



ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

MARCH 4, 2026

LENTEN MIDWEEK SERVICE OF WORD AND PRAYER

7:00 PM

The theme of this year's Lenten midweek prayer is "Holy Conversations with Jesus." The Sunday lectionary for Lent reveals Jesus in conversation with both friends and adversaries. Lent's second Sunday presents Jesus' interaction with the seeker, Nicodemus, who is perhaps not ready to make a commitment to following this new teacher.

*Lenten offerings may be placed in the plate at the entrance to the sanctuary.
The congregation is invited to join in the **BOLD** responses.*

GATHERING

Holy Conversations with Jesus: Nicodemus

The Holy Spirit gathers us into a community of prayer.

Prelude

"Improvisation on 'As the Wind Song' ACS 943 from *All Creation Sings*

Tune WAIRUA TAPU by Lim Swee Hong; Organ setting by David P. Dahl

Welcome

Pastor Timothy McKenzie

Gathering Litany

The love of God poured into our hearts,
The saving grace of Jesus Christ,
And the abundant life of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Please stand as able.

Gathering Song

"Take, Oh, Take Me As I Am" ELW 814 sing two times

TAKE ME AS I AM

Text & Music: John L. Bell, b. 1949 © 1995 Iona Community, admin GIA Publications, Inc.

Take, oh, take me as I am; sum-mon out what I shall be;
set your seal up - on my heart and live in me.

Greeting

The love of God poured into our hearts,
the saving grace of Jesus Christ ✠,

and the abundant life of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Power of the eternal Father, help us. Wisdom of the Son, enlighten the eye of our understanding. Tender mercy of the Holy Spirit, unite our hearts to yourself. Eternal God, restore health to the sick and life to the dead. Give us a voice, your own voice, to cry out to you for mercy for the world. You, light, give us light. You, wisdom, give us wisdom. You, supreme strength, strengthen us. Amen.

Please be seated.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, silence, reflection and song.

Silence

During this time of silence, we quiet ourselves, entering into the mystery of God's presence. The beginning and the end of this period of silence is marked with the sound of a bell.

Reading John 3:1-17

¹Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ²He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person." ³Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." ⁴Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" ⁵Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' ⁸The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." ⁹Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" ¹⁰Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ¹⁷"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Lenten Meditation

"Conversations at night"

Pastor Timothy McKenzie

Please stand as able.

Song

"As the Wind Song" ACS 943 from *All Creation Sings*

WAIKUA TAPU

Text: Shirley Erena Murray, 1931-2020; Music: Lim Swee Hong, b. 1963; T&M © 2005 Hope Publishing Co

1 As the wind song through the trees, as the stir - ring of the
 2 As the rain - bow af - ter rain, as the hope that's born a -

breeze, so it is with the Spir - it of God,
 gain, so it is with the Spir - it of God,

as the heart made strange - ly warm, as the voice with - in the
 as the green in the . . . spring, as a kite on a . . .

storm, so it is with the Spir - it of God.
 string, so it is with the Spir - it of God,

Nev - er seen, ev - er known where this wind has
 mak - ing worlds that are new, mak - ing peace come

blown bring - ing life, bring - ing pow'r to the world,
 true, bring - ing gifts, bring - ing love to the world,

as the danc - ing tongues of fire, as the soul's most deep de -
 as the ris - ing of the yeast, as the wine at the . . .

sire, so it is with the Spir - it of God.
 feast, so it is with the Spir - it of God.

Please be seated.

PRAYER

The Holy Spirit prays with and through us.

Prayers of Intercession

(Pastor McKenzie, prayers)

The congregation may sit or kneel for the Prayers.

In Christ Jesus we meet the God who knows our weakness and bears the wounds of the world. Therefore, let us be bold as we pray, trusting that God draws near to those in any kind of need.

“Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” (John 3:3)

Word of life, you see us in our need as we come to you by night. Bless your church to be the light of Christ in the darkness and night of the world so that all who struggle in their need might believe in your Son Jesus and know eternal life in him. Lord, protect us and all people this night,
that we might live for you tomorrow.

Faithful God, you look with love upon all the peoples and nations in this world. Bless and heal all who seek you by night in sickness, grief, and loneliness, and restore them to wholeness and health to walk with hope in the light of Jesus, the Savior of the world. Lord, protect us and all people this night,
that we might live for you tomorrow.

Word of life, though you look with love upon the world, very often we cover the world in a nighttime of our own making with violence, war, and strife. Help the leaders of this nation and all nations to seek you, to work for peace, and to live with courage and love for all people, especially the poor, the displaced, and the oppressed. Lord, protect us and all people this night,
that we might live for you tomorrow.

Faithful God, lead each of us more deeply into your word and the life of prayer during Lent. Help us to learn again that only in believing in Jesus are we born from above and will we know eternal life. May we seek your Son, and being found in him, may we share his love and mercy with others who walk in the loneliness of night. Lord, protect us and all people this night,
that we might live for you tomorrow.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him, may not perish but may have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

Into your wide embrace, O God, we place all our prayers, trusting that you will receive them into your heart of mercy, Jesus Christ, your Son and our Savior.
Amen.

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.

Please stand as able.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Blessing

May the love of the Father, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, speak to you, dwell in you, and bless you, now and forever.

Amen.

Sending Song

“Dearest Jesus, We Are Here” ELW 443 stanza two

LIEBSTER JESU, WIR SIND HIER

Text: Benjamin Schmolek, 1672-1737; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, alt; Music: Johann R. Ahle, 1625-1673

2 Your com - mand is clear and plain, and we would o -
 bey it du - ly: "You must all be born a - gain,
 heart and life re - new - ing tru - ly, born of wa - ter
 and the Spir - it, and my king - dom thus in - her - it."

Dismissal

Go in peace. Follow the way of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

“Sprightly” from *Improvisation on ‘Dearest Jesus, We Are Here’*

Tune by Johann R. Ahle; Organ setting by Wayne L. Wold

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Worship Leaders: Pastor Timothy McKenzie; live streaming camera: A.J. Pridgen; Musician: Lester Ackerman, Director of Music Ministry and Organist

Lenten Mid-Week Worship series: “*Holy Conversations with Jesus*” During Lent, please join us online, Wednesdays (2/25-3/25), at 7 pm at St. Mark’s and live on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/@st.markslutherancharlotte234/streams>), St. Mark’s website (<https://saintmarkscharlotte.org/live-stream/>), and Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/SaintMarksLutheran/>) for the weekly worship series.

Lenten Schedule

Lenten Wednesday Supper 6 pm-6:45 pm Fellowship Hall 2/25-3/25.

Lenten Midweek Worship 7 pm (in-person and online)

Lenten Devotional Booklets are in the Gathering Place. Make Lent a time for prayer.

LENTEN BOX OFFERINGS: During Lent we focus on Jesus’ path to the cross and his sacrifice for us. One of our small sacrifices during this period is our donations into a small Lenten box. Lenten boxes are in the Gathering Place along with a letter noting that our donations will help support NAMI Charlotte (National Alliance on Mental Illness). Please construct it with your name on it and put it in a visible location to remind you daily of Jesus’ sacrifice for you. We no longer accept coins but still accept bills or simply a check made out to St. Mark’s. Donations can also be made online. Please return your boxes by Easter.

St. Mark's Prayer List

James Watson, Bonnie Sauer, Sarah East, Phaedra & Scott Snow, Bill Bowden, Harry Kendrick, Kendal Turner, Rochelle Dagenhart, Janice Darnell, Pastor Glen Sea, Mark Barbee, Mark Thornton, Polly Needham, Tom Tolbert, Samuel Davis, Bob Roach, Payton McAdams, Dale Hopp, Bill Coppedge, Marcia Newlin, 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 & Christopher Shirley, Eileen Dunlap, Dannye Olin Bragdon, Mindy Curley, Louisa & Oakley Coburn, Roxi Tolbert, Bill Schwartz, Arlene Fielding, David Kutscher, Danielle Clausen, Joseph Tolbert, and Jay Harbinson.

Please feel free to email Pastor McKenzie with Prayer List and other prayer requests
(pastortimsmc@gmail.com)



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)

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Our Ministers

All the people of God at St. Mark's

Rev. Dr. Timothy McKenzie, Senior Pastor

pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org

Rev. Ali Rode, Associate Pastor for Family Ministry

pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org

Lester Ackerman,

Director of Music Ministry, Organist

les@saintmarkscharlotte.org

Sue Wadgyar, Parish Administrator

admin@saintmarkscharlotte.org

Elaine Johnson, Financial Administrator

finance@saintmarkscharlotte.org