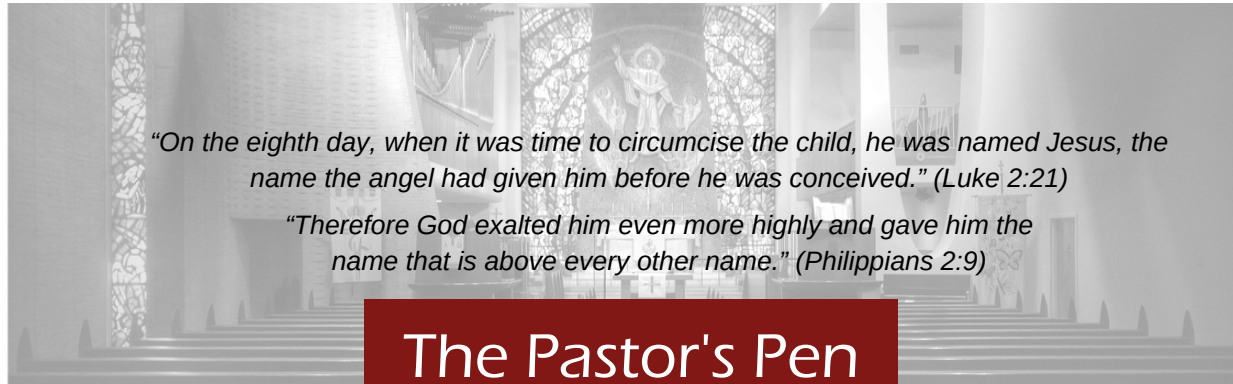


ReMarks

January 2026

St. Mark's Lutheran Church



Dear Friends in Christ,

A New Year begins. What joys and challenges will you experience in 2026? Some things from 2025 remain unfinished or were only just beginning, and you will have to wait to see how they emerge and grow. Amid these things, you also carry the everyday relationships of family, friends, workplace, and community.

Yet the great hope and certainty of the New Year is that we begin it in the Name of Jesus. January 1st is the festival of "The Name of Jesus," reminding us that we begin the New Year in his name as he abides in, with, and among us. Like the two travelers on the road to Emmaus who experienced Jesus walking with them, he has been walking with you on all your journeys, and he will continue with you in 2026, opening you to his Word alive within you.

Even among more liturgical churches, the festival of "The Name of Jesus" goes largely unnoticed in a country lost in the afterglow of Christmas and New Year's celebrations. One tradition I experienced in Japan that I miss dearly is the tradition of "Gantan Reihai" (New Year's Day Worship), when the church gathers on New Year's Day to give thanks to God for the Name of Jesus. This wonderful tradition names and blesses the New Year in Jesus' name, "the name that is above every other name."

Amid the noise of the world and the many other voices championing their own names, only his Name silences the world's noise offering you abiding peace, strength, and hope. Dwelling in you, his Name becomes one with you – his Name forming your identity. Only he speaks out of silence to transform and shape you so you might offer peace and hope to others. Jesus is the Name above every other name who gives meaning to your name.

As you begin 2026, be awake to moments of God's time, Kairos moments, when Jesus comes to you in, with, and among family, friends, and strangers. His Name speaks to you in the Word, and you receive him in the bread and the wine of the Eucharist. Again, this year, live in his Name!

In the fellowship of the gospel,
Pastor Timothy McKenzie

December Council Highlights

St. Mark's Congregation Council Meeting Summary

The Church Council met at 7:00 p.m. with all but one member in attendance. Incoming council members, Pastor Ali Rode, and former council member and guest A.J. Pridgen were also in attendance. The meeting opened with a devotion led by Andrea Long, reflecting on themes from the Gospel of Luke and emphasizing gratitude for the many ways Christ works in our lives. The minutes from the November 10, 2025 meeting were approved unanimously, with a minor spelling correction. The Treasurer's report highlighted November financial results, which included a surplus of \$2,640. The Council reviewed current financial examined early 2026 pledge totals. As of the end of November Pledges remain significantly lower than at the same time last year. Council agreed on the importance of reinforcing the value of pledging to support effective planning for the coming year.

Pastor Tim McKenzie provided updates on ministry and facilities. He noted the installation of Emily Hartner as Bishop of the North Carolina Synod, completion of abatement work in Fellowship Hall, progress in the courtyard renovations, ongoing HVAC troubleshooting, replenishment of the Columbarium fund with \$7,000 in donations, and the forthcoming launch of a new church website. He also expressed gratitude for the congregation's support during his time away.

The Council formally elected the 2026 Executive Committee, naming Tomas Puky as President, Charles Lakeman as Vice President, Andrea Long as Treasurer, and Virginia Molan as Secretary. Additional discussions addressed worship logistics and the potential development of a family ministry support committee. The meeting concluded at 9:00 p.m. with prayer.

Submitted by Tom Puky, Council Secretary

Baptism of Eleanor Taylor 12/7



Eleanor Taylor was welcomed into Christ's body through Holy Baptism at 8:30 am on 12/7. Pictured with Pastor Tim is mother Carolyn holding Eleanor, and father Zachary with Emery.

Christmas Altar Flowers



On Christmas Eve flowers (left) were given to the glory of God and in celebration of Jesus Christ who is "Emmanuel, God with us" by Pastor Timothy and Mari McKenzie, and on 12/28 flowers (right) were given by Joann and Cliff Edahl to the Glory of God and in honor of the entire St. Mark's family.



Special thanks to Marc and Susan Ginns for delivering this year's poinsettias from Tractor Supply.

Thank you to whoever in the past made the lovely square needlepoint chrismons that adorn the sanctuary Christmas trees.



Around St. Mark's

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

Carolina Pro Musica Concert, Friday, December 12, 2025



The annual premier Baroque ensemble Carolina Pro Musica Christmas concert was well attended and included the telling of the biblical Christmas narrative by Bob Sweeten, accompanied by music and poetry. It is an honor that Carolina Pro Musica again called St. Mark's home for its 47th season. Photos courtesy of John Jacob.

Christmas Soprano Concert, Sunday, December 14th



A Sunday afternoon Soprano Christmas Concert by Kazuyo Yamazaki and pianist Kyoko Sawada attracted a large turnout and featured a mixture of sacred Christmas hymns in English and Japanese as well as popular Christmas carols. Pastor McKenzie opened and closed the event with prayer in Japanese and English and Kazuyo Yamazaki gave a powerful testimony of the presence of Jesus in her faith journey framed within the songs she sang. Photos courtesy of Phillip Budidharma.

Around St. Mark's

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

Queen City Ringers Holiday Concert, Sunday, December 21, 2025



The Queen City Ringers closed out their 2025 Christmas concert tour at St. Mark's with a concert titled, "A Winter Star." The program included a mix of sacred and popular Christmas works, along with a well-received Christmas carol hymn sing.



We are pleased that the Queen City Ringers continues to call St. Mark's home.

Coming Up at St. Mark's

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



St. Mark's Congregational Meeting

January 25, 2026
immediately following the 10:30 service

One service only at 10:30 am

The 2025 Annual Report printed copies
will be in the Gathering Place January 11.

Thank you for your faithfulness in
service together to Christ at St. Mark's!

Annual Congregational Meeting

Please mark your calendar for St. Mark's annual meeting on 1/25. Please note there will be one service that day at 10:30 am,

Pastor Ali's Installation

Please join us on 1/11 at 3 pm for the Installation of Rev. Alexandra Rode as Associate Pastor for Family Ministry. Bishop Emily Hartner will be preaching with a reception to follow the service.

*Installation of Associate Pastor
for Family Ministry*

Rev. Alexandra Joy Rode
Sunday, January 11 • 3 pm

Bach Charlotte's Winterfest at St. Mark's!



WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28 • 7:30 PM
Armida Abandoned: Handel's
Dramatic Cantatas

A night of drama, passion, and fire: Handel at his most theatrical. From intimate arias to dazzling instrumental fireworks, every note brims with operatic flair.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29 • 7:30 PM
The Romantic Response

Bach's genius meets the sweeping emotions of Brahms in a program that pulses with intensity.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30 • 7:30 PM
The Flute and the Cantata Tradition

Radiant and alive with color, this program spotlights the flute's expressive brilliance—brought vividly to life by the perpetually boundary-pushing Emi Ferguson.

continued on page 6

Coming Up at St. Mark's

Bach Charlotte's Winterfest at St. Mark's!

continued from page 5



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1 • 3:00 pm
Organ Recital with
Lester Ackerman

Experience the power and poetry of the organ in the hands (and feet) of master musician Les Ackerman.

Program

Third Sonata in A Major, Op. 65 Felix Mendelssohn
Con moto maestoso (1809-1847)

Two Chorale Preludes, from Six Schubler Chorales Johann Sebastian Bach
Wer nur den lieben Gott last Walton, BWV 647 (1685-1750)
Kommst du nun, Jesu, vom Himmel, BWV 650

Fantaisie in C Major (Version III, 1868) Cesar Franck (1822-1890)

Variations on 'America' for Organ (1891) Charles Edward Ives
Allegro-Moderato (1874-1954)

Var. I Moderato

Var. II Andante-Interlude

Var. III Allegro

Var. IV Polonaise-Interlude

Var. V Allegro-as fast as the pedals can go

Two folk tune settings for organ

Shenandoah (Largamente e sempre rubando) Arr. Leonardo Ciampa

Amazing Grace (Toccata for Organ) J. Christopher Pardini

Carillon-Sortie (1911) Henri Mulet (1878-1967)

Congregational Life

Love Circle



Wednesday,
January 14
at 11:00 am
in the Large
Conference room.

Congregational Life

St. Mark's Men's Group

Men of St. Mark's, we invite you to participate in the upcoming year's activities. In January, we have two opportunities for which we are seeking your participation and support.

Saturday, January 10 at 9 AM: That morning we will have our regular group meeting as well as prepare a meal for the patients, their families and guests of Hospitality House Of Charlotte for their noon (and later) meals. We will meet at about 9 AM in the fellowship hall and then will prepare the food. Typically the meal has been a combination of homemade vegetarian vegetable soup and fresh sandwiches (variety of meat, bread, and cheese). We will purchase and have on site the food stuffs necessary to make this meal in the church kitchen Saturday morning. We will package it up, deliver it to the house at 1400 Scott Avenue around 11 AM and set it up for their use.

Also, this same Saturday, we need to take some time to disassemble and move the manger scene down to the storage room. Let's have a good turn out for these activities.

Tuesday night and Wednesday morning, January 20 and 21, 2026 we are hosting ten of our homeless neighbors, preparing supper, breakfast and a bag lunch as well providing sleeping quarters, showers and clean linens for them for the night of January 20.

Fortunately, all volunteer slots have already been filled for that date with the exception of having someone provide the evening meal on January 20. While "preparing a meal" sounds a bit intimidating, the meal should be very basic, consisting of a protein course, vegetable(s) course and starch (bread) plus some kind of simple dessert. It can be home-cooked, cooked in the church kitchen or a pre-cooked meal readily purchased at any local grocery store. (Remember that some of our guests work full-time jobs so they need a solid meal at the end of the day.) We recommend making / providing enough for at least 12 to 13 people.

Please see if you can find it in your heart to schedule and prepare this important evening meal on January 20 to serve those who are less fortunate. If you feel so inclined, please sign up for this time slot on the sheet in the Gathering Space near the front doors.

St. Mark's Men's Group Steering Committee



Many thanks to St. Mark's Men's Group for setting up the Nativity Manger in the church yard on 12/13. Many hands made the job quick and easy. Thank you to all who participated!

Congregational Life

Ethnic Restaurant Group

Ethnic Restaurant Group will enjoy delicious food at Wan Fu Chinese Restaurant at 6:00 PM on January 20, 2026.

Wan Fu has satisfied customers since 1989. Flavors range from cold sesame noodles with peanut sauce, lo mein, and chow fun to clearly marked Hunan and curry dishes.

Chinese Guardian Lions (Shishi statues, "Foo Dogs") welcome diners at the front door. Exquisite wood carvings enliven the interior. "Wan Fu" translates as 10,000 Happiness.

Wan Fu is located at 10719 Kettering Dr, Charlotte, NC 28226.

Directions (if headed):



- West on NC-51 (Pineville-Matthews Road): turn right onto Kettering Drive at Outback Restaurant.
- South on Park Road & Johnston Road: turn right onto NC-51 (Pineville-Matthews Road), then turn right onto Kettering Drive at Outback Restaurant.
- East on NC-51 (Pineville-Matthews Road): be careful and turn left onto Kettering Drive at Outback Restaurant (there is no traffic light at this T-intersection).



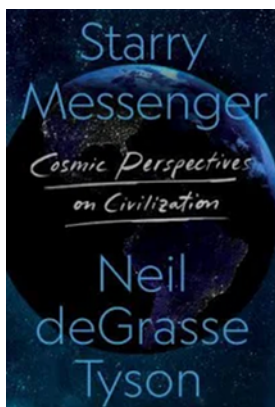
All are welcome! Bring a friend, neighbor, or business associate and be part of the fun.

RSVP to Tom & Judy Tolbert by midnight on Sunday, January 18th.



Ethnic Restaurant Group at Mystic Spice 12/16

St. Mark's Book Group



The St. Mark's Book Group will meet on Thursday, January 22, 2026, at 10 am in the large conference and via Zoom. This month's selection is *Starry Messenger: Cosmic Perspectives on Civilization* by Neil deGrasse Tyson. In his usual brilliantly communicative style, Dr. Tyson walks us through the scientific palette that sees and paints the world differently. From insights on resolving global conflict to reminders of how precious life is, Tyson reveals an array of brilliant and beautiful truths that apply to us all, informed and enlightened by knowledge of our place in the universe.

All are welcome to join us in this provocative and informative study. Please contact Kay Sehorn or Judy Tolbert for more information.

Family Ministry

Pastor Ali Rode Committee Chairperson



Greetings Church Family of St. Mark's Lutheran Church,

It is a distinct honor and privilege to be extended the call to serve as your Associate Pastor for Family Ministry. I write to you this afternoon having just completed my first week of service to the Body of Christ here at 1001 Queens Rd. and I cannot help but to feel a sense of shared mutual excitement and sincere hope for our future work together as a church.

My focus in ministry at St. Marks will be Family Ministry which incorporates all ages in fellowship and faith formation. This is a new vision for our church, where we will seek to make intergenerational spaces and places for folks to journey together faithfully through

each age and stage of life. Our shared work in Family Ministry will also give intentional care to children, youth, young adults, and parents.

One of the burning questions many church folks ask is, "How do you grow the church today?" It is evident more and more people are burned out by religion or have no experience in faith formation. My pastoral response to this question is two-fold based on these wise sayings: (1) "If you want to make a friend, be a friend" and (2) "Be the change you wish to see in the world." Many folks have had negative experiences with churches. You and I get to be the opportunity for them to have a positive one. Extending the hand of friendship is the first faithful step, then inviting folks to partner with us in making a difference in our community can become an opportunity to get to know them and welcome them into fellowship. Everyone is looking for a sense of belonging and purpose. The church fulfills both of these deep spiritual desires.

To know the health of a community, one of the honorable questions to consider is, "How are the children?" Young people feel split between school, extracurricular commitments and family, not to forget their concern about the world and their future in it. We serve Jesus in an age where there is increasing individualism, isolation, and existential dread. Young people do not always find the support in their community for these challenges. They say, "It takes a village to raise a child." I pray we at St. Marks can grow in our ability to be good villagers in the lives of our current and new families we meet along the journey.

As a family grows and adjusts over time, so does the church. I'm grateful to be growing in faithfulness with each of you. I ask for your prayers and support to our congregation as I get to know our members and our community and look forward to our work together.

Grace & Peace,

Rev. Ali Rode, Associate Pastor for Family Ministry

About Pastor Ali (from St. Mark's website)

Pastor Ali first felt her call to ministry as a teenager during confirmation. Following the nudge of the Holy Spirit, she has served in a variety of roles in ministry including youth leader, camp counselor, volunteer coordinator, and pastor. Her specialties include pastoral care and counseling, ministry with children and youth, community development, and strategic planning. She comes to us from Dayton, Ohio where she was born and raised, having served the past 9 years as a lead pastor. She was first commissioned as a Deacon in 2014 and ordained as a Full Elder in the United Methodist Church in 2018.

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Family Ministry

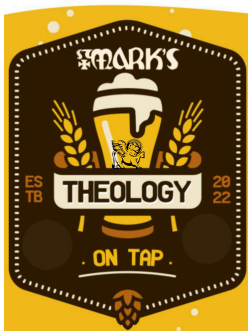
Pastor Ali Rode Committee Chairperson

continued from page 9

She is a graduate of Ohio Northern University in Ada, Ohio where she studied Youth Ministry and Spanish. She received her Master of Divinity from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, located on the campus of Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Beyond her degree work, she has invested considerable time in the study of Counseling Ministries at the Methodist Theological School of Ohio in Columbus, Ohio.

Pastor Ali and her spouse Brian moved to the Charlotte area summer of 2025 as part of her spouse's corporate relocation. They shop the Charlotte Regional Farmer's Market most weekends, savor single-origin coffee, enjoy a variety of creative arts, and travel in their free time.

THEOLOGY ON TAP



January Theology on Tap will be Thursday, January 29 at 6:30 pm (not the usual 7pm) at the home of Marty and Dawn Schwartz located at 4627 Arborloft Court Charlotte, 28270.

Please bring an appetizer to share and BYOB

Everyone is welcome!



Pictured: Theology on Tap 12/18 at Legion Brewing

Gifts & Memorials

Jay Jacob Committee Chairperson

In Memory of Sean Fielding

Robert Omasta - Soup Kitchen

In Honor of Jack Richardson

Bill Schwartz - General Fund

In Memory of William Davenport

Ken Davenport and Family - Gifts and Memorials
Emily Outen - Gifts and Memorials

In Honor of Tom Tolbert

Andrea Long - Soup Kitchen

Property Ministry

Genna Hurley Committee Chairperson

Fellowship Hall Painting Update



Painting of the Fellowship Hall was completed during the third week of December, and included the hallway in front of the kitchen. Grays and black contrast with the neutral white walls to add architectural interest to the room. The doors have been removed for staining.



Thank you to Clayton Payne for taking the lead on this, to Layton Campbell for being our design consultant, and to the Visible Partnerships Committee for overseeing this project.

Social Ministry

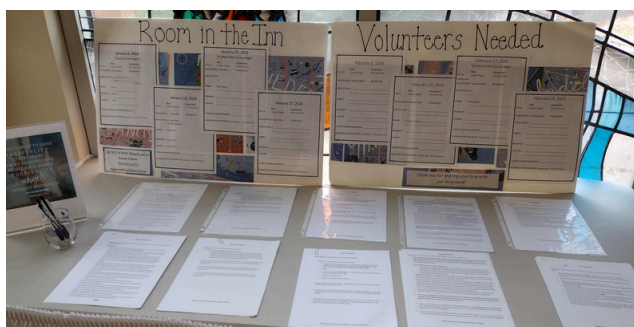
Susan Ginns Committee Chairperson



ROOM IN THE INN begins the 6th when we will be hosting 10 homeless men each Tuesday during January and February.

We are 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.

Volunteers are still needed!
Please sign up in the Gathering Place to help as you are able.



Nourish Up

Another 184 lbs of food! That's 554 lbs total for November and December. On December 23 Marc received this note of thanks for St. Mark's in-kind contributions to Nourish Up.

Dear Marc Ginns:

Thank you for believing in, and being a part of, the Nourish Up mission — feeding our neighbors with food and compassion. Your donation 184 lbs. of food provides groceries and meals to our neighbors in need. Your generosity makes a tremendous impact.

In 2024, Nourish Up (formerly Loaves & Fishes/Friendship Trays) provided nutritious groceries to 164,608 people through our food pantries and our grocery home delivery program. Of those, 28,203 had their groceries delivered directly to their doorstep by volunteers through grocery home delivery. In addition, volunteers delivered more than 138,000 nutritiously prepared meals to those unable to obtain or prepare meals for themselves due to age, disability, or illness through our Meals on Wheels program.

We cannot nourish our neighbors without neighbors like you. Thank you for your support and compassion.

Sincerely,
Martha Cochrane, Community Engagement Coordinator

Worship & Music

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson

Worship Highlights



First Sunday of Advent,
Sunday, November 30th,
John Brumbaugh, cello



St. Mark's Choir, First Sunday of Advent
2025



Amy Woodall, Jack Richardson,
8:30am song leaders, December
14th, Third Sunday of Advent



St. Mark's Handbell Choir, Sunday, December 7th, Advent
Lessons and Carols



Communion servers,
Sunday, December 7



Karen Feezor, Charles Lakeman, Meg Fielding, lectors,
Advent Lessons and Carols, Sunday, December 7, 2025



St. Mark's Choir, Second Sunday of Advent,
December 7, 2025

Worship & Music

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson



Andrea Long, lector, Sunday, December 14, 2025, Third Sunday of Advent



Ella Puky, Third Sunday of Advent, December 14, 2025



Taylor McNamara, Jack Richardson, song leaders, 8:30am worship, Third Sunday of Advent



Larry Dagenhart, Jr. prayer assistant, Third Sunday of Advent



St. Mark's Handbell Choir, Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 21, 2025



Michael Lakeman, crucifer, Fourth Sunday of Advent



Marty Schwartz, lector, Sunday, December 21, 2025



Nick Hanewinckel, cantor, Sunday, December 21



St. Mark's Choir and Handbell Choir, Fourth Sunday of Advent 2025

Worship & Music

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson



Cliff Edahl, Temple Talk,
Fourth Sunday of Advent



Communion servers, Janice
Miller, John Simon, First
Sunday of Christmas



Riley Smith, crucifer, First
Sunday of Christmas,
December 28th, 2025



Flora Chance, lector, First
Sunday of Christmas,
Sunday, December 28



Taylor McNamara,
cantor, First Sunday
of Christmas



Crucifer and
Acolyte, Andrew
and Ella Puky
Christmas Eve 2025



Andrea Long, lector,
Christmas Eve 8:00pm



Gospel Procession, Christmas Eve 2025



Christmas Eve Brass
Quintet 2025

Worship & Music

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson
Worship Highlights



Cantors for the psalm,
Christmas Eve 2025



Pastor Tim, Christmas
Eve 2025



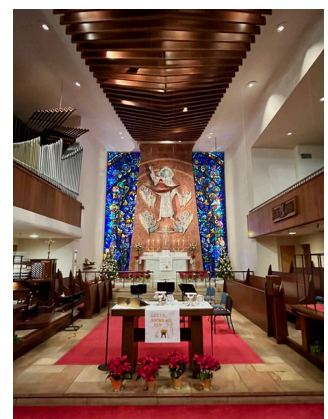
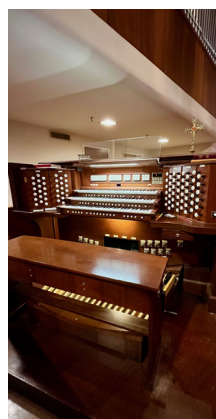
Christmas Eve 2025



St. Mark's Choir, Christmas Eve 2025



Chancel organ and sanctuary grand piano,
Christmas Eve 2025



Christmas Eve 2025

Worship & Music

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson

We Sing the Faith

Historical and Spiritual Insight Into the Hymns We Sing

Reflections by Lester Ackerman

"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.

"Joy to the World, the Lord Is Come!" ELW 267

had its first appearance in the collection *Psalms of David*, published in 1719 by the great English hymn writer Isaac Watts (1674-1748). This hymn was not written for either Advent or Christmas but is a paraphrase of the second half of Psalm 98. Watts gives it the heading "The Messiah's Coming and Kingdom". In our *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* "Joy to the World" is the last hymn for Advent, and in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* it was the first Christmas hymn. The tune **ANTIOCH** (named for the ancient Greek city near the current city of Antakya, Turkey) was composed by the early American church musician Lowell Mason (1792-1872). It was marked in his publication from 1836 *Occasional Psalm and Hymn Tunes* "arr. from Handel". It is possible he had two melodies from Handel's *Messiah* in mind: "Glory to God" and "Comfort Ye", which perfectly express the joy of Isaac Watt's hymn.

"O Little Town of Bethlehem" ELW 279 The

The hymn text was written by Phillips Brooks (1835-1893) in 1868 for a Sunday school service at Holy Trinity Church in Philadelphia. Brooks returned from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1865, inspired by being in a field with shepherds on Christmas Eve. Wishing to share his impressions and feelings in hymn form, he wrote the words for the children of his church. His organist and Sunday School superintendent Lewis Redner (1831-1908) wrote the tune **ST. LOUIS** at Brooks request the evening before its first sharing on Sunday morning, December 27, 1868..

"Blessed Be the God of Israel" ELW 250

Carl P. Daw, Jr. (b. 1944), an American Episcopal priest, wrote this hymn in 1985 for a competition for new Advent hymns sponsored by The Hymn Society of America. It is a paraphrase of the Song of Zechariah in Luke 1:68-79, the Benedictus, the song of thanksgiving offered by Zechariah on the occasion of the circumcision of his son, John the Baptist. The canticle received its name from its first words in Latin ("Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel", "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel"). **FOREST GREEN** is an English folk tune, collected and notated by the great English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams (1871-1958), after he heard it sung by a man named Garman of Forest Green, near Ockley, Surrey.

Worship & Music

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson

"Love Has Come" ELW 292

This hymn was penned by Ken Bible (b. 1950) former director for thirty years at the Lillenas Publishing Company, an American music publishing firm. His text highlights "love" in relation to Christmas. Paul Westermeyer writes: "the word love appears twenty-two times, partly by itself as a refrain that fits this tune, but it is also refracted through a variety of interpretive prisms, which collectively help define it: coming, shining, proclaimed, born, peace, Jesus' name, life, gift, free, with us, and ultimately God." **UN FLAMBEAU** is a 17th century tune from Provençal, France, associated with the text "Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella." **UN FLAMBEAU** translates "a flaming torch", especially one made of several thick wicks dipped in wax.

"In a Lowly Manger Born" ELW 718

Ko Yuki (1896-1985) wrote this hymn in 1923 and included it as a prologue in his *Poems on the Life of Jesus* (1929). He served as pastor of Tokyo Futaba Independent Church from 1921 until 1971, which eventually became part of the Church of Christ in Japan. In addition to many writings and translations, he served as editor of the Japanese Common Hymnal, and wrote or translated over five hundred hymns. This hymn begins with the baby Jesus in the manger, then moves through Jesus' life, ministry, passion, and exaltation. **MABUNE** is the first word of the hymn in Japanese and means "manger." The tune was written for this hymn in 1930 by Seigi Abe (1892-1974) and published in *Sambika* (1931).

"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."

"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."

Worship & Music

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson

January Serving Schedule

Crucifer/Acolyte

1/4 C/A: Needed
1/11 C/A: Needed
1/18 C/A: Needed
1/25 C/A: Needed

Sound System

1/4 Bob Chernet
1/11 Neil Dixon
1/18 John Brumbaugh
1/25 Kevin Feezor

Tabulators

1/4 Meg Fielding
Janice Miller
1/11 TBD

1/18 TBD

1/25 TBD

Ushers

Team C: Larry Dagenhart, Jr., Alan Harms, Jenny Dagenhart, Sally McCauley

Prayer Assistants

1/4 Michael Thompson
1/11 Charles Lakeman
1/18 Youth
1/25 Dave Dunlap

Lectors

1/4 Karen Feezor
1/11 Meg Fielding
1/18 Kay Finlon
1/25 Charles Lakeman

Communion Helpers

1/4 Chris Miller
1/11 Catherine Metze
1/18 Kay Finlon
1/25 Sandy Rach

Video Streaming

1/4 Joe Barrett
1/11 Charles Lakeman
1/18 Charles Lakeman
1/25 A.J. Pridgen

Greeters

1/4 Gretchen Dodge
Michael & Tara Thompson
1/11 Evelyn Gerdes
Eddie & Carol Goodall
Patrick & Rebecca Huang
1/18 Dale & Mary Lou Hopp
Jay Jacob
1/25 Millie Cansler
Dave & Eileen Dunlap

Communion Assistants

1/4 Karen & Keven Feezor
A.J. Pridgen, Nick Wartner
1/11 Lisa Barnette, Jay Jacob
Rebecca Huang, Virginia Molan
1/18 Barbara Baker, Andrea Long
Charles & Susan Lakeman
1/25 A.J. Pridgen, Chris Stevenson
Andrew & Tom Puky

January Birthdays

1/1 Brenda Durst
1/1 Fay Fisher
1/1 Andrew Puky
1/1 Robert Smith
1/4 Brady Ferner
1/4 Mary Lou Hopp
1/8 Diane Thornton

1/10 Steve McCall
1/13 Andrew Abbasi
1/14 Michael Huang
1/15 Jacob Wenzel
1/16 Melissa Lavoy
1/19 Genna Hurley
1/20 Willa Eason

1/20 Barbara McKenzie
1/20 Tara Thompson
1/24 Mike Doyne
1/26 Pamela Baynard
1/30 Janice Simpson
1/30 Christopher Miller