am. Come join us!!

Saint 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, screwdriver 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 homemade 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 at Michael.Doyne01@gmail.com.

Ethnic Restaurant Group

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.











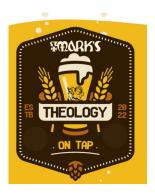






Family Ministry

THEOLOGY ON TAP



December's event will be Thursday, 12/7 at 7pm at Brewers at Yancy, located at 4001 Yancy Ave. Everyone is invited!



pictured: THOT 11/9 @ NoDa Brewing Company

Gifts & Memorials

Jay Jacob Committee Chairperson

In Memory of Charlie Cox

Karen Covington - Soup Kitchen Fund John & Marilyn Graham - Youth Ministry Fund Alan & Jackie Harms - Gifts & Memorials Tina Houser Evans - Gifts & Memorials Janice & David Simpson - Gifts & Memorials

In Memory of Takamasa Esashi (Mari McKenzie's father)

Alan & Jackie Harms - Music Fund Karen Covington - ELCA Global Mission (Japan)

In Memory of Marie Anne Daniels

Eric & Melba Daniels - Music Fund Eric & Melba Daniels - Soup Kitchen Fund

In Memory of Avery Grace Lepkowski

Michael & Rebecca Lepkowski - Gifts & Memorials

In Celebration of the Birth of Our Lord and Savior and in Memory of Jane & Tom Waggoner

Doug & Carol Milheim - Soup Kitchen Fund

In Celebration of the Birth of Our Lord and Savior and in Memory of Carol & Bill Milheim

Doug & Carol Milheim - Soup Kitchen Fund

In Honor of Susan Lakeman

Lawanna Stoeckel - Soup Kitchen Fund

Social Ministry

Susan Ginns Committee Chairperson



Room in the Inn

ROOM in the INN is just around the corner. We will be hosting 10 homeless men each Tuesday during January.

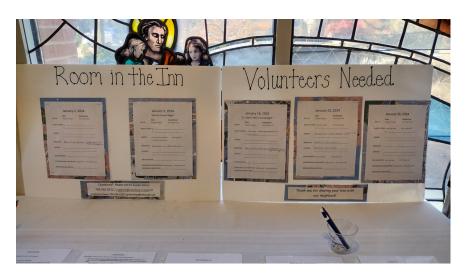
Volunteers will be needed to supply a warm DINNER, BREAKFAST in the morning, and a BAG LUNCH to take with them. More information on these duties will be available soon in the gathering place.

If you are unable to provide any of these duties, there is something you can help with - BEDTIME SNACKS for our guests such as lunch size bags of pretzels, goldfish, or small bags of fruit snacks.

At this time we have enough of the items needed for the toiletry bags we offer - TRAVEL SIZE toothpaste, deodorant, lip balm, body lotion , and kleenex packet and toothbrush. But after this year we will be out of everything, so don't hesitate to pick up any of these items when shopping Walmart or Target.

Here is a reminder of items we DO NOT NEED because of dispensers we added in the showers - soap, shampoo, and conditioner. And we CANNOT OFFER mouthwash as ordered by Roof Above, the parent of Room in the Inn.

Please drop off your bedtime snacks,or other donations,into the collection basket in the hall across from the restrooms. Thank you in advance for your participation in this outreach to the homeless in our community.



Please sign up to help as you are able in the Gathering Place.

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson

Let us rejoice, in our carols, hymns and anthems, that the good purpose of God is being mightily fulfilled.



Please consider putting these worship opportunities and music events on your schedule. All are welcome!



We are very pleased again this year to host the Queen City Ringers annual Christmas Concert. Please join us for this marvelous seasonal event. Admission is free, donations are welcome.

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson

Let us rejoice, in our carols, hymns and anthems, that the good purpose of God is being mightily fulfilled.







Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson

November Worship Highlights





St. Mark's Choir, Reformation Day 2023



Charlotte Symphony Brass Quintet and Percussionist, Reformation Sunday



Michael Lakeman, Crucifer, Reformation Day



Communion Assistants, Reformation Sunday



Reformation Sunday congregational potluck lunch



Saint Mark's Choir, All Saints Sunday

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson

November Worship Highlights





Altar flowers, Wedding of Nathalie Valverde and Ben Stephens, November 3, 2023



Amy Woodall, Christian Souza, 8:30 Worship song leaders, All Saints Sunday



Saint Mark's Choir, All Saints Sunday



All Saints Sunday





Madeline Phillips, soprano soloist, All Saints Sunday



Karyn Dalton, guest minister, Sundays November 12th and 19th



Christian Souza, Delenn Rumbolo, vocal duet, Sunday, November 12,

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson

November Worship Highlights





Thanksgiving Eve worship, November 22, 2023



Alex Wilborn, principal trumpet, Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, Christ the King



Delenn Rumbolo, Christian Souza, cantors, Sunday, November 26, Christ the King



Charlotte Flute Association master class





Charlotte Flute Association master class and workshop, Sunday, November 19, 2023, St. Mark's choir room

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson We Sing the Faith

Historical and Spiritual Insight Into the Hymns We Sing Reflections by Lester Ackerman

"For All the Saints, Who From Their Labors Rest" ELW 422

This hymn was written by William How (1823-1897) an Anglican Bishop, first published in a collection entitled Hymns for Saints' Days, and Other Hymns, By a Layman (London, 1864). A passage from Hebrews 12 is the inspiration: "since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight...and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." American hymnologist and composer Austin Lovelace adds his insight: "the hymn gives thanks for the saints of old, makes a prayer that we may be found faithful, and acknowledges the unity of the whole Church in heaven and on earth in the mystical body of Christ, a picture of the church in holy warfare, and a vision of the victorious Church." The tune SINE NOMINE ("without a name") is one of four original hymn tunes written anonymously by Ralph Vaughan Williams, first published in the English Hymnal (1906).

"Shall We Gather at the River" ELW 423

This text and tune were written in the summer of 1864 by American composer, author, and theologian Robert Lowry (1826-1899). The author said he was seated at the parlor organ of his home in Brooklyn, NY, reflecting on Revelation 22:1 "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb." Dr. Lowry said "the music came with the hymn." The tune HANSON PLACE is named for the church where he served in Brooklyn, Hanson Place Baptist Church.

"When Peace Like a River" ELW 785 (also known by it's refrain "It Is Well With My Soul")

This gospel song was written by Horatio Spafford (1828-1888) a successful lawyer in Chicago, whose life was wrought with overwhelming tragedies: he lost his son to scarlet fever at age 4, lost a fortune in real estate investments in the Chicago fire of 1871, and all four of his daughters were drowned in the sinking of the passenger ship Ville du Havre in 1873. It is speculated that while on a ship to meet his bereaved wife, Spafford penned the words of this hymn near the area where his daughters had drowned "When sorrows like sea billows roll..." Spafford, however, does not dwell on the theme of life's trials and sorrows, but focuses attention in the third stanza on the redemptive work of Christ and in the last stanza anticipates Christ's second coming. The tune was written by Philip Bliss, a family friend of the Spafford's, and is named VILLE DU HAVRE, the name of the ship on which 226 souls perished at sea.

"On Jordan's Stormy Bank I Stand" ELW 437

Samuel Stennett (1727-1795) an English Seventh Day Baptist preacher, wrote this hymn depicting the story of the children of Israel crossing into Canaan as a metaphor for the joys of heaven. Just as Canaan was a land flowing with milk and honey, our heavenly home is a place of pleasantness, health and joy. Because of the hardship and uncertainty of the harsh frontier life, many hymns that became popular in the nineteenth-century American frontier dealt with the subject of the heavenly reward. The tune PROMISED LAND was first published in The Southern Harmony (1835) and includes four of Stennett's original seven stanzas, with the anonymous refrain addition.



Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson We Sing the Faith

Historical and Spiritual Insight Into the Hymns We Sing Reflections by Lester Ackerman

"Now Thank We All Our God" ELW 840

This famous German hymn is from the pen of Martin Rinkhart (1586-1649) a Lutheran pastor, poet and musician. He wrote this hymn in 1630 during the Thirty Years' War, and intended it as a table grace "Tisch-Gebetlein" ("Little Prayer at Table/Meals"). The first two stanzas are inspired by Ecclesiasticus (Wisdom of Sirach) 50:22-24 "And now bless the God of all, who everywhere works great wonders, who fosters growth from our birth." The third stanza is a majestic outburst of worship and praise to the Triune God. Johann Cruger (1598-1662) composed the tune NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT, and has been wedded to this hymn since it's first publication in 1647.

"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" ELW 634

This hymn is the work of two different authors, Edward Perronet (1726-1792), a friend and advisor of the Wesleys who later became a Congregational minister, wrote the first four stanzas, and John Rippon (1751-1836) the fifth and sixth stanzas, published in his A Selection of Hymns (London, 1787). In Rippon's hymn, the original title was "The Spiritual Coronation" with reference to Song of Solomon 3:11 "Look, O daughters of Zion, at King Solomon, at the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, on the day of gladness of his heart." The tune CORONATION was written for this hymn by Oliver Holden (1765-1844) an amateur American composer with a successful career as a general store owner, real estate dealer, and a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

"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).

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson

December Serving Schedule

Crucifer/Acolyte

12/3 C/A: Needed 12/10 A: Needed

C: Michael Lakeman

12/17 C/A: Needed

12/24am C/A: Brady Ferner

12/24pm A: Needed

C: Michael Lakeman

12/31 C/A: Needed

Sound System

12/3 Neil Dixon

12/10 Kevin Feezor

12/17 Alan Harms

11/24 Kevin Feezor (am) Alan Harms (pm)

12/31 John Brumbaugh

Tabulators

12/3 Charles Lakeman

Diane Thomas

12/10 Carol Goodall

Karen Feezor

12/17 Susan League

Diane Thomas

12/24 Kevin Feezor

Dawn Schwartz

12/31 Meg Fielding

12/1 Tom Tolbort

12/11 Joe Summer

Doug Milheim

Charles Lakeman

Prayer Assistants

12/3 Dave Dunlap

12/10 Pastor Tim

12/17 Youth

12/24 Tom Tolbert

12/31 Larry Dagenhart, Jr.

Lectors

12/3 Larry Lippert

12/10 Cindy Little

12/17 Marty Schwartz

12/24 Lisa Barnette (am)

12/24 Brooks Stevenson (pm)

12/31 Flora Chance

Communion Helpers

12/3 Kay Finlon

12/10 Catherine Metze

12/17 Sandy Rach

12/24 Karen Covington (am)

12/24 Kay Finlon (pm)

12/31 Kay Finlon

Video Streaming

12/3 A. J. Pridgen

12/10 Ron Wenzel

12/17 Ron Wenzel

12/24 A. J. Pridgen

12/31 A.J. Pridgen

Greeters

12/3 Tom & Kay Sehorn

Michael & Tara Thompson

12/10 Gretchen Dodge

Jackie Ellington

12/17 Evelyn Gerdes

Eddie & Carol Goodall

12/24 Patrick & Rebecca Huang

Dale & Mary Lou Hopp

12/31 Millie Cansler Jay Jacob

Communion Assistants

12/3 Barbara Baker, Flora Chance Janice Miller, A. J. Pridgen

Betsy Wenzel

12/10 Jay Jacob, A. J. Pridgen

John Simon, Chris Stevenson

Kimberly Zimmerman

12/17 Barbara Baker, Rebecca Huang

Charles & Susan Lakeman

Michael Lakeman

12/24 A.J. Pridgen (am)

12/24 Cliff Edahl, Jay Jacob (pm)

Kevin & Karen Feezor

Gretchen Payne

12/31 Lisa Barnette

Ushers

Team B: Doug Milheim, Marc & Susan Ginns, Eddie Goodall, A. J. Pridgen, Sean Fielding

December Birthdays

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

12/12	Jonathan Lakeman
12/13	Sarah Lindberg
12/14	Kathleen Williams
12/14	Emily Reinke
12/14	Palmer Stevenson
12/16	Astrid Doyne
12/16	Ashley Frusti
12/18	Millie Cansler

12/19	Eric Timm
12/20	Carol Milheim
12/20	Warren Miller IV
12/23	Ben McCall
12/25	Marc Ginns
12/25	Tyler Andujar
12/25	Phillip Foust
12/27	Sally McCauley