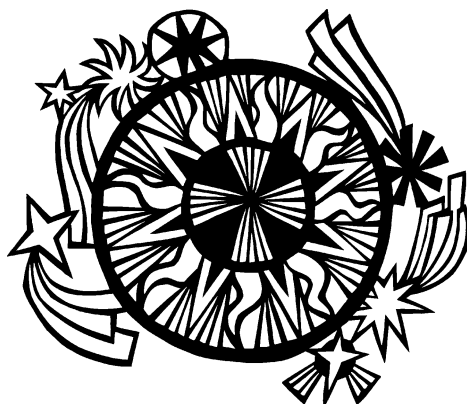


ST. MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH
and
ST. GEORGE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

welcome you!

**December 31,
2023**



**The First
Sunday of
Christmas**

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

SATURDAY

“SHINE” CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP: 6:00 PM (1ST SATURDAYS-CHAPEL)

SUNDAY

THE DIVINE LITURGY: 9:00AM (ST. MARK)

EDUCATION HOUR: 10:30 AM (ST. MARK)

HOLY EUCHARIST: 8:00AM & 10:30AM (ST. GEORGE'S)

EDUCATION HOUR: 9:00AM (ST. GEORGE'S)

105 EAST “D” STREET BELLEVILLE, IL 62220

EMAIL: WORSHIP@STMARKBELLEVILLE.ORG

STGEORGEOFFICE@SBCGLOBAL.NET

PLEASE wear a mask/face covering *if* you are exhibiting *any* upper respiratory symptoms consistent with allergies, a cold, or COVID-19 (runny nose, cough, sore throat).

To parents with small children: We are glad your family is worshiping with us today! *“Quiet Bags”* (supplies & activities for use by small children) are available in the Welcome Area. If you or your child need a break from the service, feel free to walk to the Welcome Area/narthex (the service is still audible over the speakers).

Parish Hall and Restrooms are located on the lower level of the main church building. The stairway is off the entrance foyer. A second **handicapped access** restroom is available next to the **accessibility lift** to the lower level is located in the Welcome Area. An usher will be happy to assist you with the lift.

Assistive listening devices and **low vision items** are available. Please ask one of our ushers.

PRELUDE & WELCOME

The assembly STANDS and faces the cross as it enters.

GATHERING HYMN

“Once in Royal David’s City”

ELW 269



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly cat - tle shed,
2 He came down to earth from heav - en who is God and Lord of all,
3 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re - deem - ing love;
4 Not in that poor low - ly sta - ble, with the ox - en stand - ing by,



where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a man - ger for his bed:
and his shel - ter was a sta - ble, and his cra - dle was a stall;
for that child so dear and gen - tle is our Lord in heav'n a - bove;
we shall see him; but in heav - en, set at God's right hand on high;



Mar - y was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ, her lit - tle child.
with the poor and meek and low - ly, lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
and he leads his chil - dren on to the place where he is gone.
there his chil - dren gath - er round, bright like stars, with glo - ry crowned.

GREETING

Blessed be the Father, +Son & Holy Spirit - Love from the beginning, Word made flesh, Breath of heaven. **Amen.**

Christ is born: Alleluia, alleluia! 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.**

HYMN OF PRAISE

“Hark! the Herald Angels Sing”

ELW 270

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

2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the ever-lasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of the virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail, the incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel! *Refrain*

Refrain: Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the new-born king!”

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray... Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The assembly is SEATED.

WORD

+ First Reading:

Genesis 22:15-18

¹⁵The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, ¹⁶and said, "By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, ¹⁸and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice."

Carol -

"Ding, Dong, Merrily on High"

F B \flat C F B \flat C 7

Ding Dong! Mer-ri - ly on high in heaven the bells are
Ev'en so here be-low, be - low, let stee - ple bells be
Pray you, du - ti - ful - ly prime your ma - tin chime, ye

4 F F B \flat C F

ring - ing. Ding Dong! Ve - ri - ly the sky is
swun - gen, And "I - o, i - o, i - o!" by
ring - ers; May you beau - ti - ful - ly rime your

7 B \flat C 7 F F Dm

riv'n with an - gel sing - ing. Glo - - -
priest and peo - ple sung - en.
eve - time song, ye sing - ers.

10 Gm C 7 F Dm Gm C 7

13 F B \flat C F B \flat C 7 F

ri - a, Ho - san - nah in ex - cel - sis!

+ Second Reading: Micah 5:2-5a

²But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. ³Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; ⁵and he shall be the one of peace.

Carol -

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

ELW 279



1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
4 O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.
cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.
O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

+ Third Reading: Luke 2:8-16

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a

Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” ¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

Carol - “God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen”

1. God rest ye merry, gentlemen let nothing you dismay.
Remember, Christ, our Savior was born on Christmas day
To save us all from Satan’s power when we were gone astray
(Refrain)

Refrain:

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy
O tidings of comfort and joy.

2. From God our Heavenly Father a blessed Angel came;
and unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same:
How that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name. (Refrain)

3. Now to the Lord sing prai-ses, all you within the place,
and with true love and brotherhood each other now embrace;
this holy tide of Chri-stmas all other doth deface. (Refrain)



+ Fourth Reading: Luke 14: 1a, 7-14

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath... ⁷when he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. ⁸“When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; ⁹and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, ‘Give this person your place,’ and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. ¹⁰But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher’; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. ¹¹For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” ¹²He said also to the one who had invited him, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. ¹³But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

Carol

“Good King Wenceslaus”

1. Good King Wenceslaus looked out on the Feast of Stephen,
 2. "Hith - er, page, and stand by me, if you know it, tell - ing,
 3. "Bring me food and bring me wine, bring me pine logs hith - er,
 4. "Sire, the night is dark - er now, and the wind blows strong - er,
 5. In his mas - ter's steps he trod, where the snow lay dint - ed;

When the snow lay round a - bout, deep and crisp and e - ven.
 You - der pea - sant, who is he? Where and what his dwell - ing?"
 You and I will see him dine, when we bear them thith - er."
 Fails my heart, I know not how; I can go no long - er."
 Heat was in the ver - y sod which the saint had print - ed.

Bright - ly shone the moon that night, though the frost was cru - el,
 "Sire, he lives a good league hence, un - der - neath the moun - tain,
 Page and mon - arch, forth they went, forth they went to - geth - er,
 "Mark my foot - steps, my good page, tread now in them bold - ly,
 There - fore, Chris - tian men, be sure, while God's gifts pos - sess - ing,

When a poor man came in sight, gath - 'ring win - ter fu - el.
 Right a - gainst the for - est fence, by Saint Ag - nes' foun - tain."
 Through the cold wind's wild la - ment and the bit - ter weath - er.
 You shall find the win - ter's rage freeze your blood less cold - ly."
 You who now will bless the poor shall your - selves find bless - ing.

+ Fifth Reading: Galatians 4:4-7

⁴But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. ⁶And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Carol – "I Saw Three Ships"

I saw three ships come sailing in
 On Christmas Da-y, on Christmas Day;
 I saw three ships come sailing in
 On Christmas Day in the morning. →

And what was in those ships all three,
On Christmas Da-y, on Christmas Day?
And what was in those ships all three,
On Christmas Day in the morning?

The Virgin Mary and Christ were there,
On Christmas Da-y, on Christmas Day;
The Virgin Mary and Christ were there,
On Christmas Day in the morning.

O they sailed into Bethlehem,
On Christmas Da-y, on Christmas Day;
O they sailed into Bethlehem,
On Christmas Day in the morning.

And all the Angels in Heav'n shall sing,
On Christmas Da-y, on Christmas Day;
And all the Angels in Heav'n shall sing,
On Christmas Day in the morning.

And all the bells on earth shall ring,
On Christmas Da-y, on Christmas Day;
And all the bells on earth shall ring,
On Christmas Day in the morning.

And all the souls on earth shall sing,
On Christmas Da-y, on Christmas Day;
And all the souls on earth shall sing,
On Christmas Day in the morning.

Then let us all rejoice again,
On Christmas Da-y, on Christmas Day;
Then let us all rejoice again,
On Christmas Day in the morning.

+ Sixth Reading: John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.





1 Love has come— a light in the dark - ness! Love shines forth in the
 2 Love is born! Come, share in the won - der. Love is God now a -
 3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us! Love is life ev - er -



Beth - le - hem skies. See, all heav - en has come to pro - claim it;
 sleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of his moth - er;
 last - ing and free. Love is Je - sus with - in and a - mong us.



hear how their song of joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to
 what is the name her heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the
 Love is the peace our hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the



you, a Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.
 name she whis - pers; Love! Love! Je - sus, Im - man - u - el.
 gift of Christ - mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Following the final carol, the assembly **STANDS**.

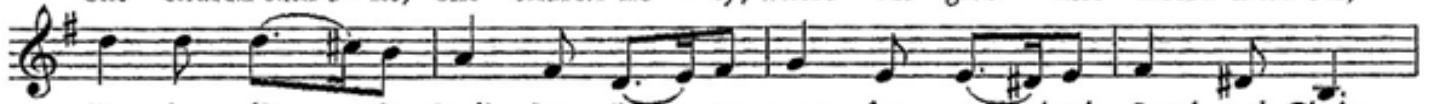
CREED *To the tune of Greensleeves/“What Child is This?”*



We be - lieve in God al - might - y, Au - thor of all things that be.
 We be - lieve that Je - sus suf - fered, scourged and scorned and cru - ci - fied;
 We be - lieve in God's own Spir - it, bond - ing all the saints with - in



Mak - er of the earth and heav - ens, Keep - er of the sky and sea.
 tak - en from the cross, was bur - ied, True Life there had tru - ly died.
 one church cath - o - lic, one church ho - ly, where for - give - ness frees from sin;



We be - lieve in God's Son, Je - sus, now for us both Lord and Christ,
 We be - lieve that on the third day Christ was raised up from the grave,
 in the bod - y's res - ur - rec - tion, for the break - ing of death's chain



of the Spir - it and of Mar - y born to bring a - bun - dant life.
 then as - cend - ed to God's righ - t hand. He will come to judge and save.
 gives the life that's ev - er - last - ing. This the faith that we have claimed.

Tune *Greensleeves*; Words: Sylvia G. Duristan (1955-1993)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION *The names of those for whom we pray can be found in the back of this bulletin. The response to “Hear us, O God,” is “Your mercy is great.”*

PEACE *The assembly is invited to share a greeting of God’s peace with one another.*

*Following **the Peace**, you may be seated for a few moments*

*Should you wish to leave an **offering** today...*

*for **St. Mark**: your offering may be placed in the **wooden box** on the table near the baptismal font.*

*For **St. George’s**: your offering may be placed in the **gold offering plate** on the table near the baptismal font*

OFFERING PRAYER *Please STAND*

Assistant: Let us pray. God of abundance, receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. **Amen.**

OFFERTORY “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear” **ELW 282 vs. 1**

**It came up-on the mid-night clear, that glo-rious song of old,
from an-gels bend-ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav’n’s all - gra-cious king.”
The world in sol-emn still-ness lay to hear the an-gels sing.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING *(Tune: “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”)*

The Lord be wi-th you.

And with you.

Lift u-p your hea-rts to pray.

We lift them u-p unto the Lord, for we thank Go-d this day.

For at the bir-th of time your Word brought li-ght into- our strife.

And now the Word breaks through the dark, takes on our hu-man life.

Still through the clo-ven skies they come

with pea-ceful wi-ngs unfurled,

and still their heav-en-ly mu-sic floats

o’er all the wea-ry world.

Above its sa-d and low-ly plains

they be-nd on hov-‘ring wing,

and ev-er o’er its ba-bel sounds

the bless-ed an-gels sing.

The night before he died, our Lord had sup-per wi-th his friends.

He broke the bre-ad and took the cup, and giving tha-nks he said:

“This is my bo-dy bro-ken; this cu-p, my blo-od for you;

And when you eat rememb’ring me, forgiveness flo-ws to you.”

THE LORD'S PRAYER *traditional*

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 TO COMMUNION

Glory to God in the highest! Come to the table of peace.

LAMB OF GOD (*Tune: "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"*)

O Lamb of Go-d, you ta-ke away the si-n of a-ll the world;

O Lamb of Go-d, you take away the sin of a-ll the world;

Have mercy o-n us, Lamb of God, and gi-ve your peo-ple peace.

Have mercy o-n us, Lamb of God, and give the wo-rld your peace

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION *Please SIT*

Communion is open to everyone. In this sacrament, we believe that Christ is truly present in the bread and wine. At this service, communion will be served from around the altar rail. At the usher's direction, please come forward and kneel at the altar rail.

- ✘ *After receiving the bread, you may take an individual cup or drink from the chalice.*
- ✘ *You may return to your seat after communing.*
- ✘ *Those who do not wish to commune may come forward for a blessing. Please cross your arms over your chest to indicate this preference.*
- ✘ *Reception of the Eucharist under one kind (bread or wine) is valid communion for those who must avoid If you are unable to go to the altar for communion, please notify an usher or the pastor, so that communion may be brought to you in your pew.*



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COMMUNION HYMNS

“Away in a Manger”

ELW 278



1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for his bed,
 2 The cat - tle are low - ing; the ba - by a - wakes,
 3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask you to stay



the lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down his sweet head;
 but lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing he makes.
 close by me for - ev - er and love me, I pray.



the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
 I love you, Lord Je - sus; look down from the sky
 Bless all the dear chil - dren in your ten - der care



the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
 and stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is night.
 and fit us for heav - en, to live with you there.

“In the Bleak Midwinter”

ELW 294



1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,
 2 Heav - en can - not hold him, nor . . . earth sus - tain;
 3 What . . . can I give him, poor . . . as I am?



earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
 heav'n and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign;
 If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb;



snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
 in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed
 if I were a wise . . . man I would do my part;



in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.
 the Lord . . . God al - might - y, Je - sus Christ.
 yet what I can I give him— give my heart.

TABLE BLESSING *after the distribution* **Please STAND**

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

CANTICLE AFTER COMMUNION “**Good Christian Friends, Rejoice**” **ELW 288 v. 2**



Good Christ - ian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;



now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!



He has o - pened hea-ven's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.



Christ was born for th - is! Christ was born for this!

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Assistant: Let us pray. God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

God bless you and keep you, Jesus grant you grace and truth, and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts – Father, +Son, and Holy Spirit - now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

“Joy to the World”

ELW 267

**1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing. →**

**2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**3 No more let sin and sorrow grow
nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.**

**4 He rules the world with truth and grace
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders. wonders of his love.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISMISSAL

Christ the Savior is born! Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

MINISTERS OF THE LITURGY

Presider: The Rev. Brian M. Robison + **Assisting Minister:** Greg Martens

Lector: Kathy Rothgangel & Terry Paeltz + **Crucifer:** TBD + **Livestream Camera:** Mike Murakami

Chalice Bearer: David Buckley + **Safety Volunteer:** Melanie Robison + **Acolyte:** Eliza and Katie Kammann

Ushers: Mark Bearth & St. George's + **Organist:** Evelyn Duncan

NEWS & NOTES FOR DECEMBER 31, 2023

THE WEEK AHEAD

- Monday 1/1:** *Offices Closed for New Year's Day*
- Weds. 1/3:** 10:30AM Joint Use Taskforce - Conference Room
- Thurs. 1/4:** 6:15PM Bell Choir Rehearsal (*St. Mark*)
7:15PM Voice Choir Rehearsal (*St. Mark*)
- Sat. 1/6:** 6:00PM SHINE Contemporary Worship for Epiphany - Chapel

SHARE THE WARMTH Project

Inspired by Phillip's Wish in the movie *5000 Blankets*, our collection of **GENTLY USED or new blankets, hats, mittens, gloves, scarfs** for the homeless in our community will run thru January 31.

The collection bin in the Narthex/Canterbury Room has overflowed several times and we are almost to our 125-blanket goal!

As of December 14, the following donations had been received:



101 blankets; 99 hats/ear covers; 68 pairs of gloves; 43 neck scarves/mufflers; 72 pairs of socks

Donations have been distributed to:

St. George/St. Mark Food Pantry; Union United Methodist Church homeless program; Belleville Christian Center; Moms on a Mission in Dupo; Violence Prevention Center of Southwestern Illinois



Check your closets to see how many blankets you have that will help keep our homeless a little warmer this winter! A collection can be in the Narthex.

Do you or someone you know have the talent of knitting and/or crocheting? FREE yarn is available to anyone (member or non-member) to make hats, mittens, gloves, scarves for this project. Contact Peggy Anderson 618 791-0992 for your FREE yarn.



Neighborhood Watch Opportunity for St. Mark & St. George's

The Joint Safety Committee has identified a neighborhood need our churches might be able to help with. St. George's has begun the process of organizing a Neighborhood Watch (NW) program, and they have invited St. Mark to participate. Beyond wanting to be helpful to the neighborhood, we have our own interest in neighborhood safety and health. Organizational leadership, facility support, and hosting quarterly meetings are just a few of the ways our churches could support a NW program. Anyone interested in serving to implement this endeavor, please contact Mark Bearth, mark.bearth@gmail.com.



Diaper Drive for Epiphany!

As the Wise Men brought gifts to the baby Jesus, we will celebrate Epiphany with a Diaper Drive for little ones in need in our community.

Our Epiphany Diaper Drive will run January 7 through 14. Items collected will be donated to The Pregnancy Care Center of Belleville, Fontabella Maternity Home in O'Fallon and other local organizations.

Diapers sizes 4 through 7 and pullups sizes 2T and 3T are most needed. Open packages will be accepted. **Unopened packages of diaper wipes and diaper rash cream are also welcome.**

Realizing diapers are expensive, members are encouraged to join together on purchases or provide monetary donations to Sherri Foppe or Ann Martens. Donations may also be made electronically at <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-YT91/campaign/C-14EWR> through January 15th.

SHINE Worship Next Saturday

Join us for less-formal worship with guitar accompaniment led by combined musical talents from St. Mark and St. George's next **Saturday, January 6 at 6:00PM** in the chapel! **Let your light SHINE forth on the feast of the Epiphany!**



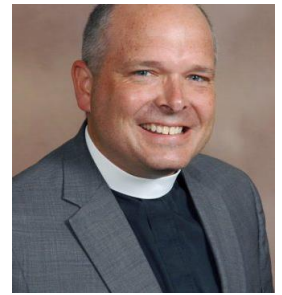
St. Mark Offerings for 12/24 (Advent 4): General Fund: **\$3,039.11** (incl. online offerings received by 12/29); Food Pantry: \$115; Coffee Fund: \$25; Muller Landscaping Fund: \$101; Fiber Arts: \$101; Grounds/Property Maintenance: \$101; Sunday Morning Coffee/Kitchen: \$48

Christmas Eve Offerings will be reported in the January 7 Mark Times.

A Word to Christmas by Bishop Busboom

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all" (Titus 2:11).

Some of you may have heard the story of the parents who overheard their young child praying the Lord's Prayer before she went to bed around this time of year. "Forgive us our Christmases," she prayed, "as we forgive those who *Christmas* against us" (source unknown). How very cute and poignant all at the same time. Indeed, we Christians are not immune from the temptation to let the hustle and bustle of Christmas get in the way of its true meaning.



The author of the New Testament book of Titus cuts to the chase when it comes to describing the true meaning of Christmas. "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all" (2:11). And, a few verses later, "[Jesus Christ] it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds" (2:14). In Jesus, God's grace has been made real, accessible to all. This grace that is ours in Jesus frees us to live transformed lives, lives that no longer are centered around ourselves, but rather around our neighbors, *all* our neighbors. Is not this transforming grace of God made real in Jesus and lived out through our relationships with others the true meaning of Christmas? Are you beginning to see the truth in that little girl's prayer?

Christmas — the celebration of the grace of God appearing for all in Jesus — holds the promise to transform how we live our lives. And it holds the promise to transform our churches.

How can we sing "calls you one and calls you all to gain the everlasting hall" and still be more consumed with excluding those we judge to be either "too conservative" or "too liberal" rather than sharing the good news that, in Jesus, the grace of God has indeed appeared to all as the Bible teaches? "Forgive us our Christmases as we forgive those who Christmas against us."

How can we sing "peace on earth and mercy mild" and yet be silent in the face of unjust wars and indiscriminate violence? "Forgive us our Christmases as we forgive those who Christmas against us."

How can we sing "bless all the dear children in your tender care" and yet ignore the children in our own communities who are suffering from poverty, abuse, and neglect? "Forgive us our Christmases as we forgive those who Christmas against us."

How can we sing "cast out our sin, and enter in" and still not see *all* God's children, regardless of the color of their skin or the language they speak, as having been created in God's own image? "Forgive us our Christmases as we forgive those who Christmas against us."

In light of our constant need for God's forgiveness, even at Christmas, the good news of Christmas and always, is that in Jesus, God's grace has appeared to all, including us. After all, it is this grace, not our human effort or will, that transforms us. As we celebrate Christmas this year, may God's grace transform you. May God's grace transform your congregation. And may all the world come to see, in and through how we live our lives, the transforming power of God's grace at work in the world, even today.

Bishop Greg Busboom

Bishop Greg G. Busboom, Central/Southern Illinois Synod

ST. MARK PRAYER INTENTIONS

Members: Eleanor Benton, Dave Brauer, Rick Crosby, Gary Dozier, Evelyn Duncan, Mary Hill, Bruce Martens, Dwight Ness, Mae Newsome, Kim Palmer, Sandra Purdy, Marilyn Robinson, Larry Shurtleff, Carol Weshinskey, Gary Weshinskey, & Barb Wurdinger

Family & Friends: Dennis Althardt, Stellamarie Bearth, Phyllis Booker, Kathy Boxdorfer, Jim Braeutigam, Patty Brennecke, Susan Carson, Dorothy Cheek, Christine, Catherine Davis, Brian Dinges, Mike Ellison, Katrina Fenner, Taiylar Foppe, Josh Gansmann, Christine Gass, Viv Gillespie, Joni Giordano, David Graber, Stephanie Groennert, TC Groennert, Jamie House, Debbie Jacobs, Donna Koudelka, Austin Lickenbrock, Becky Loeschner, Elroy Luffman, Wyatt Madison, Allen Martens, Christopher Martiszus, Glenda Martiszus, Bobby & Joyce McCall, Pr. Ron & Debbie Neustadt, Dean Norrenberns, Theresa Painter, Hilda Parnell, Tim & Missy Partelow, Debbie & Larry Powers, Michelle Rideout, Darrell Robinson, Sarah and Family, Dave Schaaf, Jill Schlueter, Stefanie Schroeder, David & Donna Sims, Margie Snep, Ingrid Thompson, Kris Whitley, Louise Wilson, Elisabeth Woodrome, Karen Woolf, Wilma Woolf, Ken Zika, Chloe Zipperer

Happy belated birthday to Jamie Perry (12/23) and David Crosby (12/23)

For those celebrating birthdays this week: Letitia Downen (1/3)

For those mourning the loss of loved ones: Richard Boxdorfer (12/27) and Mary Alice Stackel (12/27) (family of Al & Mary Boxdorfer)

St. George's Prayers and Petitions

Parishioners: Joan Barnes, Liz Briesacher, Joe Bono, Marilyn Boschert, Margaret Brown, Mickey Cattaneo, Barbara Gates, Marilyn Gillen, Nolan Haefner, Susan Fellner, Mary Vivian Gillispie, Ken Gottschall, Bradley Harmon, Heather Holden, Judy Jacobs, Kevin Korte, Charles Laedlein, Mike Ledden, Betty Massey, Mary Mohrman, Kathy Parsons, Frank Rogers, The Rev. Cindy Sever, Jim Stelling, Liz Stelling, Elaine Thebus, Duffy Walters, David Welch, Claudia Zimmermann;

Family & Friends: The Auth Family, P.J. Barnett, Helen Blackburn, The Most Rev. Michael Curry, Father Gary Dalmasso, Alex Dieterle, Hunter Dunn, Mike Gross, The Very Rev. Andrew S. Hook, Jennifer Huggins, Adam Jones, Robert Laedlein, Brenda Lee LaMonte, Kim Levick, Diane Lordan, Ann Lowe, Carol Ludwick, Evelyn Marquardt, Jean O'Neal, Mary Ann Steinkamp, Sue Tarbell, Anita Thomas, Sharon Underwood, Darrell Weigand, Jane Williams, Anne, Jessica, Kim

For those in service of our country: Joshua Arbogast, Sean Arbogast, Neal Ballas, Jeff Boschert, Jena Breckon, Douglas DiCenso, Steven Gates, Daniel Gearhart, Kenneth Gearhart, Dustin Kelley, Dan Kitchell, Eric Lunan, Jacob Marler, Ryan Marler, David Moses, Creighton Worley;

For those celebrating birthdays: Pat Ledden, Marilyn Boschert (31), Vimal Buckley, Cindy Lynk (Jan. 6);

The Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God, and in loving memory of **Carl Jacob Klein** and all infant children to whom God has granted abundant entrance into His heaven.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUES.	WEDS.	THURSDAY	FRI.	SATURDAY
	1 <i>Office Closed for New Year's Day</i> 	2	3 10:30AM Joint Use Taskforce	4 6:15PM Bell Choir 7:15PM Voice Choir	5 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	6 6:00PM SHINE Worship The Epiphany of Our Lord 
7 The Baptism of Our Lord 9:00AM The Divine Liturgy 10:30AM Coffee & Fellowship	8 9:00AM H&W Meeting-CR	9	10	11 1:30PM Evangelism meeting—CR 6:15PM Bell Choir 7:15PM Voice Choir	12 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	13
14 Second Sunday after Epiphany 9:00AM The Divine Liturgy 10:20AM Coffee & Fellowship 10:30AM Confirmation 10:30AM Adult Forum: <i>"The House of Peter?"</i> by Pr. Brian	15 <i>Office Closed for MLK Day</i> 2:30PM Fiber Arts @ Westfield Manor	16 5:30P Food Pantry Meeting	17	18 6:15PM Bell Choir 7:15PM Voice Choir	19 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	20
21 Third Sunday after Epiphany 9:00AM The Divine Liturgy 10:20AM Coffee & Fellowship 10:30AM Confirmation	22 6:00PM Pastoral Care Committee 7:00PM Church Council Mtg.	23	24	25 6:15PM Bell Choir 7:15PM Voice Choir	26 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	27
28 Fourth Sunday after Epiphany/ 9:00AM The Divine Liturgy 10:20AM Coffee & Fellowship 10:30AM Confirmation	29	30	31			

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January 2024

Date	Assistant Minister	Lector	Crucifer	Chalice Bearer	Camera Operator	Usher	Safety Volunteer	Coffee Hour
Jan. 7	Danielle T.	Charlie D.	Rex R.	Mike M.	Mike M.	Frank D. & Jason M.	Cathie S.	Team 1
Jan. 14	Sherri F.	Aaron F.	Frank D.	Tom P.	Greg M.	Rick Crosby & Rex R.	Missy K.	Team 2
Jan. 21	Charlie D.	Curtis D.	Keith K.	Mike M.	Aaron F.	Danielle T. & Curt G.	Jan R.	Team 3
Jan. 28	Greg G.	Missy K.	Greg M.	Greg M.	Melanie R.	Kathy C. & Nancy G.	Mark B.	Team 4



Leticia D.	1/3	Diane M.	1/7	Mike F.	1/7
Peggy A.	1/9	Devin K.	1/10	Steve B.	1/12
Jerry S.	1/17	Rex R.	1/18	Julie V.	1/23
Laurie G.	1/24	Natalie O.	1/31		



happy anniversary
Terry & Nancy T. 1/25

