



ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Our Mission

Growing Disciples - Making Christ Known



DECEMBER 14, 2025

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

10:30 AM SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

Our Gospel text from Matthew finds the reader in waiting for confirmation from Jesus to John the Baptist that he indeed is the Messiah. Jesus responds to John with the promise that the faith of the disciples might be made real by what they 'hear and see'. In the passage from Luke, Mary receives a vision from the angel Gabriel and demonstrates her faith audibly through song. Signs and signals surround us as holy awakenings in our lives. Our gathered worship gives sight and sound to the intangible anticipation of our souls this third week of Advent.

GATHERING

Bold responses are spoken by the congregation.

Prelude

"The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came"

Basque Carol GABRIEL'S MESSAGE

Setting for organ by David Cherwien

The congregation stands as the cross is carried into the sanctuary.

Processional Hymn

"Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding" ELW 246

MERTON

Text: Latin hymn, 1632; tr. Edward Caswall, 1814-1878; Music: William H. Monk, 1823-1889

1. Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding! "Christ is near," we hear it say.
"Cast away the works of darkness, all you children of the day!"
2. Wakened by the solemn warning, from earth's bondage let us rise;
Christ, our sun, all sloth dispelling, shines upon the morning skies.
3. See the Lamb, so long expected, come with pardon down from heav'n.
Let us haste, with tears of sorrow, one and all, to be forgiv'n;
4. So, when next he comes in glory and the world is wrapped in fear,
he will shield us with his mercy and with words of love draw near.
5. Honor, glory, might, and blessing to the Father and the Son
with the everlasting Spirit while unending ages run!

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.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,
whose home is heaven and earth,
whose salvation is sure.

Amen.

The congregation may kneel or sit for the Confession. Silence is kept for reflection.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Long-expected God,
**we confess that we look to ourselves
for the peace and security only you can provide.
We reach for swords and spears,
reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war.
We become impatient while waiting
and weary of keeping awake.**

**Free us from self-reliance,
and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors.
Increase our trust in God's timing,
and awaken us to your advent among us,
that we may abound in the hope you have promised.
Amen.**

God judges us not as we deserve,
But according to God's own righteousness.
✠ You are freed and forgiven
Saved by grace,
And ready to welcome the Savior.
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 all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; 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 two 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.

WORD

First Reading

Isaiah 35:1-10

Andrea Long, lector

¹The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and shouting. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. ³Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." ⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened; ⁶then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert; ⁷the burning sand shall become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp; the grass shall become reeds and rushes. ⁸A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. ⁹No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. ¹⁰And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

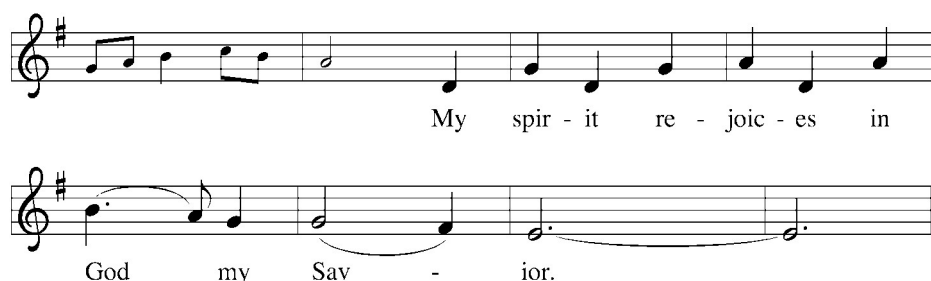
The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Luke 1:46b-55

Taylor McNamara, Amy Woodall, cantors

Luke 1:47 from *Psalter for Worship Year A*; © 2007 Augsburg Fortress



^{46b}"My soul proclaims the greatness | of the Lord, ⁴⁷my spirit rejoices in | God my Savior, ⁴⁸for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your | lowly servant. From this day all generations will | call me blessed: ⁴⁹you, the Almighty, have done great | things for me and holy | is your name. ⁵⁰You have mercy on | those who fear you, from generation to | generation. R ⁵¹You have shown strength | with your arm and scattered the proud | in their conceit, ⁵²casting down the mighty | from their thrones and lifting | up the lowly. ⁵³You have filled the hungry | with good things and sent the rich | away empty. ⁵⁴You have come to the aid of your | servant Israel, to remember the prom- | ise of mercy, ⁵⁵the promise made | to our forbears, to Abraham and his chil- | dren forever." R

Second Reading

James 5:7-10

Andrea Long, lector

⁷Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the 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

Matthew 11:2-11

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 11th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” ⁴Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me. ⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written, ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you’ ¹¹“Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

Sermon

“Holy Awakenings: Sight and Sound”

Pastor Ali Rode

Please stand as able.

Hymn of the Day

“The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came” ELW 265

GABRIEL’S MESSAGE

Text: Basque carol; para. Savine Baring-Gould, 1834-1924; Music: Basque carol; arr. C. Edgar Pettman, 1865-1943, and John Wickham.

1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,
2 “For know a bless - ed moth - er thou shalt be,
3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;
4 Of her, Em - man - u - el, the Christ, was born

with wings as drift - ed snow, with eyes as flame:
all gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee;
“To me be as it pleas - eth God,” she said.
in Beth - le - hem all on a Christ - mas morn,

“All hail to thee, O low - ly maid - en Mar - y,
thy son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,
“My soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy God’s ho - ly name.”
and Chris - tian folk through - out the world will ev - er say:

most high - ly fa - vored la - dy.”
most high - ly fa - vored la - dy.”
Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy,
“Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy,”

Glo - ri - a!

Arr. © 1955, 1983 E. H. Freeman, Ltd, admin. Glenwood Music Corp.

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.

Please be seated.

Prayers of Intercession

Larry Dagenhart, Jr., prayer assistant

The congregation may kneel or sit for the prayers.

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation. *A brief silence.*

God of welcome, we give you thanks for the ministries of compassion in this congregation: the Soup Kitchen, Kairos, Room in the Inn, the food pantry, and all who contribute to these ministries with their time and resources. Bless this congregation to be a blessing to many in our community, especially during these cold months. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Creating God, your creation is a vast wonder and mystery, from galaxies and planets far away, to our planet Earth, your creative Word has breathed eternal life into the cosmos. In this vastness, we give you thanks that we are sustained and loved by you. Bless the nations and peoples of this world to care for our planet, to use it wisely, and to share its abundance with all who are in need. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we pray for peace in our world. Bring an end to conflict in war-torn nations and create a spirit of welcome to refugees who find themselves strangers in new lands. Free all who govern from the temptations of power, so they may serve all people with wisdom and compassion. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Beloved Healer, in uncertain times and amid this busy season, strengthen and heal broken bodies and spirits, and bless all who seek to care for and protect those in need. Bless, heal, and sustain our church family, especially, Rochelle Dagenhart, Janice Darnell, Pastor Glen Sea, Mark Barbee, Diane Thornton, Polly Needham, John Graham, Mark Thornton, Tom Tolbert, Dr. Samuel Davis, Bob Roach, Payton McAdams, Dale Hopp, Bill Coppedge, Marcia Newlin, Andres and Silvia Puky, Ashlyn Bordelon, Betsy League, Carmelita Harris, Lucille Johnson, Marilyn Stevens, Satoko Yamada, Judy Cox, Ross Boheler, Charlene Oppermann, Elaine Ketner Sherman, Gene Ellington, Tanner Grant, Christopher Shirley, Eileen Dunlap, Dannye Olin Bragdon, Mindy Curley, Louisa and Oakley Coburn, Roxi Tolbert, Bill Schwartz, Arlene Fielding, David Kutscher, Danielle Clausen, Joseph Tolbert, and Jay Harbinson. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

God of grace, we often find ourselves in a spiritual wilderness. As we go about our busy lives, and especially during this season of Advent, remind us to slow down. Remind us to be still, to open our hearts and listen to you. Guide us toward showing kindness instead of indifference. Deliver us from fear and anxiety by reminding us that you are the one true God in whom we must place our trust and faith. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Eternal Lord, we give you thanks for all the saints, especially John of the Cross, whom we commemorate today. Continue to draw us, as you did John, into the life-giving mystery of your presence that we might behold you with joy and confidence as you lead us into your kingdom that has no end. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.
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.
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.
Please stand as able.*

Offertory *(The offering is brought forward by the ushers)*
"Tidings of Comfort and Joy" stanza one, 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
 tid - ings of com - fort and joy, com-fort and
 joy, O tid - ings of com - fort and joy!

Offering Prayer

Let us pray. Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come.
Amen.

Holy Communion

The Great Thanksgiving

Holy Communion Setting Three

S 144a

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

Here is life, God is with us.
Come, receive what God has promised.

Please be seated.

Distribution of Holy Communion

Holy Communion is offered continuously at the Lord's table and at the high altar. Please follow the ushers' prompts, walking forward to the desired communion station and returning via the side aisles. On the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, distribution is by wafers and small cups, and on the 2nd, 4th, and 5th Sundays of the month distribution is by intinction. Gluten free wafers and grape juice are always available.

Communion Music

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the
world, have mer-cy on us, have mer-cy on us.

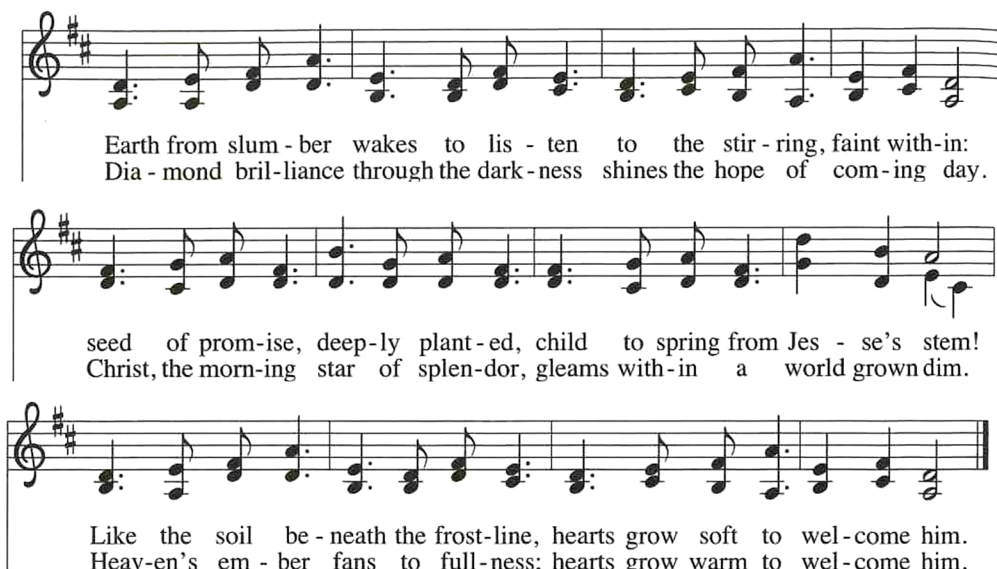
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the
world, grant us peace, grant us peace.

“Lamb of God” from *Christmas Carol Mass* Traditional English Carol

“Improvisation on ‘Now the Heavens Start to Whisper’”
Welsh melody SUO GAN
Organ setting by David M. Cherwien

Communion Hymn “Now the Heavens Start to Whisper” ACS 901 stanzas 1 & 2 SUO GAN
Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953 © 2006 GIA Publications, Inc.; Music: Welsh melody; arr. Hymnal version © 2020 Augsburg Fortress

1 Now the heav - ens start to whis - per, as the veil is grow - ing thin.
2 Heav - v clouds that block the moon - light now be - gin to drift a - way.



Earth from slum - ber wakes to lis - ten to the stir - ring, faint with-in:
Dia - mond bril-liance through the dark-ness shines the hope of com-ing day.

seed of prom-ise, deep-ly plant-ed, child to spring from Jes - se's stem!
Christ, the morn-ing star of splen-dor, gleams with-in a world grown dim.

Like the soil be - neath the frost-line, hearts grow soft to wel-come him.
Heav-en's em - ber fans to full-ness; hearts grow warm to wel-come him.

Please stand as able.

Post-Communion Blessing

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

Post-Communion Prayer

Let us pray. God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

SENDING

Sending Blessing

May God who comes among us,
Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit,
grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,
and good news to share today and always.


Amen.

Recessional Hymn

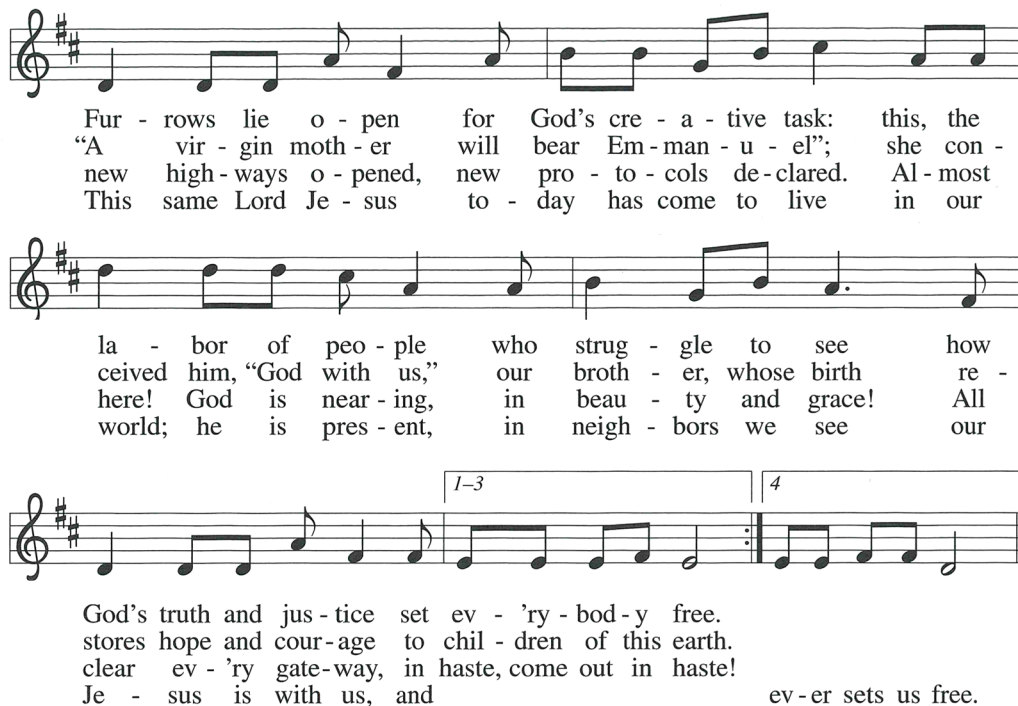
“All Earth Is Hopeful” ELW 266

TODA LA TIERRA

Text: attr. Ambrose of Milan, 340-398; Martin Luther, 1483-1546; tr. Hymnal version © 2006 Augsburg Fortress; Music: J. Walter, *Geistliche Gesangbuchlein*, 1524



1 All earth is hope - ful, the Sav - ior comes at last!
2 Peo - ple of Is - rael, you heard the proph - et tell:
3 Moun - tains and val - leys will have to be pre - pared;
4 We first saw Je - sus a ba - by in a crib.



Fur - rows lie o - pen for God's cre - a - tive task: this, the
 "A vir - gin moth - er will bear Em - man - u - el"; she con -
 new high - ways o - pened, new pro - to - cols de - clared. Al - most
 This same Lord Je - sus to - day has come to live in our
 la - bor of peo - ple who strug - gle to see how
 ceived him, "God with us," our broth - er, whose birth re -
 here! God is near - ing, in beau - ty and grace! All
 world; he is pres - ent, in neigh - bors we see our
 God's truth and jus - tice set ev - 'ry - bod - y free.
 stores hope and cour - age to chil - dren of this earth.
 clear ev - 'ry gate - way, in haste, come out in haste!
 Je - sus is with us, and ev - er sets us free.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.

Worship has ended. You are free to depart or you may remain for the postlude.

Postlude

"Savior of the Nations, Come"

Tune NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND
 Setting for organ Andreas Nikolaus Vetter



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Worship Leaders: Pastor Timothy McKenzie; Pastor Alexandra Joy Rode; prayer assistant: Larry Dagenhart, Jr.; crucifer: Andrew Puky; acolyte: Ella Puky; lector: Andrea Long; live streaming camera: Ron Wenzel; soundboard: John Brumbaugh; ushers: Doug Milheim, Marc & Susan Ginns, Eddie Goodall, Rod Stephens; greeters: Millie Cansler, Dave & Eileen Dunlap; communion assistants: Lisa Barnette, Jay Jacob, Charles & Susan Lakeman, Cliff Edahl; communion helper: Catherine Metze; tabulators: Charles Lakeman, Janice Miller; musicians: St. Mark's Choir; Amy Woodall, Taylor McNamara, cantors; Lester Ackerman, Director of Music Ministry and Organist

Next Sunday Leaders: prayer assistant: Youth; crucifer/acolyte: Needed; lector: Marty Schwartz; live streaming camera: Ron Wenzel; soundboard: Kevin Feezor; ushers: Team B; greeters: Neil & Charlotte Dixon, Susan Lakeman; communion assistants: Barbara Baker, Rebecca Huang, Virginia Molan, Charles Lakeman, Tom Puky; communion helper: Kay Finlon; tabulators :Karen Feezor, Doug Milheim

From the pastor -

"Watch, Prepare, Rejoice, and Behold" are the four traditional themes of Advent. In Week 1, Jesus tells us to "Watch" because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. In Week 2, John the Baptist echoes Isaiah's words, saying, "Prepare the way of the Lord" making straight his paths in this world. In Week 3, Isaiah writes that the desert will "rejoice and blossom," for God will come with vengeance to save creation, and "everlasting joy shall be upon their heads." And in Week 4, Matthew writes of Jesus' birth as the prophetic fulfillment, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel." 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 and yet new 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

Looking forward into Advent

12/17: Advent Midweek Prayer 7 pm

12/14 Advent 3: Service of Holy Communion 8:30 am and 10:30 am

12/14 Christmas Soprano Concert 2 pm

12/21 Advent 4: Service of Holy Communion 8:30 am and 10:30 am

12/21 Queen City Ringers Concert 5 pm

During Advent, prepare your heart with prayer and song!

Christmas Eve Worship 5 pm Family Christmas; 8:30 pm Nativity of Our Lord Holy Communion (Music begins at 8 pm)

Today: "A Soprano Christmas Concert," 2 pm.

Reception to follow. All are welcome!

Ethnic Restaurant Group will celebrate the flavors of India at Mystic Spice Restaurant at 6:00 PM on 16 December 2025. Deepti Singh is the proprietor and

inspiration for this new restaurant. Deepti seasons her dishes as she would in her home region of North India. The results are fresh, aromatic, complex, and elevated. The flavor-profiles feature traditional combinations of herbs, seeds, and other ingredients to excite all the taste buds: sweet, sour, salty, bitter, and umami. Deepti recommends that people often may ask for "mild", so that the authentic aromas and tastes can bloom and be enjoyed without fear of "hot/spicy" (which actually is not a "flavor"). She wants everyone have a positive experience and appreciation of the flavors of India. Mystic Spice is in the Tower Festival Shopping Center: 8706 Pineville-Matthews Road (NC-51), Pineville NC 28226. There is plenty of parking. Deepti remodeled the building to provide a compatible ambience for a pleasant meal.


- West-bound on NC-51: turn right, into the parking lot for Tower Place Festival; Mystic Spice is on west side of parking lot.
- South-bound on Park Road: turn left on Park Cedar Drive (traffic light beside CVS); go 0.4 mile; turn right, between last buildings before NC-51 (halfway past Church of the Nazarene).
- East-bound on NC-51: turn left on Park Road; turn right at 2nd traffic light (Park Cedar Drive, before CVS); go 0.4 mile; turn right, between last buildings before NC-51 (halfway past Church of the Nazarene).

All are welcome! Bring friends and neighbors. This will be an extraordinary opportunity to explore colors, aromas, textures, and flavors! RSVP to Tom and Judy Tolbert by midnight on Monday before the dinner. We are eager to try some additional new dishes on Tuesday. We hope you will join us there!

Theology on Tap Thursday, 12/18 at 7 pm at Legion Brewing, South Park, 5610 Carnegie Blvd. Join us for the last THOT in 2025. Everyone is welcome

Queen City Ringers "A Winter Star"

Handbell Concert 12/21 5 pm Admission is free.

Aid for Hurricane Helene Victims If you would like to help, please hover your phone camera over the  QR code to connect to the NC Synod's website.

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!

The Christian Education Hour is at 9:30 am on Sundays. You are invited to join the Faith Forum for lively discussions. The class meets in the Large Conference room. New members are always welcome.

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.

Confirmation Class meets every other Sunday at 9:30.

Stewardship

Your pledge helps St. Mark's ministries of worship, service and fellowship continue over the coming year. **2026** Pledge cards 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.

2026 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

ROOM IN THE INN is just around the corner when we will be hosting 10 homeless men each Tuesday during January and February. Requesting donations of BED-

TIME SNACKS for our 10 homeless men we host every Tuesday during January and February ----- lunch size bags of chips, pretzels goldfish; granola bars (preferably without nuts); small bags of fruit snacks. The collection basket is in the hall on the table across from the large conference room. All donated toiletries have been bagged and ready. Your donations are greatly appreciated by the Social Ministry committee and the homeless men we serve.

NOURISH UP (formerly Loaves & Fishes) is facing **empty shelves**. Nourish Up is also unable to replenish this shortage because of a sharp cut in federal funding. They need financial assistance to purchase fresh produce, dairy products and bread to accompany the donated non-perishables. Checks can be sent to St. Mark's with "Nourish Up" on the memo line. Our baker's rack will always be waiting for your generous donations of "unbreakable nonperishable" food items. Thank you for your continuous support.

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 pm; Wednesday nights "Just the Basics", 7:30 pm; & Thursday nights "Not a Glum Lot", 6:30 pm; "SLAA" meets in Room 106: Mondays men only at 6 pm; Thursdays at 6:30 pm; Fridays women only at 6 pm & Saturday mornings 10:30 am.

O COME, LET US ADORE HIM, CHRIST THE LORD!			
ADVENT AT ST. MARK'S	11 / 30, 12 / 7, 14, 21	Sundays of Advent 8:30 & 10:30 am	
	12 / 5, 10, 17	Advent Midweek Worship 7 pm	
CHRISTMAS AT ST. MARK'S	12 / 24	Christmas Eve	5 pm Family Christmas 8:30 pm Nativity of Our Lord Holy Communion. Music begins at 8 pm
	12 / 28	First Sunday of Christmas 10:30 am only	
WINTER MUSICAL OFFERINGS	12 / 7	"Lessons and Carols" - 10:30 am Service	
	12 / 12	Carolina Pro Musica Christmas Concert 7:30 pm	
	12 / 14	Christmas Soprano Concert 2 pm	
	12 / 21	Queen City Ringers "A Winter Star" 5 pm	

Music Notes

"My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness" ELW 251, is a paraphrase and musical setting of the passage from Luke's Gospel, the Magnificat, Mary's song of praise. This hymn was co-written by Martin Seltz (b. 1951) and Frank Stoldt (b. 1958), and first included in *With One Voice* (1995), the supplement to the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978). The tune **KINGSFOLD** was arranged by English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) from a folk tune he heard in a town named Kingsfold in Surrey, England.

"The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came" ELW 265 This hymn has its origins as a Basque carol (Basque Country is an autonomous region in northern Spain on the border with France). This hymn tells the story that begins with the angel Gabriel's announcement in Luke 1:26, then summarizes Mary's song (Magnificat) in verses 46 through 55, with each stanza concluding with the single word "Gloria." The last stanza tells us that we are heading to Christ's birth on Christmas morning, though the focus remains on Mary and her song. **GABRIEL'S MESSAGE** is a Basque tune in a compound meter (three pulses to a beat) that possibly dates to as early as the sixteenth century.

"Now the Heavens Start to Whisper" ACS 901 This hymn is the first Advent hymn in the Worship Supplement *All Creation Sings* (2020). Written by Mary Louise Bringle (b. 1953), a North Carolinian who grew up in Greensboro, and currently teaches at Brevard College, she was asked by GIA publications to write a new Advent hymn "with a Celtic flavor" set to the Welsh tune SUO GAN. Bringle combined the Celtic sense of "thin places" with biblical references like the shoot from Jesse, comfort for God's people, the sun of righteousness, the prophetic message, and the morning star. **SUO GAN** is an anonymous Welsh lullaby, first published in *Musical and Practical Relicks of the Welsh Bards* (London, 1794). **SUO GAN** translates as "lullaby."

This Week: From the Lutheran Church Calendar

December 14, John of the Cross, renewer of the church (1542-1591)

John was a monk of the Carmelite order who met Teresa of Avila when she was working to reform the Carmelite order and return it to a stricter observance of its rules. He followed Teresa's lead and encouraged others to follow her reform. He was imprisoned when he encountered opposition to the reform. Like Teresa, John was a mystical theologian, and his writings are thought of as the peak of mystical Christian writing. John's drawing of the Crucifixion inspired Salvador Dali's 1951 painting "Christ of Saint John of the Cross."

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

Rochelle Dagenhart, Janice Darnell, Pastor Glen Sea, Mark Barbee, Diane Thornton, Polly Needham, John Graham, Mark Thornton, Tom Tolbert, Dr. Samuel Davis, Bob Roach, Payton McAdams, Dale Hopp, Bill Coppedge, Marcia Newlin, Andres & Silivia Puky, Ashlyn Bordelon, Betsy League, Carmelita Harris, Lucille Johnson, Marilyn Stevens, Satoko Yamada, Judy Cox, Ross Boheler, Charlene Oppermann, Elaine Ketner Sherman, Gene Ellington, Tanner Grant, Christopher Shirley, Eileen Dunlap, Dannye Olin Bragdon, Mindy Curley, Louisa and Oakley Coburn, Roxi Tolbert, Bill Schwartz, Arlene Fielding, David Kutscher, Danielle Clausen, Joseph Tolbert, and Jay Harbinson.

Please email Pastor McKenzie with Prayer List and other prayer requests (pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org)

Readings for 12/21/2024, Fourth Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 7:10-16
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25

Birthdays

12/14	Kathleen Williams	12/18	Millie Cansler
12/14	Emily Reinke	12/19	Eric Timm
12/14	Palmer Stevenson	12/19	Carol Milheim
12/16	Astrid Doyne	20/20	Warren Miller IV
12/16	Ashley Frusti		



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)



Our Ministers

All the people of God at St. Mark's

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