



ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Our Mission

Growing Disciples - Making Christ Known

✙ ✙ ✙

DECEMBER 28, 2025

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

10:30 AM SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the "holy innocents" of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.

GATHERING

Bold responses are spoken by the congregation.

Prelude

"Partita on 'Good Christian Friends, Rejoice'"

14th century German carol IN DULCI JUBILO

Theme and six variations for solo organ by Raymond H. Haan

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

Processional Hymn

"Angels We Have Heard on High" ELW 289

GLORIA

Text: French carol; tr. H.G. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864; Music: French carol; arr. Edward S. Barnes, 1887-1958

1. Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo; gloria in excelsis Deo.
2. Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heav'nly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo; gloria in excelsis Deo.
3. Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing:
come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn king.
Gloria in excelsis Deo; gloria in excelsis Deo.

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,
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty Savior, Prince of Peace.

Amen.

Trusting God's steadfast love and faithfulness,
let us confess our sin.

Reconciling God,
**We yearn for your presence to transform
our grief, pain, and despair.**

**We confess that we have not always prepared
room in our hearts for your love;
we have not always recognized
your presence among us;
we have not always embraced your message of peace.**

**We cry out, weary with the burden of violence,
oppression, and fear.**

**We confess our failure to make room
for those seeking refuge;
our participation in violent systems
that harm your innocent ones;
our reluctance to embody your good news.
Be born in us today
and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation.
Amen.**

Carol "Away in a Manger" ELW 277 stanza one

1. Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
the stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

God's grace upon grace flows over you.
† Christ's presence redeems the whole creation.
Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad!
Amen.

Carol "Away in a Manger" ELW 277 stanza three

3. Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

AWAY IN A MANGER

Text: North American, 19th century; Music: James R. Murray, 1841-1905

AWAY IN A MANGER

Text: North American, 19th century; Music: James R. Murray, 1841-1905

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. O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, 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.

WORD

First Reading

Isaiah 63:7-9

Flora Chance, lector

⁷I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD, because of all that the LORD has done for us and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. ⁸For he said, “Surely they are my people, children who will not act deceitfully,” and he became their savior ⁹in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Carol

“O Little Town of Bethlehem” ELW 279 stanza four

ST. LOUIS

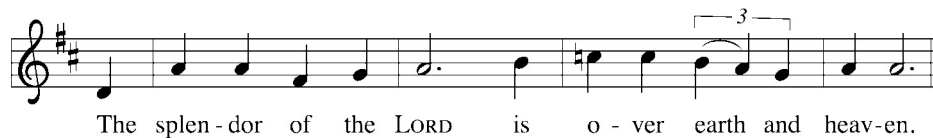
Text & Music: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893; Music: Lewis H. Redner, 1831-1908

4. O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!

Psalm 148

Jack Richardson, Taylor McNamara, cantors

Psalm 148:13 (Robert A. Hobby) from *Psalter for Worship Year A*; © 2007 Augsburg Fortress



Hallelujah! Praise the LORD | from the heavens; praise God | in the heights. ²Praise the LORD, | all you angels; sing praise, all you | hosts of heaven. ³Praise the LORD, | sun and moon; sing praise, all you | shining stars. ⁴Praise the LORD, heav- | en of heavens, and you waters a- | bove the heavens. ⁵Let them praise the name | of the LORD, who commanded, and they | were created, ⁶who made them stand fast forev- | er and ever, giving them a law that shall not | pass away. R ⁷Praise the LORD | from the earth, you sea monsters | and all deeps; ⁸fire and hail, | snow and fog, tempestuous wind, do- | ing God's will; ⁹mountains | and all hills, fruit trees | and all cedars; ¹⁰wild beasts | and all cattle, creeping things and | flying birds; ¹¹sovereigns of the earth | and all peoples, princes and all rulers | of the world; ¹²young | men and

maidens, old and | young together. R ¹³*Let them praise the name | of the LORD, whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over | earth and heaven.* ¹⁴*The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all | faithful servants, the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. | Hallelujah! R*

Second Reading

Hebrews 2:10-18

Flora Chance, lector

¹⁰It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹²saying, “I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.” ¹³And again, “I will put my trust in him.” And again, “Here am I and the children whom God has given me.” ¹⁴Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Please stand as able.

Gospel Acclamation

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” ELW 270 stanza one

MENDELSSOHN

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.; Music: Felix Mendelssohn, 1809-1847; arr. William H. Cummings, 1831-1915.

1. Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king;
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled.”
Joyful, all you nations rise; join the triumph of the skies;
with angelic hosts proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king!”

The Holy Gospel

Matthew 2:13-23

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 2nd chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹³Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” ¹⁴Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt ¹⁵and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.” ¹⁶When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. ¹⁷Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: ¹⁸“A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.” ¹⁹When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰“Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.” ²¹Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to

go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

Sermon

"His presence saves"

Pastor Timothy McKenzie

Please stand as able.

Hymn of the Day

"Coventry Carol"

COVENTRY CAROL

Text: Coventry carol, 15th cent. Music: Coventry Carol, melody from *Pageant of the Shearmen and Tailors*, 15th cent.; harm. Martin Fallas Shaw 1875-1958

Burden

Lul - ly, lul - lay, thou lit-tle tin - y child, bye - bye, lul -

ly lul - lay.
 1 O sis - ters, too, how may we do
 2 He - rod the King, in his ra - ging
 3 That woe is me, poor child for thee!

for to pre - serve this day this poor young - ling for
 charg - ed he hath this day his men of might, in
 And ev - ery morn and day, for thy part - ing nor

Repeat Burden after verse 3

whom we sing bye - bye, lul - ly lul - - lay?
 his own sight, all young chil - dren to slay.
 say nor sing bye - bye, lul - ly lul - - lav.

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

Melissa Smith, prayer assistant

The congregation may kneel or sit for the prayers.

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need. *A brief silence.*

God of steadfast love, we remember your goodness, spoken long ago and still unfolding. You have awakened our hearts in many ways, through prophets, fire, and cloud. Now, you speak to us through a fragile and radiant child with the gift of eternal peace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of abundance, all creation praises you —sun, moon, and shining stars reflect your glory; fire, hail, snow and frost; mountains, hills, fruit trees and cedars, praise you with abundance. Help us, who are created to stand within all that you have made, to cherish and sustain this world so that all might know your abundant love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of community, standing at the edge of a new year, carrying hopes we can name and worries we can't, remind us that you go before us, not only in miracles, but in the ordinary steps of faithfulness. Help us trust that you are at work even when the way forward is unclear. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of compassion, as you sheltered the Holy Family amid religious and political violence, so too, protect all people who are displaced as refugees and exiles because of religious and political persecution and oppression. As you comforted Rachel, comfort all who have lost children to violence, and help us to stand with, welcome, and comfort all children who continue to suffer injustice for their religion, nationality, gender and identity. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of love, for those who have died and now rest in your care, gather them into your light, and comfort all who mourn with the promise that in Christ all things are held together, and nothing is lost to you. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of life, Jesus, who calls us sisters and brothers, knows our sufferings. Pour out your compassion and healing upon all sisters and brothers who suffer illness, addiction, loneliness, and separation from love and community. Help us to care for those around us who need strength and encouragement. Bless, heal, and sustain our family and friends whom we daily remember on our Prayer List, along with those we especially remember this week: Harry Kendrick, Mary Lou R., Kendal Turner, Sheila Pierfelice, Rochelle Dagenhart, Janice Darnell, and the two Mint Hill police officers who were wounded by gunfire on Friday; and now hear us as we name before you, either aloud or in our hearts, other names and concerns close to us... *a brief silence for names or concerns spoken aloud or in silence...*Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

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

“So Long Ago on Christmas Day”

Hal H. Hopson

So long ago on Christmas Day, a tiny, little baby lay. He gently slept on manger hay. Gloria in excelsis Deo! And did the little baby cry? If so, the angels sang on high. They sang with Mary’s lullaby. Gloria in excelsis Deo! The shepherds heard the song above: the King is born ‘mid ox and dove. He’ll bless the world from heav’n above. Gloria in excelsis Deo! And now our love and praise we bring. Our song of joy we gladly sing, for Christ is here: the newborn king. Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Please stand as able.

Offertory

(The offering is brought forward by the ushers)

“O Come, All Ye Faithful” ELW 283 stanza one

ADESTE FIDELES

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, sts. 1, 3-4; tr. Unknown, st. 2; Music: attr. John Francis Wade

- 1. O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem;
come and behold Him born the king of angels:

Refrain: O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Offering Prayer

Let us pray. God of glory, great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior.

Amen.

Holy Communion

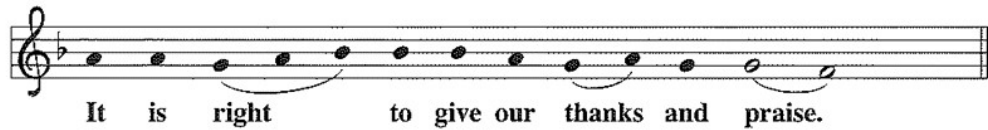
The Great Thanksgiving

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.



Proper Preface

Sanctus

“Holy, Holy, Holy” from *Holy Communion Setting Four*

S 153

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san-na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san-na in the high - est.

The musical notation is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four lines of music on a treble clef staff. The lyrics are written below the staff, with horizontal lines indicating the alignment of the notes with the words. The first line ends with a fermata over the final note. The second line has a fermata over the final note. The third line has a fermata over the final note. The fourth line has a fermata over the final note.

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

God is now in flesh appearing.
Come to the feast of joy!

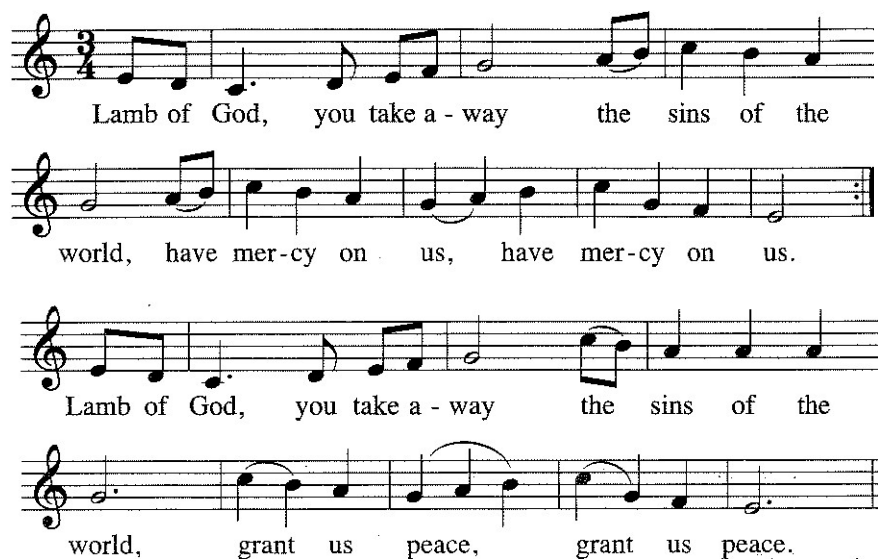
Please be seated.

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” 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 Quiet Joy” from *Seventy-nine Chorales*, Op. 28

Marcel Dupre

Communion Hymn

“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” ELW 276

W ZLOBIE LEZY

Text: English carol; tr. Edith M.G. Reed, 1885-1933, alt.; Music: Polish carol

1. Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing Christ the child is Lord of all.
Swiftly winging, angels singing, bells are ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!
2. Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of a gospel true.
Thurs rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

“In Dulci Jubilo” BWV 751

Johann Sebastian Bach

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. Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us.

Amen.

SENDING

Sending Blessing

The triune God,
glorious Mystery,
holy Incarnate One,
abiding Comforter,
✠ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.

Amen.

Recessional Hymn

“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice” ELW 288

IN DULCI JUBILO

Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866
Music: German carol, 14th cent.; arr. Robert L. Pearsal, 1795-1856

1. Good Christian Friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;
ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!
2. Good Christian Friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
now ye hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened heaven's door, and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
3. Good Christian Friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Now ye need not fear the grave; Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

DISMISSAL

Glory to God in the highest!

And peace to God's people on earth!

Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

Thanks be to God.

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

Postlude

“Joy to the World” from *Seven Chorale Preludes for the Christmas Season*

Setting for organ by Michael Bedford



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Worship Leaders: Senior Pastor Timothy McKenzie; Associate Pastor Alexandra Joy Rode; prayer assistant: Melissa Smith; crucifer/acolyte: Riley Smith; lector: Flora Chance; live streaming camera: Joe Barrett; soundboard: Alan Harms; ushers: Doug Milheim, Marc & Susan Ginns, Eddie Goodall, Rod Stephens; greeters: Tom & Kay Sehorn, Ted Seman, David Thomason; communion assistants: Bonnie Eckerd, Janice Miller, John Simon, Betsy Wenzel; communion helper: Karen Covington; tabulators :Joe Barrett, Meg Fielding, Diane Thomas; musicians: St. Mark's Choir; Jack Richardson, Taylor McNamara, cantors; Lester Ackerman, Director of Music Ministry and Organist

Next Sunday Leaders: prayer assistant: Michael Thompson; crucifer/acolyte: Needed; lector: Karen Feezor; live streaming camera: Joe Barrett; soundboard: Bob Chernet; ushers: Team B; greeters: Gretchen Dodge, Michael & Tara Thompson; communion assistants: Karen & Kevin Feezor, A.J. Pridgen, Nick Wartner; communion helper: Chris Miller; tabulators :TBD

Parish News

From the Senior Pastor -

“For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6)

At Christmas, God's kingdom draws near to us in the birth of Jesus the Messiah, whose kingdom crosses all borders of nation, culture, and language. In Jesus, human time now forever includes God's eternity. Isaiah's words about Jesus, “born for us,” reveal God's kingdom of peace established, not in one nation or people, but for all nations and people. He is the eternal now, Emmanuel, God with us.

Jesus is born anew in the manger of your heart and in the hearts of fellow sisters and brothers around the world in every nation and language. Jesus Christ seeks to dwell in your heart, that through you, he might extend his reign of peace and love to all people. He lives your humanity that you might share his peace and love with all whom you meet.

Blessed Christmas!
Senior Pastor Tim McKenzie
pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org

Coming Up at St. Mark's

Worship and Congregational Life

Altar Flowers Today are given by Joann and Cliff Edahl to the Glory of God and in honor of the entire St. Mark's family.

Pastor Ali Rode's Installation: 1/11 at 3 pm. Please join us for the Rite of Installation, followed by a reception.

Set the Date! The 2026 Annual Meeting is scheduled for 1/25/2026 following the 10:30 service.

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 Requesting donations of BEDTIME 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 will close Thursdays 12/25/2025 and 1/1/2026. See you 1/8/26! You can help 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.

Music Notes

"The First Noel" ELW 300 is the last hymn in the Christmas section of our hymnal. The first few stanzas have the shepherds in the fields looking up at the star in the eastern sky (Luke 2:1-20), and then the wise men follow that star, which leads them to the baby Jesus (Matthew 2:1-12). We know very little about the origin of either the text or the tune, both English. We do know the text first appeared in print in 1823, *Some Ancient Christmas Carols*, a revised and second publication by Davies Gilbert. Sir John Stainer (1840-1901) composed a harmonization of the tune **THE FIRST NOWELL** in the late nineteenth century, the version that appears in our hymnal.

"Good Christian Friends, Rejoice" ELW 288 This Christmas hymn dates to the 14th century, and was translated into English by John Mason Neale (1818-1866), and included in his collection *Carols of Christmas-tide* (London, 1853). When a carol is written in two languages it is called macaronic. The original text was German with phrases of Latin to teach the Christmas story to folks of little formal education. Austin Lovelace says the music is "foot" music, and obviously was meant to be danced. The early church was more accustomed to austere plainsong and motets, and decided that popular music of the day was too good to miss as a teaching tool. As Martin Luther said, "Why should the devil have all the good tunes?" **IN DULCI JUBILO** (Latin for "in sweet rejoicing") is the tune name, and dates to 14th century Germany.

This Week: From the Lutheran Church Calendar

December 28, The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

The infant martyrs commemorated on this day were the children two years old and younger of Bethlehem, killed by Herod who worried that his reign was threatened by the birth of a new king. Augustine called these innocents, "buds, killed by the frost of persecution the moment they showed themselves." Those linked to Jesus through their youth and innocence encountered the same hostility Jesus encountered later in his ministry.

January 1, The Name of Jesus

The observance of the octave (eighth day) of Christmas has roots in the sixth century. Until the recent past, Lutheran calendars called this day "The Circumcision and Name of Jesus." The emphasis on circumcision is the older emphasis. Every Jewish boy was circumcised and formally named on the eighth day of his life. Already as a baby, Jesus bears the mark of a covenant that he makes through the shedding of his blood on the cross. Baptized into Christ, the church begins a new year in Jesus' name.

January 2, Johann Konrad Wilhelm Loehe, renewer of the church (1808-1872)

Loehe (Löhe) was a pastor in nineteenth-century Germany. From establishing a school for pastors and deaconesses in the small town of Neuendettelsau, he sent pastors to North America, Australia, New Guinea, Brazil, and the Ukraine. His work for a clear confessional basis within the Bavarian church led to conflict with ecclesiastical authorities. Loehe's chief concern was that a congregation find its life in Holy Communion, and from that source outreach and social ministries would flow. The Missouri Synod and the Iowa Synod are considered founded by his initiative, and Concordia Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN and Warburg Seminary, Dubuque, IA look to Loehe for their origins. His German language "Liturgy for Christian Congregations of the Lutheran Faith" (1844) had a profound influence upon the publication of the first English language Lutheran liturgy in 1860.

Adapted from Sundays and Seasons

St. Mark's Prayer List

Harry Kendrick, Mary Lou R., Kendal Turner, Sheila Pierfelice, Rochelle Dagenhart, Janice Darnell, Pastor Glen Sea, Mark Barbee, Mark and Diane Thornton, Polly Needham, John Graham, Tom Tolbert, Dr. Samuel Davis, Bob Roach, Payton McAdams, Dale Hopp, Bill Coppedge, Marcia Newlin, Andres & 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.

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

Readings for 1/4/2026

Second Sunday of Christmas

Jeremiah 31:7-14

Psalms 147:12-20

Ephesians 1:3-14

John 1:1-18

Birthdays

1/1 Brenda Durst

1/1 Fay Fisher

1/1 Andrew Puky

1/1 Robert Smith



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

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