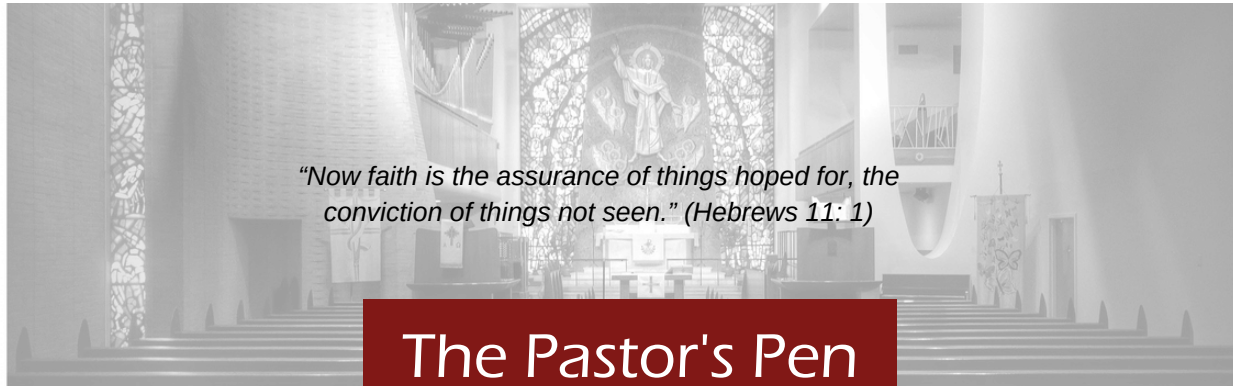


ReMarks

March 2026

St. Mark's Lutheran Church



"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Hebrews 11: 1)

The Pastor's Pen

Dear Friends in Christ,

There is a hymn by Kenneth Morris, made famous by Mahalia Jackson that I have long admired, titled, "My God is Real." The words to the first verse are: "There are some things I may not know, and there are some places, Oh Lord, I cannot go; but I am sure of this one thing, that God is real, for I can feel him in my soul."

The words to this hymn describe a deep and abiding faith – the faith described above in the words of Hebrews. The New Testament word for "faith" (*pistis*) is a word we may at times take for granted, yet the fact that we live and move within faith is the key to its meaning. Faith depends not upon your own power but upon letting go and letting God live, move, and work in you.

In ancient non-religious Greek, *pistis* also signified a reliable warrantee or guarantee. Faith is the belief that God's word and promise are reliable and dependable, that you can stake your life and future upon God. As the words of this hymn suggest, there are many things in life we may not know or understand, but faith is a sure spiritual foundation granting assurance and conviction of God's constant presence. By faith, we know God is real.

The hope of faith is anything but passive and private. Hope is an active waiting that pulls the future into the present. Hope enables faith to work actively through love to overcome the things of this world that separate and divide humanity. Faith and hope do the heavy lifting, reconciling you with God so that you might make God's reconciliation real with your sister and brother.

During Lent, take time for quiet and prayer. Remember God's promises. Listen deeply within yourself where faith and hope reside. Jesus has overcome the world, granting grace to overcome and heal your brokenness. His power overcomes fears and doubts so that you might become God's real presence for others. God is real.

In the fellowship of the gospel,
Pastor Timothy McKenzie

February Council Highlights

St. Mark's Congregation Council Meeting Summary

February Council Meeting Recap

Date: January 9, 2026

Meeting Start: 7:00 PM ET

The meeting was called to order by Tom Puky.

Devotion & Minutes: Tom Puky led the devotional. Minutes from the January 2026 meeting were reviewed and approved, pending a few minor corrections.

Financial Updates: Andrea Long provided a brief financial update, noting a deficit for January likely caused by recent snowstorms. A more complete report will be shared at the next meeting. She also noted that payments on the roof loan continue.

Pastors' Reports: Pastor Tim shared the following:

- Upcoming memorial services:
 - John Graham on February 14 at 1:00 PM
 - Pat Fox on February 21 at 1:00 PM
- Fellowship Hall: door repairs are complete.
- Sermons for snowstorm-impacted Sundays were emailed to the congregation.
- Continued community visibility through partnerships, including Bach Charlotte and an upcoming event featuring Yuki Ota, a Japanese folk singer.
- Reminder: the annual congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, February 15.
- Pastor Ali shared the following: Updates on the Souper Bowl of Caring and partnership with Nourish Up.
- Ongoing efforts to build relationships with members and staff.
- The first Family Ministry meeting of the year is scheduled for February 22.

Closing: The meeting concluded with a prayer led by Bonnie Eckerd at 7:45 PM.

Submitted by Virginia Molan, Council Secretary

St. Mark's Annual Congregational Meeting February 15, 2026



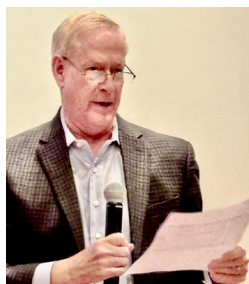
Pastor
Tim



Tom Puky,
Church
Council
President



Charles
Lakeman,
Finance
Committee



Cliff
Edahl



Jay Jacob,
Gifts and
Memorials



Andrea
Long,
Church
Treasurer

Thank you to all who attended the 2026 Annual Meeting! We looked back with thanksgiving on 2025, envisioned the coming year, and passed a new budget enabling us to do new ministry in mission for Christ. Together we are the body of Christ!

Around St. Mark's

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

Carolina Pro Music Concert "An Italian Souvenir"



On February 27, Carolina Pro Musica performed a marvelous Baroque program titled "An Italian Souvenir," featuring works by Isabella Leonarda, Antonio Vivaldi, Antonio Lotti, Gio. Antonio Pandolfi Mealli, Tomaso Albinoni, and Tarquino Merula. The centerpiece instrument of the evening was a long-necked cousin of the lute known as the "theorbo," played by visiting musician, William Simms.



The ensemble featured, Karen Hite Jacob, harpsichord; Sung Lee, oboe, baroque flute; Janelle Davis, violin; Barbara Blaker Krumdieck, baroque cello; and William Simms, lute, theorbo. The concert was followed by a time of conversation with the artists. Photos courtesy of John Jacob.

Around St. Mark's

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

Snow Days



Sunday worship was canceled on 2/1 due to a heavy snowstorm with accumulation of near record snowfall in Charlotte. The photos (taken by Pastor McKenzie) show the conditions Saturday mid-morning as the storm was beginning to deposit heavy snow. This was a week after an ice storm on 1/25 that also led to services being cancelled and the Annual Meeting postponed.



Japanese Folk Singer HoSoVoSo

On 2/8 we hosted a rare performance by a Japanese singer named Yuki Ota who goes by the artist's name "HoSoVoSo." The music featured original compositions as well as songs by James Taylor and Louis Armstrong. It was a relaxing and quiet event of thoughtful music, sponsored by The Japan-America Society and the Japan Cultural Association of the Carolinas.



Fellowship Hall Renovation - Exciting News

There is exciting news regarding the Fellowship Hall Renovation! A St. Mark's member has come forward with a matching gift program that will kick off with an all-congregation luncheon at a to-be-determined Sunday in the near future! This member will match all gifts dollar-for-dollar up to \$22,000! The goal is to raise enough at this luncheon to complete the Fellowship Hall, and this generous matching gift program will go a long way toward that goal! Completion includes new flooring, furnishings, window treatments and audio-visual equipment. Be on the lookout for an update on this luncheon and exciting matching gift program!

— Visible Partnership Committee

Around St. Mark's

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

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper



The Congregational Life Committee and Room in the Inn hosted the annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper in the Fellowship Hall. The menu included light and fluffy pancakes, bacon, fresh fruit, and King's Cake for dessert. 2026 Lenten Devotional booklets were available to take home.



The tables were colorfully covered and festively decorated with necklaces and masks, making for a relaxed and enjoyable evening for all who attended. Thank you to Congregational Life and Room in the Inn for coordinating this event!



Around St. Mark's

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

From the Archives: St. Mark's Beginnings and Its First Pastor

As St. Mark's celebrates its 167-year anniversary, I thought it would be a good time to look back on the founding of St. Mark's and its first Pastor, The Reverend Alexander Phillippi.

On January 30, 1859 Pastor G.D. Bernheim, Pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Cabarrus County and head of the struggling Mt. Pleasant College, came to Charlotte to solicit funds for the College. Of his visit he said,

"I had no idea at the time of establishing a Lutheran Church here, it was business for our College that induced me to make the trip. Mr. James Carson of this city has the honor of first suggesting the founding of this Lutheran Church, when I approached him for a donation for our College he replied, 'I will give you nothing for the College, but if you start a Lutheran Church in Charlotte, I will give \$50 towards it.' This suggestion struck me very forcibly and I reported it that night to my host Mr. Isenhour. He was surprised at Mr. Carson's liberal offer and said:

'I will give you \$100 for the same purpose; do what you can when you go to town tomorrow and we may have at last a Lutheran Church in Charlotte, for which I have been anxiously waiting for the last 30 years, ever since I settled here.'

Pastor Bernheim eventually collected pledges for \$600 which he used to purchase the "Old Methodist Church" on the corner of Seventh and College Streets. On Monday evening January 31, 1859, a meeting of Lutherans was held in the Mecklenburg County Court House and after an address and prayer, St. Mark's Lutheran Church was founded with 16 charter members.

At the same time a call was extended to the Rev. Alexander Phillippi, DD who had just graduated from Gettysburg Theological Seminary. Pastor Phillippi accepted this call to St. Mark's and worked very faithfully for more than a year with considerable success. With war clouds looming, he left for his home in Virginia in 1860 to be with his own people if war started. When war did break out, Pastor Phillippi served as a Chaplain in the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. During the war he was captured twice and each time he escaped. Pastor Phillippi was the longest-serving Chaplain in the Army of Northern Virginia. He returned to Wythe County, Virginia, and organized several new Lutheran congregations there and was present at the 50th Anniversary Celebration of St. Mark's in 1909. He served as President of Trinity College in Wytheville for 21 years.

He died in 1915; his grave is in the East End Cemetery in Wytheville, where he served at St. John Lutheran Church for 50 years.

In his obituary on the front page of the Pulaski Southwest Times of November 29, 1915 it was said, "Our city has lost one of its most popular and useful citizens, the Rev. Alexander Phillippi, who died at his home last night at 11 o'clock. ... His first pastorate in the Lutheran church was at Charlotte, N.C., where he built the first Lutheran church ever erected in that city... Thus ended a long and useful life. A man for whom all people had the greatest respect. Many people now on earth, and multitudes who have passed to the Great Beyond, will rise up and call him blessed".

In less than a week Charlotte's first Lutheran Church was founded, had its first building, and its first Pastor.

[Most of this article is based on a history written by Phillip E. Gerdes in 2000. For more of St. Mark's history please see the Our History section on the St. Mark's website.]

Joe Barrett



Coming Up at St. Mark's

Love Circle



Love Circle will meet Wednesday, 3/11 at 11 am in the Large Conference room. Join us!

The Season of Lent 2026

Mid-Week
Lenten Prayer
February 25 - March 25
6 - 6:45 pm Supper
7 pm Prayer Service
(also live on YouTube,
St. Mark's website & Facebook)

"Holy
Conversations
with Jesus"

Lenten Supper Preparation Schedule:

- March 4 Worship & Music
- March 11 Finance
- March 18 Social Ministry
- March 25 Men's Group

Join us for weekly prayerful reflection on biblical conversations with Jesus, helping us to hear his voice speaking in our lives.

Carolina Pro Musica

CELEBRATING AMERICA'S 250!

Carolina Pro Musica

Carolina Pro Musica joins in the celebration of America's 250th anniversary with music that was performed in Boston, Philadelphia, Williamsburg and other places in colonial America with tunes you may know and ones you wish you did.

**March 20, 2026
7:30 pm**

**St. Mark's Lutheran Church
1001 Queens Road**

Ticket reservation:
<https://www.carolinapromusica.org/schedule>

Half price tickets for SMLC!!
Enter StMarksHO on CPM website

www.SaintMarksCharlotte.org

Spring
Cleanup
Day

**March 21, 2026
Spring WORK DAY**

8:30 to 11:00 am

The Property Committee invites you to participate in the annual Spring Work Day on March 21, from 8:30 until 11:00 am. No special skills are needed, just a willingness to serve your congregation with a little elbow grease. Things to be done include light cleaning, minor yard work if you like the out of doors, and general straightening up prior to Easter.

WORK ZONE

All are welcome!

Your hosts: Property Committee

Coffee & doughnuts!

Have you seen something around the church building that needs a little tender loving care? Simple things like:
Dust the organ.
Trim some bushes.
Mop a floor.
Vacuum an air conditioning register. Clean the wine spots off the carpet in the sanctuary.

Coming Up at St. Mark's

Charlotte
Flute
Association
Recital



Please join us for the
**Charlotte Flute
Association's Members'
Recital!**
Sunday, March 22, 2026 at 2:30 p.m.
St. Mark's Lutheran Church
1001 Queens Road, Charlotte, NC

Charlotte
Flute Association
Free
admission.
All are
welcome!

For more information, email
charlotteflutes@gmail.com

Japanese Association in Charlotte Spring Festival



**HARU
MATSURI** JAPANESE SPRING
FESTIVAL
春祭り
SATURDAY, MARCH 28 ~ 3-6 PM
ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

PRESENTED BY  Japanese Cultural
Association of
the Carolinas  Japan American Society
North Carolina

PLEASE REGISTER HERE 

Please join us in the Fellowship Hall for musical performances, a kimono fashion show, community dance, and more. There will be baked goods and homemade items, and children's activity tables with origami, coloring, chigiri-e, and more!

Use the QR code to register.



Senior Voice Recital March 29 at 5:30 PM

Jack Richardson is performing his Senior Recital for his Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance. After studying under Dr. Brian Arreola as well as getting a certificate in Musical Theatre, he is expected to graduate in May from UNC Charlotte. The repertoire for this recital goes for the 18th century all the way to contemporary music, and includes composers such as Mozart, Chabrier, Maria Grever, and Stephen Sondheim. The recital will take place at St. Mark's Lutheran Church on Sunday March 29th at 5:30 pm.



Congregational Life

St. Mark's Men's Group

First, a big "thank you" to the Men's Group (and congregation) members who assisted running SMLC's Room in the Inn/Room Above programs for two different Tuesday nights in January and February. We provided (albeit temporary,) warm, safe refuge/ sleeping quarters for ten individuals each of those nights. SMLC also provided two meals and a "to go" lunch for each guest as well as access to showers, clean linen, and laundry facilities. We thank all of you for opening your hearts and sharing your time, treasure and energy to make this happen. We have made a difference in twenty men's lives.

Upcoming Activities: Saturday, March 14 at 9 am: We will have our usual monthly meeting in the Fellowship Hall. During this meeting we will need to discuss and coordinate upcoming activities. This same day, we are planning to do our first of three 2026 "Adopt a Street" street cleanups of Kenilworth and Scott Avenues immediately following this meeting. (I am coordinating with Jim Metze the pick-up and return of the gloves, vests, grabbers and bags, since Jim will be out of town.) Also, as in past years, we want to suggest that the individuals in this group be prepared to make a small personal financial contribution to support the men's group activities at this meeting. Envelopes will be provided.

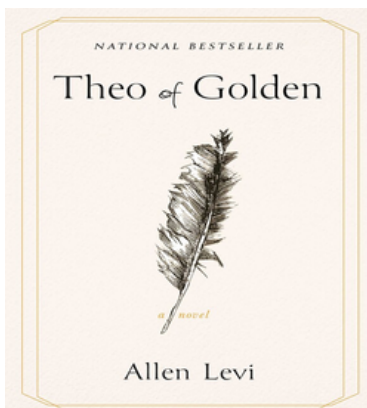
Wednesday, March 25, 2026: The Men's Group will be preparing a congregation supper prior to Wednesday night Lenten service. It will be served starting around 6 pm. As in the past, we are thinking about making and serving "homemade" vegetarian vegetable soup with fresh grilled cheese sandwiches and maybe some fruit. Prep will start around 4:30 pm. We need six or seven men willing to wash, chop, dice vegetables and stir a pot as well as assemble and cook grilled cheese sandwiches, serve our guests and then clean up afterwards. Please let Mike Doyne know if you can assist.

Ethnic Restaurant Group

St Mark's Ethnic Restaurant Group will sample traditional Spanish cuisine at Miro Spanish Grill on March 17th at 6:00 PM. Depending on our headcount, we may have some menu limitations. Regardless of details, the food will be spectacular and have names that although possibly unfamiliar may be generally pronounceable. The fare may go with tapas or mains. Either approach is guaranteed to please. Do try to save a little space for the desserts, which are always delightful. RSVP to Tom and Judy Tolbert by midnight on March 12.



St. Mark's Book Group



The St. Mark's Book Group will next meet on Thursday, March 26, at 10 am in the large conference room and via Zoom. This month's selection is Theo of Golden by Allen Levi. The story is set in the small southern town of Golden, GA. Theo is a mysterious and distinguished older gentleman who arrives to spend a year in Golden. He discovers, on the walls of the local coffee shop, wonderful portraits of a large number of town residents. He studies them intently and subsequently starts buying them in order to give them to the people portrayed. Many interesting relationships and situations result, with far more people affected than Theo would have imagined. The story has many lessons to teach us about suffering, loss, kindness, possible new beginnings, and enrichments of people's lives. All are welcome to join us for this discussion. Please contact Kay Sehorn or Judy Tolbert for more information.

Family Ministry

Pastor Ali Rode Committee Chairperson



Family Ministry Reflection

I've always considered myself a "child at heart." I carry within myself a heart for imagination, and enjoyment of play. This worked well as a teenager, as I provided nursery and childcare at my local church as well as nannied during the summertime. Hey, I was an 80's baby that grew up with the tune, "I don't wanna grow up, I'm a Toy's R' Us Kid" and let's not forget Walt Disney's Peter Pan and the voyage to Neverland.

But, as many people experience eventually I found myself in a season of life where I realized it was "time to grow up now". I recall stepping through the antique door to the sanctuary of First UMC in Evanston, IL when I received my seminary degree thinking, "This is the threshold to adulthood." I anticipated dealing with great ambitions, larger bills, and problems I had always expected someone else to manage. I was 26. I had a lot to learn.

Now 16 years later, I still have more to learn, and I'm starting to recognize that many adults I've served with in ministry, if they are honest, are still figuring out being an adult too. No matter how much we may know, or what we have endured, or how serious we may consider life, there is still within us the memory of first being a child. Carl Jung in his understanding called it the "Inner Child". I've witnessed great wisdom from internal reflection on such aspects of one's self.

This concept of childhood relates well to our Christian understanding. Jesus said in the Gospel of Matthew, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me." (Mt.18:3b-5 NRSVUE)

One day I was at a craft store for a church event, and there I saw it, and I had to have it— a farmhouse style lettered-sign with bold black letters on a white field, "DON'T GROW UP IT'S A TRAP". "I must have this for my office", I thought. It still hangs 10 years later, in the view field aside of my desk. It reminds me to accept my role as a child of God, to embrace children and young people, as well as to embrace life as a child, full of wonder, awe and exploration.

Family Ministry in the life of the church aims to gather people across all generations to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Jesus said in Matthew, "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Mt.22:40 NRSVUE)

I look forward to partnering with the Beloved Children of God here at St. Mark's to make more places and spaces for the obviously young and the young at heart. I ask your prayers as our Family Ministry Committee meets for our second gathering March 1st and as we initiate new ideas and initiatives in "Growing Disciples and Making Christ Known".

Family Ministry

Pastor Ali Rode Committee Chairperson

THEOLOGY ON TAP



March 19 at 7pm
We'll meet at the
Rusty Onion, 6654
Carmel Road.

Everyone is
welcome!



*Pictured: Theology on Tap 2/19 at
Custom Home Pubs.*

Save the Date!

Egg Hunt Easter Sunday April 5th
between worship services!



Souper Bowl of Caring



Your donations help Nourish Up provide food to our neighbors in need. They were delivered to Nourish Up on Feb. 25.

Seahawks on the Left, Patriots on the Right. We'll leave the point counting for the football game. When it comes to Souperbowl of Caring, everyone wins. Thanks for helping households in the area provide food in times of economic challenges.

158 lbs Patriots
136 lbs Seahawks
108 lbs baker's rack that was only interested in commercials and half time show!

Lenten Offerings

PEACE LILY ORDER FORM
SUNBURST WREATH DONATIONS
ALTERNATE GIFTS & LENTEN BOXES

Please complete the form below and return it with your payment to the church office or via email/online payment no later than March 29. Donations for the Wreath and for Alternate Gifts accepted through Easter.

Peace Lilies # _____ @\$14.00 each = \$ _____

Given By _____

Phone _____

Given in honor of

Given in memory of

Sunburst Wreath Donation \$ _____

Given By _____

Given In Honor Of _____

Given In Memory
Of _____

NAMI Charlotte (Lenten Boxes)

\$ _____

Given By _____

Given In Honor
Of _____

Given In Memory
Of _____

Total Order Amount \$ _____

Make checks payable to: St. Mark's Lutheran Church
PAYMENTS SHOULD ACCOMPANY ORDER!

Alternate Gifts & Lenten Boxes



We continue our Lenten Box tradition this year. It is a visible reminder the 40 days of Lent be filled with reflection, service and prayer. Lent is a time to connect with God in special ways including almsgiving (being of service).

Our Lenten Box offerings will benefit the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Charlotte.

We no longer accept coins but still accept bills or simply a check made out to St. Mark's.

NAMI Charlotte is guided by the experiences of people impacted by mental health conditions and is grounded in equity. Together, we provide advocacy, education, support, and connections to resources so that individuals and families affected by mental illness can build healthier, more hopeful lives. We envision a community that embraces and prioritizes mental health for everyone to live healthy, fulfilling lives supported by a community that cares.

Our Values

- **Hope:** We believe in the possibility of recovery, wellness and the potential in all of us.
- **Inclusion:** We embrace diverse backgrounds, cultures and perspectives.
- **Empowerment:** We promote confidence, self-efficacy and service to our mission.
- **Compassion:** We practice respect, kindness and empathy.
- **Fairness:** We fight for equity and justice.

When you look at your Lenten Box this season, think about our neighbors in need. Lenten Boxes are available in the Gathering Place.

You can also make your Lenten box donation on the St. Mark's website.

Thank you. Social Ministry Committee

Gifts & Memorials

Jay Jacob Committee Chairperson

In Memory of Pat Fox

Sarah Ingle - Music Ministry
Diane White Cain - Gifts and Memorials
Larry Dagenhart - Gifts and Memorials
Karen Covington - Music Ministry

In Memory of John J. Graham

Millie Cansler - Property
Barbara McKenzie - Gifts and Memorials
Richard and Sandra Lanier - Gifts and Memorials
Douglas and Carolyn Dellinger - Gifts and Memorials
Donn and Dottie Toney - Gifts and Memorials
Sarah Ingle - Gifts and Memorials
James and Cora Hosse - Gifts and Memorials
Sharon Cooper - Music Ministry

Social Ministry

Susan Ginns Committee Chairperson

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.

Room in the Inn



Over 8 nights this season, we kept 78 unhoused neighbors off the street through Room in the Inn — including 6 women, 4 children, and 68 men. Thank you to everyone who volunteered, donated, and prayed. Your compassion made a tangible difference!

Social Ministry Committee

Many thanks to our business partners, Enterprise Rent-A-Car (South Tryon) and Lapels Cleaners (Park Road). Their generous support was essential to another successful Room in the Inn season at St. Mark's. Please consider them for your travel and laundry needs this spring!

Worship & Music

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson

Worship Highlights



Pastor Ali Rode and Pastor Tim McKenzie, Sunday, February 15, 2026 Transfiguration of Our Lord



Taylor McNamara, cantor, Sunday, February 15, 2026



Jay Jacob, Pastor Ali, Transfiguration of Our Lord



Pastor Ali, Transfiguration of Our Lord



Pastor Tim, Sunday, February 15, 2026, Transfiguration of Our Lord



Andrew Puky, crucifer, Transfiguration of Our Lord



Ash Wednesday, St. Mark's Choir lineup, preparing to enter choir loft for 7:00pm worship



Taylor McNamara, Amy Woodall, 8:30am song leaders, Sunday, February 22, 2026



Karen Feezor, lector, First Sunday in Lent

Worship & Music

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson



St. Mark's Choir, First Sunday in Lent

We Sing the Faith

Historical and Spiritual Insight Into the Hymns We Sing
Reflections by Lester Ackerman

"Build a Longer Table" ACS 1062

This hymn comes to us from All Creation Sings (Augsburg Fortress, 2020) where it is included in the "Justice, Peace" section, though also listed in the topical index under "Hunger." David Bjorlin (b. 1984), a native of Duluth, Minnesota, wrote this hymn in 2017 inspired by a proposed collection of new hymns by the Hymn Society entitled *Singing Welcome: Hymns and Songs of Hospitality to Refugees and Immigrants*. Bjorlin writes about an early usage of his hymn: "Our pastor planned to preach about hunger and noted that this hymn seemed more about justice than hunger--longer tables, not walls; safe refuges with justice, not jails; doorways, not fences." Bjorlin paired his hymn with the French Christmas carol NOEL NOUVELET, the name of this tune being the first line of the seventh century carol. Additionally, ELW #379 pairs this tune with the Easter text "Now the Green Blade Rises."

"Light Shone in Darkness" ELW 307

text by Delores Dufner (b.1939) and tune LUX IN TENEBRIS by Mark Sedio (b.1954). Mark Sedio says of this contemporary late twentieth century hymn: "I was taken by the rather declamatory character of the first two stanzas--the first focusing on creation, the second on salvation, and the third morphing into a more eschatological forward-looking sense, all three ending curtly with the phrase 'praise (prays) for the light. Amen!'" This is only the fourth time we have sung this hymn, last sung in worship February 2020.

"Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart" ELW 873

This hymn was written as a processional hymn for a choir festival in Peterborough Cathedral, Cambridgeshire, England, in May of 1865. It originally contained eleven stanzas, necessary to get all the choirs in! Written by Edward H. Plumptre (1821-1891), an ordained Anglican priest, teacher, theologian, scholar and writer, this hymn was first published in *Lazarus and Other Poems* (London, 1865). It is based on Psalm 20:4, Psalm 147:1, and Philippians 4:4, and it is a call for everyone to rejoice in the present, in the future, and in the life to come. Arthur H. Messiter (1834-1916) wrote MARION for this hymn in 1883. Messiter was born in England, but moved to the United States, and eventually became organist and choirmaster at Trinity Episcopal Church in New York City.

Worship & Music

Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson

We Sing the Faith

Historical and Spiritual Insight Into the Hymns We Sing
Reflections by Lester Ackerman

"Rise, Shine, You People!" ELW 665

was written by Ronald A. Klug (b. 1939) for the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany in 1974 . Paul Westermeyer says in his *Hymnal Companion to Evangelical Lutheran Worship* "the gospel for that day was Luke 4:21-30, where Jesus went to the synagogue with the people on the sabbath and read the scroll from Isaiah 4: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...to bring good news to the poor...release to the captives. Or in the words of the hymn, Christ the Lord has entered our human story. So rise, shine, celebrate, and hurl your songs and prayers against the darkness." The tune WOJTKIEWIECZ was written by American composer and musician Dale Wood (1934-2003) for this hymn and was published in *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978). The tune bears Dale Wood's Polish family name, which was simplified when his family came to the United States.

"I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say" ELW 611

This hymn is one of over six hundred hymns that come to us from the pen of Scottish author, pastor and editor Horatius Bonar (1808-1889). It was included in the author's *Hymns Original and Selected* (London, 1846) with the title "The Voice from Galilee." Each stanza is Jesus' call in the first two lines, with our response in the last two, expressing the peace that Jesus brings to us. Our *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* pairs Bonar's hymn with two contrasting tunes, KINGSFOLD and THIRD MODE MELODY #332.

"Christ, Be Our Light" ELW 715

Bernadette Farrell (b. 1957) wrote both the text and tune for this hymn. Farrell is a liturgical composer in Great Britain who has been part of the church's liturgical renewal since the Second Vatican Council. Paul Westermeyer writes of this hymn: "This hymn by Bernadette Farrell is structured so that the stanzas press from longing for the signs of the kingdom of God to us as its servants and signs. The refrain that follows is a petition that Christ would be our light and shine in our hearts as the church is gathered by that light.

"Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise" ELW 834

Scottish Pastor, Walter Chalmers Smith (1824-1908) wrote this hymn in six stanzas and included it in his *Hymns of Christ and the Christian Life* (London, 1867). The four stanzas included in our hymnal are based on I Timothy 1:17, "To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever". Randy Stevens writes in his book *Be Still My Soul*, "In this hymn of pure praise, Smith acknowledges that at times, God seems hidden from us--inaccessible--not because of any lack of love on his part but rather because we are not capable of beholding his full glory. It is the splendor of light that hides him". In 1906 British composer Ralph Vaughan Williams was the first to pair this text to the eighteenth-century Welsh tune ST. DENIO. The tune title refers to St. Denis, the patron saint of France. ST. DENIO is based on a traditional Welsh ballad "A Hundred Years from Now" popular in the nineteenth century.

Worship & Music

We Sing the Faith

Historical and Spiritual Insight Into the Hymns We Sing Reflections by Lester Ackerman

"I Love to Tell the Story" ELW 661

Arabella Katherine Hankey (1834-1911) a nineteenth century English poetess, was born into a family of wealthy Anglican evangelicals. This hymn is from her seventy-four stanza poem "The Old, Old Story" published in New York in 1875. Austin Lovelace writes of this hymn: "Many people sing this hymn vigorously but do little to go out and 'tell the story' beyond the church walls. Kate Hankey startled England by the unheard-of thing by starting a Bible class for working girls in London. She also served as a nurse in South Africa, and turned over all proceeds from her writings to Christian missions. She lived what she wrote!" Philadelphia musician and piano dealer William G. Fischer (1835-1912) wrote the tune HANKEY and added the refrain.

"When We Are Tested" ACS 922

Our Hymn of the Day comes to us from the new collection of songs and hymns *All Creation Sings* (2020). Ruth Duck (b.1947) an American writer, liturgical theologian and ordained United Church of Christ pastor, was asked to write a hymn that told the story of Jesus' forty days in the wilderness. It is included in her book *The Poetry of Grace* (2015). Duck's hymn is paired nicely with the familiar Irish tune SLANE, which is named for the hill where Saint Patrick is said to have defied the king by lighting the new fire at the Easter Vigil. This tune appears two times in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (2006) ELW 793 "Be Thou My Vision" and ELW 765 "Lord of All Hopefulness."

"I Want Jesus to Walk with Me" ELW 325

This hymn is usually classified as an African American spiritual in most hymnals and songbooks, though some call it "an American folk hymn" one of the many "white spirituals" which thrived for more than two hundred years in the rural Appalachian culture. Hence, we do not know its author. Paul Westermeyer says of this hymn: "the double entendre of these spirituals means the faith expressed in them is more multivalent and profound than what may appear on the surface. For example, this one may look like a request for Jesus to walk along the pilgrim journey. Though it is that, what makes it authentic and possible for the people is what lies behind it, an affirmation that the Jesus of their salvation is with those who sing." This tune SOJOURNER has no refrain, which is uncharacteristic of most African American tunes, and has more in common with an English/Welsh folk tune, probably brought to America by early settlers. The tune is named for Sojourner Truth (1797-1883) a slave, who after escaping, preached, sang, and advocated for women's rights and abolition. She met Harriet Beecher Stowe and President Abraham Lincoln.

"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" ELW 803

is from the pen of English hymn writer Isaac Watts (1674-1748), this hymn has been labeled by the nineteenth century theologian and literary critic Matthew Arnold as the greatest hymn in the English language. Watt's hymn is based on two sources from the writings of the Apostle Paul, the first, a verse from Galatians--"May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world", and the second, a verse from the third chapter of Philippians--"Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ". Isaac Watt's intended this hymn for a communion service he wrote in 1707, with the original title "Crucifixion to the World by the Cross of Christ". American composer Lowell Mason (1792-1872) composed the tune HAMBURG in 1824, and takes its name for that city in Germany. He states that he arranged this melody from a Gregorian chant, with only a range of five different pitches: E, F, G, A, B flat.

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Kevin Feezor Committee Chairperson

Hymn Suggestions: Third, Fourth, Fifth Sundays after Epiphany,
Transfiguration of Our Lord, & First and Second Sundays in Lent 2026

March 8, 2026, Third Sunday in Lent

Jesus promises the woman at the well the gift of an internal spring within here, “gushing up to eternal life.” When presented with this gift she says, “Sir, give me this water so I may never be thirsty...” Jesus promises us through life challenges that we can trust in the inward dwelling of the Spirit which gives us peace and satisfies our needs. May our worship together remind us of that inward dwelling which provides love and reconciliation.

Hymns: ELW 533 Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty UNSER HERRSCHER
ELW 419 For All Faithful Women (stanzas 1, 8 & 2) KUORTANE
ELW 777 Come to Me, All Pilgrims Thirsty (stanza one) (Offertory) BEACH SPRING
ELW 623 Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me TOPLADY
ELW 611 I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say KINGSFOLD

March 15, 2026, Fourth Sunday in Lent

Baptism is sometimes called enlightenment. The gospel for this Sunday is the story of the man born blind healed by Christ. “I was blind, now I see,” declares the man. In baptism God opens our eyes to see the truth of who we are: God’s beloved children. As David was anointed king of Israel, in baptism God anoints our head with oil, and calls us to bear witness to the light of Christ in our daily lives.

Hymns: ELW 520 Blessed Jesus, at Your Word LIEBSTER JESU, WIR SIND HIER
ELW 779 Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound NEW BRITAIN
ELW 502 The King of Love My Shepherd Is (stanzas 1 & 2) (Offertory) ST. COLUMBA
ELW 614 There Is a Balm in Gilead BALM IN GILEAD
ELW 324 In the Cross of Christ I Glory RATHBUN

March 22, 2026, Fifth Sunday in Lent

In today’s gospel Jesus reveals his power over death by raising Lazarus from the dead. The prophet Ezekiel prophesies God breathing new life into dry bones. To those in exile or living in the shadows of death, these stories proclaim God’s promise of resurrection. In baptism we die with Christ that we might also be raised with him to new life.

Hymns: ELW 886 Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing AZMON
ELW 334 Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery (stanzas 1-3 & Lent 5) THOMAS
ELW 485 I Am the Bread of Life (stanza 1 and refrain) (Offertory) I AM THE BREAD
In the Bulb There Is a Flower HYMN OF PROMISE
ELW 666 What Wondrous Love Is This (stanzas 1, 2 & 3) WONDROUS LOVE

March 29, 2026, Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday

Today, we encounter the paradox that defines our faith: Jesus is glorified king and humiliated servant. We too are full of paradox: like Peter, we fervently desire to follow Christ, but find ourselves afraid, denying God. We wave palms in celebration today as Christ comes into our midst, and we follow with trepidation as his path leads to death on the cross. Amid it all we are invited into this paradoxical promise of life through Christ’s broken body and outpoured love in a meal of bread and wine. We begin this week that stands at the center of the church year, anticipating the completion of God’s astounding work.

Hymns: ELW 344 All Glory, Laud, and Honor VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN
ELW 343 My Song Is Love Unknown (stanzas 1-4) LOVE UNKNOWN
ELW 338 Beneath the Cross of Jesus (stanzas 1 & 2) (Offertory) ST. CHRISTOPHER
ELW 353 Were You There (stanzas 1 & 2) WERE YOU THERE
ELW 339 Christ, the Life of All the Living JESU, MEINES LEBENS LEBEN

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March Serving Schedule

Crucifer/Acolyte

3/1 C/A: Riley Smith
3/8 C/A: Needed
3/15 C/A: Needed
3/22 C/A: Needed
3/29 C/A: Needed

Sound System

3/1 Kevin Feezor
3/8 Alan Harms
3/15 Neil Dixon
3/22 Bob Chernet
3/29 John Brumbaugh

Tabulators

3/1 Susan League
Charles Lakeman
3/8 Karen Feezor
A.J. Pridgen
3/15 Karen Feezor
Meg Fielding
3/22 Karen Feezor
Dawn Schwartz
3/29 Meg Fielding
Doug Milheim
Dianne Thomas

Ushers

Team B: Doug Milheim, Marc & Susan Ginns, Eddie Goodall, Rod Stephens

Prayer Assistants

3/1 Melissa Smith
3/8 Michael Thompson
3/15 Youth
3/22 Charles Lakeman
3/29 Dave Dunlap

Lectors

3/1 Flora Chance
3/8 Meg Fielding
3/15 Andrea Long
3/22 Larry Lippert
3/29 Charles Lakeman

Communion Helpers

3/1 Chris Miller
3/8 Catherine Metze
3/15 Karen Covington
3/22 Sandy Rach
3/29 Chris Miller

Video Streaming

3/1 Joe Barrett
3/8 Charles Lakeman
3/15 Charles Lakeman
3/22 Charles Lakeman
3/29 A.J. Pridgen

Greeters

3/1 Eddie & Carol Goodall
Michael & Tara Thompson
3/8 Dale & Mary Lou Hopp
Jay Jacob
3/15 Millie Cansler
Dave & Eileen Dunlap
3/22 Susan Lakeman
Dawn Schwartz
3/29 Neil & Charlotte Dixon
Ted Seman, David Thomason

Communion Assistants

3/1 Charles & Susan Lakeman
Andrea Long, Tom Puky
3/8 Bonnie Eckerd, John Simon
Nick Wartner, Kimberly Zimmerman
3/15 Kevin & Karen Feezor
A.J. Pridgen, Chris Stevenson
3/22 Lisa Barnette, Revecca Huang
Jay Jacob, Janice Miller
3/29 Bonnie Eckerd, Andrea Long
Virginia Molan, Betsy Wenzel

March Birthdays

3/1 Elaine Hazen
3/1 Emory Taylor
3/4 Virginia Edahl
3/5 Cliff Edahl
3/7 Dawn Puky
3/9 John Danello
3/12 Lee George
3/13 Chuck Baynard

3/15 Cyndi Cox
3/14 Matt McCall
3/18 Neil Dixon
3/18 Rodney Stephens
3/22 Mindy Curley
3/23 Deanna Weckerle
3/24 James Conner
3/24 Taylor Abbasi

3/24 Tom Puky
3/25 Keith Lindberg
3/25 Madden Weckerle
3/26 Rob Johnson
3/28 Jackie Harms
3/30 Evan Wenzel
3/30 Olivia Grant
3/30 Paula Connolly