



ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Our Mission

Growing Disciples - Making Christ Known



DECEMBER 7, 2025

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

LESSONS AND CAROLS

10:30 AM SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

Today's "Service of Lessons and Carols" (see the "Music Notes" on page 15) is a St. Mark's tradition that reaches back into 19th century England with the singing of carols and the reading of lessons in preparation for the season of Christmas. During today's service, may you hear again the grace of the good news expressed through the richness of word and music. May we prepare the way of the Lord as we sing, "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"! This is the season of joy and promise.

GATHERING

*The congregation is invited to join in the **Bold** responses.*

Prelude

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

15th century French tune VENI EMMANUEL

Setting for handbells by Cynthia Dobrinski

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

Processional Hymn

"Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers" ELW 244

HAF TRONES LAMPA FARDIG

1. Rejoice, rejoice, believers, and let your lights appear;
the evening is advancing, and darker night is near.
The bridegroom is arising and soon is drawing nigh.
Up, pray and watch and wrestle; at midnight comes the cry.
2. The watchers on the mountain proclaim the bridegroom near;
go forth as he approaches with alleluias clear.
The marriage feast is waiting; the gates wide open stand.
Arise, O heirs of glory; the bridegroom is at hand.
3. The saints, who here in patience their cross and suff'rings bore,
shall live and reign forever when sorrow is no more.
Around the throne of glory the Lamb they shall behold;
in triumph cast before him their diadems of gold.
4. Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear;
arise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this benighted sphere.
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see
the day of earth's redemption that sets your people free!

Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660-1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823-1907; Music: Swedish folk tune

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.*

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.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray. Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

As the pastor lights the Advent wreath, verse six of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" is sung.

6. O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer; O Sun of justice, now draw near
disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

Text: *Psalterium Cantionum Catholicorum*, Köln, 1710; tr. Composite; sts. 2-7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress; Music: French processional, 15th cent.

WORD

First Lesson: *The prophet proclaims good news to a people in exile.*

Isaiah 40:1-8

Karen Feezor, lector

¹Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. ²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. ³A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." ⁶A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Anthem "Comfort Ye" from *Messiah*

George Frideric Handel

Jack Richardson, tenor

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

Second Lesson: *The Lord promises to send his people a righteous branch.*

Jeremiah 23:5-6

Karen Feezor, lector

⁵The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness."

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Anthem "Of the Father's Love Begotten"

13th century plainsong DIVINUM MYSTERIUM

Setting for choir and handbells by John Erickson

*Of the Father's love begotten, ere the world's began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega, he the source the ending be;
of the things that are, that have been, and the future years shall see
evermore and evermore.*

*Christ, to thee with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to thee,
hymn and chant and high thanksgiving, and unwearied praises be:
honor, glory, and dominion, and eternal victory,
evermore and evermore.*

Third Lesson: *The Lord promises that the King will come to Israel in peace.* **Zechariah 9:9-10**

Charles Lakeman, lector

⁹Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. ¹⁰He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Anthem “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

17th century French folk tune PICARDY

Setting for handbells by Julie Turner

Fourth Lesson: *The Prophet foretells the advent of the desire of all nations.* **Haggai 2:6-9**

Charles Lakeman, lector

⁶For thus says the Lord of hosts: Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land; ⁷and I will shake all the nations, so that the treasure of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with splendor, says the Lord of hosts. ⁸The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the Lord of hosts. ⁹The latter splendor of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the Lord of hosts.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Anthem “People, Look East”

French carol BESANCON

Setting for choir and organ by Malcolm Archer

People look East. The time is near of the crowning of the year. Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth, and set the table. People, look East, and sing today: Love the Guest is on the way. Burrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there: give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flower may flourish. People, look East, and sing today: Love the Rose is on the way. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more light the bowl shall brim, shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together. People, look East, and sing today: Love the Star is on the way. Angels, announce to man and beast Him who cometh from the East. Set every peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming. People, look East, and sing today: Love the Lord is on the way.

Fifth Lesson: *The Prophet foretells the redemption of Israel.*

Isaiah 35:1-6

Meg Fielding, 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 singing. 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 unstopped; 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.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Anthem “Lift Up Your Heads, O Ye Gates” Op. 44, No. 2
William Mathias

Lift up your heads, O ye gates, lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord might in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory, glory, glory.

Sixth Lesson: *The angel Gabriel foretells the birth of Jesus to Mary.*

Luke 1:26-35, 38

Meg Fielding, lector

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” ³⁴Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” ³⁵The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁸Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Anthem “A Maiden Most Gentle”
French tune, arranged by Andrew Carter

A maiden most gentle and tender we sing: of Mary the mother of Jesus our King. Ave, ave, ave Maria. How blessed is the birth of her heavenly child, who came to redeem us in Mary so mild. Ave Maria. The Archangel Gabriel foretold by his call the Lord of creation, and Savior of all. Ave Maria. Rejoice and be glad at this Christmas we pray; sing praise to the Savior, sing endless ‘Ave’. Ave, Ave, Ave Maria.

Please stand as able.

Seventh Lesson: *Jesus proclaims the nearness of the kingdom of God.*

Mark 1:1-15

Pastor Timothy McKenzie

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; ³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’” ⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” ⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came

from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” ¹²And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. ¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Please be seated.

Anthem “Thou Shalt Know Him When He Comes”

Hal H. Hopson

Thou shalt know Him when He comes, not by any din of drums nor the manner of His airs, nor by anything He wears; thou shalt know Him when He comes, not by His crown or His gown, but His coming known shall be by the holy harmony which His coming makes in thee. Thou shalt know him when he comes. Amen.

Sermon

“Prepare the way of the Lord”

Pastor Timothy McKenzie

Please stand as able.

Hymn of the Day

“On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry ” ELW 249

PUER NOBIS

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749; tr. composite Music: European tune, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621

1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an - nounc - es
2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the
3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge
4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us
5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent

that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,
way for God with - in, and let us all our
and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we
rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -
has our free - dom won, whom with the Fa - ther

for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!
hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.
waste a - way like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.
on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.
we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

The Apostles' Creed

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

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

(Tom Tolbert, 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.

Faithful God, you are the source of all wisdom, truth, and eternal life through the person of Jesus Christ. Show us, your church, our errors when we veer from paths of righteousness. Sustain and increase our faith, and embolden us to model lives of service to people who hunger for the peace that only you can give. Use us to support people who face challenges to leading faithful lives. All this we ask so that your name may be glorified by all people. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Creator God, forgive our wanton plundering of our world. Teach us to live in harmony in this Eden that you have provided for our sustenance, nurture, and enjoyment. Teach us to curb the waste and pollution that our lifestyles cause. Help us restore and preserve these abundant resources for ourselves and future generations. Open our eyes daily to the beauty of nature as it reveals your creativity, power, and grace.

God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Compassionate God, we pray for people who cannot find words to speak their fears; who have lost hope due to repeated disappointments; whose breath, minds, and bodies ache for relief. The people of Ukraine, Gaza, and all areas afflicted by violence are dear to you — as are we. Yet, obstacles separate people with different family-ties and heritage. In the darkness of invasion, warfare, and killing, encourage the frightened to find strength in you. Give solace to those who have shed silent tears through years of oppression. Inspire us to reconcile with refugees, outcasts, and those displaced from native lands. Give to all the light of hope, justice, recovery, healing, security, and peace. Mend the physical and emotional traumas that violence causes. Inspire all rulers to seek pathways to peace and international harmony, and to provide food for the hungry, shelter for refugees, and acceptance of all people who depend upon them for safety. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Merciful God, strengthen and heal all who struggle with illness, grief, and addiction, and grant peace and

hope to the dying. Strengthen and heal our extended church family: Rochelle Dagenhart, Janice Darnell, Sandy Rach, 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.

Holy God, pour your Holy Spirit upon this congregation. Remind us that we all are beggars before you. Fill us with a love for your good and gracious will. Give us hunger for your Word; thirst for your mercy; vision of your love for all people; and desire to serve you by serving others in your name. Inspire us to share the abundance that we control with those who lack adequate food, clothing, and shelter as cold days challenge the poor in our community. Inspire us to share gentle words of encouragement and acts of kindness toward all whom we meet as we daily dedicate our lives to service of others. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Eternal Father, with joy we remember our ancestors in the faith, especially Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, whom we commemorate today. As Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, guide us daily in the covenant of baptism that we may witness to you over our lives, and at the last, bring us into your kingdom with all the saints. 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

OFFERING

(Offerings for the mission of the church are gathered by the ushers.)

Please be seated.

Anthem

“And the Glory of the Lord” from *Messiah* George Frideric Handel
*And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*

Please stand as able.

Offertory

(The offering is brought forward by the ushers.)

“Tidings of Comfort and Joy” stanza 1, from *Light the Candle*

Traditional English Carol; Setting for choir and congregation by Michael Burkhardt

Verses: Michael Burkhardt © 2020 Birnamwood; Refrain: Traditional English carol; Tune: GOD REST YE,

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.

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 kits are no longer available.

Communion Music

“Lamb of God” from *Christmas Carol Mass*

Carroll Thomas Andrews

Setting for choir and congregation by John T. Kyler

English Carol, Original adapt Carroll Thomas Andrews, 1918-2014, Adapt. John T. Kyler ©1966, 2022 GIA Publications, Inc.

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.

“Savior of the Nations, Come” BWV 659 from *Eighteen Chorales*

Johann Sebastian Bach

Communion Hymn

“Come Now, O Prince of Peace” ELW 247

OSOSO

Text & Music: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947; tr. Marion Pope, © Geonyong Lee

1 Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one bod - y.
2 Come now, O God of love, make us one bod - y.
3 Come now and set us free, O God, our Sav - ior.
4 Come, Hope of u - ni - ty, make us one bod - y.

Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.

Please stand as able.

Post-Communion Blessing

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

Post-Communion Prayer

Let us pray. 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

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” ELW 254

HYFRYDOL

1. Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of ev'ry nation, joy of ev'ry longing heart.
2. Born thy people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king;
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788; Music: W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

Thanks be to God.

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

Postlude

“Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella”

French carol, UN FLAMBEAU
Setting for organ by Keith Chapman

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Worship Leaders: Pastor Timothy McKenzie; Pastor Alexandra Rode; prayer assistant: Tom Tolbert; crucifer/acolyte: Andrew Puky; lectors: Karen Feezor, Charles Lakeman, Meg Fielding; live streaming camera: Joe Barrett; soundboard: Bob Chernet; ushers: Doug Milheim, Marc & Susan Ginns, Eddie Goodall, Rod Stephens; greeters: Dale & Mary Lou Hopp, Jay Jacob; communion assistants: Virginia Molan, Susan Lakeman, Tom & Andrew Puky, Kimberly Zimmerman; communion helper: Chris Miller; tabulators: Meg

Fielding, Karen Feezor; musicians: St. Mark's Choir; St. Mark's Handbells; Jack Richardson, tenor soloist; Lester Ackerman, Director of Music Ministry and Organist

Next Sunday Leaders: prayer assistant: Larry Dagenhart, Jr.; crucifer/acolyte: needed; lector: Andrea Long; live streaming camera: Ron Wenzel; soundboard: John Brumbaugh; ushers: Team B; greeters: Millie Cansler, Dave & Eileen Dunlap; communion assistants: Barbara Lisa Barnette, Jay Jacob, Charles & Susan Lakeman, Tom Puky; communion helper: Catherine Metze; tabulators: Kevin Feezor, Charles Lakeman



Parish News

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

Altar Flowers today are given to the glory of God and in memory of Ed Marz by Joanne and her family.

Welcome Pastor Alexandra Rode! Today Pastor Ali begins ministry with us. Please take a moment to welcome her.

Baptism Today [8:30]: We welcome Eleanor Alma Taylor into the body of Christ through the sacrament of Holy Baptism. God bless her and the Taylor family as Eleanor grows in faith and love for all God's people.

Looking forward into Advent

12/10, & 17: Advent Midweek Prayer 7 pm
12/12 Carolina Pro Musica: A Baroque Christmas 7:30 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!

Love Circle will not have a meeting in December. Love Circle members will gather for a Christmas lunch at LaPeep, 8140 Providence Rd., on Wednesday, December 10, at 11:00 am. See you next year.

Carolina Pro Musica Christmas 12/12 7:30 pm Annual holiday event with favorite Baroque music, readings of the season, and carols for all to sing. Bob Sweeten, Max on the Bob and Sheri Show, returns to tell the Christmas story. Musicians appear in period attire. Half price tickets for St. Mark's members. Use code StMarksHO.

St. Mark's Men's Group Join us Saturday, December 13 at 9 am for coffee and fellowship. We will set up the manger and creche. All men are welcome!

Christmas Soprano Concert 12/14 at 2 pm Soprano vocalist, Kazuyo Yamazaki, spent her childhood in Paris and London, studying piano at the Purcell School in England. She graduated from Kobe College, majoring in piano, and also from Euodia Academy (Japan) majoring in vocal music. Ms. Yamazaki has lived in Charlotte, and now resides in Kobe, Japan. She will be accompanied on piano by Kyoko Sawada, who is the pianist for Lucky Chorus Charlotte. Admission to the concert is free, followed by a reception. 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 All are 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 discussion. The class meets in the Large Conference room. New members are always welcome.

Ushers for Sunday Worship The ministry of ushering is a crucial part of worship because it is one of the most visible ministries in the Church. Please volunteer by contacting the church office or John Simon.

St. Mark's email list If you are not receiving emails from St. Mark's, we may not have your correct email address. Please contact the church to let us know. We send at least 2 emails every week.

Family Ministry

Nursery: A fun-filled nursery, staffed by volunteers, is located downstairs. An usher is available to show you the way. Our safety protocols offer peace of mind so you can worship without worry.

Confirmation Class meets every 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

We continue to remember the hungry and homeless through our social ministries.

ROOM IN THE INN is just around the corner when we will be hosting 10 homeless men each Tuesday during January and February. We are **requesting donations of the following items** we offer our homeless guests— * travel size men's deodorant * individually packaged toothbrush * travel size toothpaste, still in its box * travel size body lotion, fragrance free * lip balm/chapstick * dental floss * pocket tissue packets. **BEDTIME SNACKS** * lunch size bags of chips, pretzels, goldfish * granola bars (preferably without nuts) * small bags of fruit snacks. **ITEMS WE DO NOT NEED** (dispensers in showers) * soap/body wash * shampoo * conditioner * mouthwash (as requested by Roof Above).

A collection basket is in the hall on the table across from the large conference room. Your help in all this will be 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 & Saturday morning 10:30 am.

Music Notes

The **Service of Lessons and Carols** tradition was established toward the end of nineteenth century England by Reverend G.H.S. Walpole in Truro, Cornwall. The first festival was held at 10:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve 1880. It is said the church at Truro had a tradition of its choirs caroling throughout the town, singing carols at residences of members of the congregation. At the request of parishioners, "an ordinary carol service" was born. A local newspaper announced the new service, noting that a like service has been instituted in other cathedrals and large towns, and has been much appreciated." **Advent Carol Services** were created especially for schools and colleges, where it has been frowned upon to celebrate Christmas while classes were still in session and the church calendar was still of Advent.

"People, Look East! ELW 248 This Advent hymn was written by Eleanor Farjeon (1881-1965), who is best known for writing "Morning Has Broken." ELW 556. "People, Look East" has been included in many hymnals since it first appeared in *The Oxford Book of Carols* in 1928. The depiction of Love as Guest, Rose, Star, and Lord is "on the way" is quite lovely, and sets "every peak and valley humming." The lively tune **BESANCON** is named for a city in eastern France where the French carol originated. Our choir sings a setting by English composer, conductor and organist Malcolm Archer (b. 1952).

"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" ELW 254 was penned by the great English hymn writer Charles Wesley (1707-1788). Charles wrote over nine thousand hymns and poems, with ten included in our *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. Though included in the Advent section of most hymnals, this hymn was written as a Christmas hymn, and included in his collection *Hymns for the Nativity of Our Lord* (1745). Austin Lovelace writes: "Names given for Jesus: strength, consolation, hope, dear desire, and joy. Also note the use of the word Born three times to begin lines of poetry in stanza two. The hymn's ultimate emphasis is on the kingship of Jesus, closing with a prayer that Christ will rule in our hearts alone." This morning we sing this great hymn, set to the Welsh tune **HYFRYDOL**, a Welsh word meaning "delightful," "pleasant," or "cheerful."

This Week: From the Lutheran Church Calendar

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

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

December 13, Lucy, martyr (283-304)

The historical details of Lucy's life have been lost, and much of what is remembered about her is legend. Lucy was probably a young Christian from Sicily who was martyred in the persecutions under Emperor Diocletian in the year 304. Her Latin name is *Lucia*, meaning "light." Legend is that in martyrdom she lost her eyes and ability to see, and hence also became the patron saint of the blind. This image is evocative of one who, even without the light of eyesight, possessed an inner faith to truly see God. Coinciding with the winter solstice, Lucy is also venerated in Scandinavia as *Sankta Lucia*, the bearer of the light of Christ during the Advent season.

Adapted from Sundays and Seasons

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 / 3, 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	

St. Mark's Prayer List

Rochelle Dagenhart, Janice Darnell, Sandy Rach, 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 & 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 12/14/2024

Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 35:1-10

Psalms 146:5-10

James 5:7-10

Matthew 11:2-11

Birthdays

12/7 Marty Schwartz

12/8 Jay Jacob

12/8 Tara Davenport

12/8 Jon McKenzie

12/7 John Graham

12/11 Joe Summer

12/12 Bob Chernet

12/12 Jon Lakeman

12/13 Sarah Lindberg

12/14 Kathleen Williams

12/14 Emily Reinke

12/14 Palmer Stevenson



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 (pastortimsmc@gmail.com)



Our Ministers

All the people of God at St. Mark's

Rev. Dr. Timothy McKenzie, Senior Pastor

pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org

Rev. Alexandra Rode, Associate Pastor

for Family Ministry

pastorali@saintmarkscharlotte.org

Lester Ackerman, Director
of Music Ministry, Organist

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Sue Wadgymar, Parish Administrator

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Elaine Johnson, Finance Administrator

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St. Mark's Lutheran Church

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