

ST. MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH

A congregation of the
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
welcomes you!

December 22,
2024



The Fourth
Sunday of
Advent

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

SATURDAY

“SHINE” CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP: 6:00 PM (*1st Saturdays - Chapel*)

SUNDAY

THE DIVINE LITURGY: 9:00AM

in-person & streaming

EDUCATION & FELLOWSHIP HOUR: 10:30 AM

105 EAST “D” STREET BELLEVILLE, IL 62220

PHONE: 618.233.9809

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WEBSITE: WWW.STMARKBELLEVILLE.ORG

The Reverend Brian M. Robison, Pastor

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 for assistance.

PRELUDE

“Prelude on Es ist eine Ros”

by C. Penfield

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS *Please STAND as you are able*

Blessed be the one God who is alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon - Father, +Son, and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Please KNEEL or remain as you are

God of mercy, **we confess that we have sinned. We trust earthly powers and human authority alone. We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.**

God of might, we confess that we have sinned. We have turned away from our neighbors. We have trusted false promises.

God in our midst, we confess that we have sinned. We plead: come to us. Bring your mercy to birth in us.

A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of God through + Christ Jesus, whose day draws near. **Amen.**

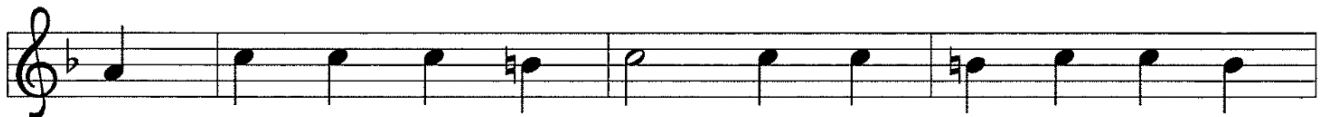
GATHERING HYMN *Please STAND* **“Hail to the Lord’s Anointed”** **ELW 311**



1 Hail to the Lord’s a - noint - ed, great Da - vid’s great - er Son!
2 You come with res - cue speed - y to those who suf - fer wrong,
3 You shall come down like show - ers up - on the fruit - ful earth;
4 Kings shall fall down be - fore you, and gold and in - cense bring;



Hail, in the time ap - point - ed, your reign on earth be - gun!
to help the poor and need - y, and bid the weak be strong;
love, joy, and hope, like flow - ers, spring in your path to birth.
all na - tions shall a - dore you. your praise all peo - ple sing.



You come to break op - pres - sion, to set the cap - tive
to give them songs for sigh - ing, their dark - ness turn to
Be - fore you on the moun - tains shall peace, the her - ald,
To you shall prayer un - ceas - ing and dai - ly vows as -



free, to take a - way trans - gres - sion and
 light, whose souls, con - demned and dy - ing, are
 go; and righ - teous - ness in foun - tains from
 cend; your king - dom still in - creas - ing, a



rule in eq - ui - ty.
 pre - cious in your sight.
 hill to val - ley flow.
 king - dom with out end.

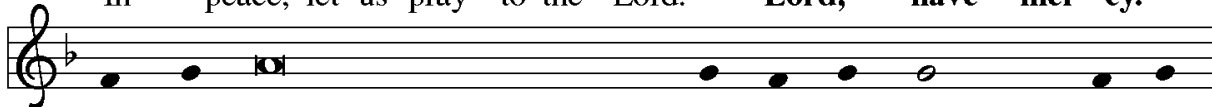
GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

KYRIE



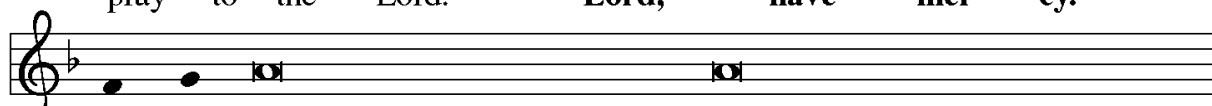
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



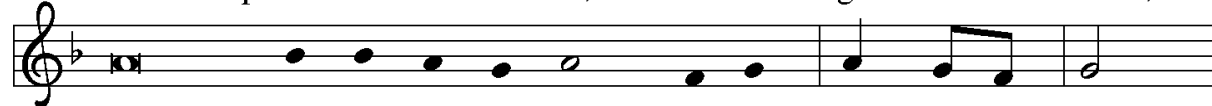
For the peace from above, and for our sal - va - tion, let us



pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



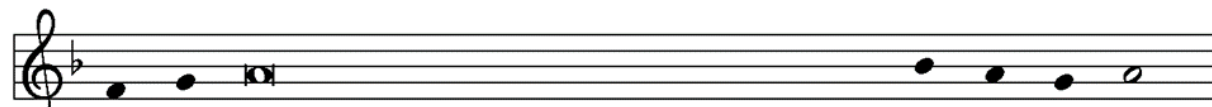
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



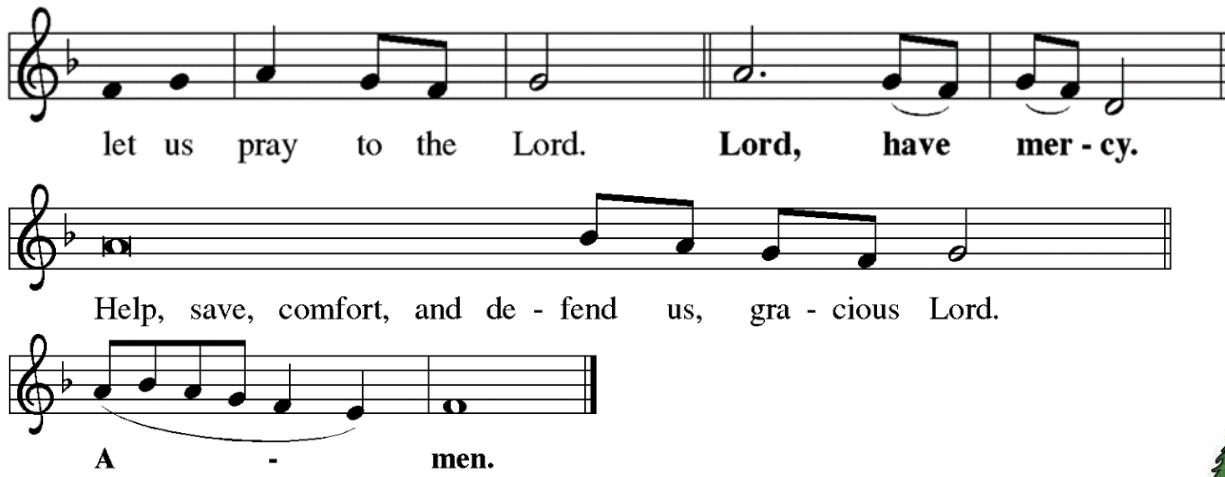
and for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer-cy.
 Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra-cious Lord.
 A - men.



LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

We praise you, O God, for this wheel of time that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, open our eyes to see your presence in the lowly ones of this earth. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may sing of your advent among us in the Word made flesh. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

“Light One Candle”

ELW 240 vs. 4



4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
 He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray... Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Following the prayer, please SIT.

WORD

FIRST 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;

^{5a}and he shall be the one of peace.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALMODY: Luke 1:46b-55 *spoken responsively by half-verse*

^{46b}My soul proclaims the greatness | of the Lord,

⁴⁷**my spirit rejoices in | God my Savior,**

⁴⁸for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your | lowly servant.

From this day all generations will | call me blessed:

⁴⁹you, the Almighty, have done great | things for me

and holy | is your name.

⁵⁰You have mercy on | those who fear you,

from generation to | generation.

⁵¹You have shown strength | with your arm

and scattered the proud in | their conceit,

⁵²casting down the mighty | from their thrones

and lifting | up the lowly.

⁵³You have filled the hungry | with good things

and sent the rich | away empty.

⁵⁴You have come to the aid of your | servant Israel,

to remember the prom- | ise of mercy,

⁵⁵the promise made | to our forebears,

to Abraham and his chil- | dren forever.

ALLELUIA VERSE *The assembly STANDS to welcome the gospel.*



GOSPEL: Luke 1:39-45

A reading from the Holy Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as recorded by the evangelist Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.** *Please SIT*

SERMON

"Recognizing God"

The Rev. Brian M. Robison

HYMN OF THE DAY "Unexpected and Mysterious" ELW 293 *Tune: Beach Spring*



1 Un - ex - pect - ed and mys - ter - i - ous is the gen - tle word of grace.
2 In a mo - men - tar - y me - et - ing of e - ter - ni - ty and time,
3 We are called to pon - der mys - t'ry and a - wait the com - ing Christ,



Ev - er - lov - ing and sus - tain - ing is the peace of God's em - brace.
Mar - y learned that she would car - ry both the mor - tal and div - ine.
to em - bod - y God's com - pas - sion for each fra - gile hu - man life.



If we fal - ter in our cour - age and we doubt what we - have known,
Then she learned of God's com - pas - sion, of E - liz - a - beth's great joy,
God is with us in our long - ing to bring heal - ing to - the earth.



God is faith - ful to con - sole us as a moth - er tends her own.
and she ran to greet the wo - man who would re - cog - nize her boy.
while we watch with joy and won - der for the prom - ised Sav - ior's birth.

APOSTLES CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION *The names of those for whom we pray aloud (members, staff, first-time additions) are listed below. Please read only the first names. Other prayer intentions can be found in the back of this bulletin. The response to "Lord, in your mercy," is "Hear our prayer"...*

**Eleanor Benton, Toni Brendel, Kathy Casey, Gary Dozier, Evelyn Duncan, Ivan Kohlmeier,
Bruce Martens, Dwight Ness, Mae Newsome, Kim Palmer, Tina Partelow,
Marilyn Robinson, Larry Shurtleff, Cohen Summers, & Carol Weshinsky.**

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*

OFFERING *Should you wish to leave an offering today, it may be placed in the wooden box on the table near the baptismal font at any point during or after the service.*

OFFERTORY *"The Holly and the Ivy"*

Arr. by Cormier St. Mark Chancel Choir

OFFERING PRAYER

Assistant: Let us pray together... **Creator God, you made the whole world, even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us. We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine. Strengthen us with this food that we may live in expectation for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

OFFERTORY

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

ELW 257 v. 1

**O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here until the son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to you O, Israel.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING (*Chanted to the tune of “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”*)

The Lord be with you **and also with you.**

Lift up your hearts, **we lift them to the Lord.**

We give our thanks to God our Lord

It’s right to give our thanks and praise.

Rejoice! Rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to you O, Israel.

It’s right to praise God every time and place, through Jesus, promised gift of grace, whose advent sets God’s people free; with all creation we sing joyfully:

Rejoice! Rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to you O, Israel.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (*tune: O Come, O Come Emmanuel*)

Oh, holy, holy, holy Lord,

the God of power and God of might.

Your glory fills the heaven and earth;

Hosanna in the highest!

Rejoice! Rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to you O, Israel.

Lord Jesus took and blessed & broke the bread;

“My body given in love for you,” he said.

“This cup binds you in covenant with me;

Thus be forgiven and remember me!

Rejoice! Rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to you O, Israel.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

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

God feeds us with tender mercy. Come to the table.

LAMB OF GOD (tune: *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*) Please SIT

Oh, Jesus, wisdom, our Emmanuel,
you take away the si-n of the world.

Have mercy on us La-mb of God;

Have mercy on us, gra-nt us your peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice, Emmanuel, Shall come to you O, Israel.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

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 either for health reasons.*
- ✘ *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.*

“Lo’ How a Rose E’er Blooming”

ELW 272



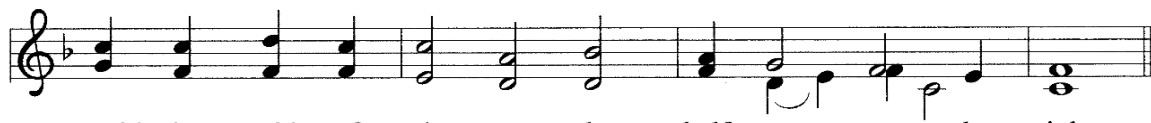
1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem hath
2 I - sai - ah had fore - told it, the rose I have in
3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the
4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt our hu - man



sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as
mind; with Mar - y we be - hold it, the
air, dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the
woe; O Sav - ior, king of glo - ry, who



seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, a -
vir - gin moth - er kind. To show God's love a - right, she
dark-ness ev - 'ry - where. True man, yet ver - y God, from
dost our weak - ness know: bring us at length, we pray, to



mid the cold of win - ter, when half - spent was the night.
bore to us a Sav - ior, when half - spent was the night.
sin and death he saves us and light - ens ev - 'ry load.
the bright courts of heav - en and in - to end - less day.

“The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came”

ELW 265

**1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
with wings as drifted snow, with eyes
as flame:**

**"All hail to thee, O lowly maiden
Mary, most highly favored lady,"
Gloria!**

**2 "For know a blessed Mother thou
shalt be, all generations laud and
honor thee;
thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers
foretold,
most highly favored lady." Gloria!**

**3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her
head; "To me be as it pleaseth God,"
she said,**

**"My soul shall laud and magnify
God's holy name."
Most highly favored lady, Gloria!**

**4 Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was
born in Bethlehem all on a Christmas
morn,
and Christian folk throughout the
world will ever say:
"Most highly favored lady." Gloria!**

After the distribution is complete, please STAND as you are able for the blessing.

TABLE BLESSING

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

CANTICLE AFTER COMMUNION “O Lord, Now Let Your Servant” ELW 313 v. 1

1 O Lord, now let your ser - vant de - part in heav'n-ly peace,
for I have seen the glo - ry of your re - deem - ing grace:
a light to lead the na - tions un - to your ho - ly hill,
the glo - ry of your peo - ple, your cho - sen Is - ra - el.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Assistant: Let us pray together... **Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name. Amen.**

BLESSING

God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light, God, our hope for the journey – Father, +Son, and Holy Spirit - bless and keep you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

“Savior of the Nations, Come”

ELW 263



- 1 Sav - ior of the na - tions, come; vir - gin's son, make here your home.
- 2 Not by hu - man flesh and blood, but the mys - tic Breath of God,
- 3 Won - drous birth—oh, won - drous child— from his throne, a vir - gin mild!
- 4 From God's heart the Sav - ior speeds, back to God his path - way leads;



Mar - vel now, O heav'n and earth: God has cho - sen such a birth.
was the Word of God made flesh, fruit of wom - an, blos - som fresh.
Ver - y God, and Mar - y's son, ea - ger now his race to run!
out to van - quish death's com - mand, back to reign at God's right hand.

- 5 Now your manger, shining bright,
hallows night with newborn light.
Night cannot this light subdue;
let our faith shine ever new.
- 6 Praise we sing to Christ the Lord,
virgin's son, incarnate Word!
To the holy Trinity
praise we sing eternally!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISMISSAL Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

“My Dancing Day”

Arranged by J. Biery

MINISTERS OF THE LITURGY

Presider & Preacher: The Rev. Brian M. Robison + **Assisting Minister:** Sherri Foppe

Crucifer: Keith Kniepkamp + **Lector:** Curtis Dowty + **Chalice Bearer:** Greg Martens

Tech Minister: Aaron F. + **Ushers:** Kathy Casey & Nancy Guenther + **Safety Volunteer:** Melanie R.

Prayer Intentions

St. Mark Members

Eleanor Benton, Toni Brendel, Kathy Casey, Gary Dozier, Evelyn Duncan, Ivan Kohlmeier, Bruce Martens, Dwight Ness, Mae Newsome, Kim Palmer, Tina Partelow, Marilyn Robinson, Larry Shurtleff, Cohen Summers, & Carol Weshinsky

St. Mark Family and Friends

Dennis Althardt, Stellamarie Bearth, Bonnie Baete, Phyllis Booker, Kathy Boxdorfer, Thomas Boxdorfer, Jim Braeutigam, Patty Brennecke, Doug Carpenter, Susan Carson, Christine, Arianna Curnes, Catherine Davis, Marilyn Dichsen, Mike Ellison, Katrina Fenner, Josh Gansmann, Marge Gardner, Christine Gass, Viv Gillespie, Joni Giordano, David Graber, Stephanie Groennert, TC Groennert, Jamie House, Debbie Jacobs, Jimmy Jurgens, Austin Lickenbrock, Donna Lesche, Becky Loeschner, Wyatt Madison, Christopher Martiszus, Glenda Martiszus, Bobby & Joyce McCall, Allen Martens, Janet Middendorf, Pr. Ron & Debbie Neustadt, Dean Norrenberns, Theresa Painter, Hilda Parnell, Tim & Missy Partelow, Debbie & Larry Powers, Darrell Robinson, Sarah and Family, Dave Schaaf, Jill Schlueter, Becky Schnitzius, Stefanie Schroeder, David & Donna Sims, Margie Snep, Ingrid Thompson, Bob Vaughn, David Vaught, Toni Walston, Louise Wilson, Margie Wilson, Sue Witherell, Karen Woolf, Wilma Woolf, Jeanie Workman, Ken Zika, Chloe Zipperer

Members and Friends Serving in Our Nation's Military

Taiylar Foppe Merrel & Josh Merrel, Ryan McKenzie

Members Celebrating Birthdays This Week

Ash Robinson (12/22), David Crosby (12/23), Melaina Robison (12/23), Jamie Perry (12/23), Curt Gansmann (12/26), Danielle Tribout (12/26), Leah Richards (12/26), Marilyn Robinson (12/27), Linda Ness (12/28), and Brianna Kilzer (12/28)

St. Mark Staff

Pastor: The Rev. Brian M. Robison

Administrative Assistant: Randi Cardoza + **Music Director:** Carol Kugler

Organist: Evelyn Duncan + **Parish Nurse:** Becky Schnitzius

Land Acknowledgement

St. Mark Lutheran Church is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the **Quapaw**, **Myaamia**, **Kaskaskia**, and **Kickapoo** peoples, and we give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor all our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.

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MARK TIMES

NEWS and NOTES for December 22, 2024

This Week at St. Mark:

Monday, Dec. 23:	9:00AM	Christmas decorating – Church & chapel
Tuesday, Dec. 24:	7:00PM	Festival liturgy for Christmas Eve
Wednesday, Dec. 25:	10:00AM	Liturgy for Christmas Day (with St. George's)
<i>December 25 & 26:</i>		<i>Offices closed</i>



Decorating Day Upcoming!

We will **finish decorating for Christmas** at **9:00AM** on **Monday, December 23**. This is a joint effort by the altar guilds of St Mark and St George, but **ALL** are encouraged to come and help! Many hands make work light!

Today's Adult Forum – St. Nicholas, Part 2

Today's Adult Forum will feature the second half of the video documentary, *St. Nicholas – The Real Story*, led by Dr. Mark Wilson, one of the lecturers at the Bible and Archaeology Fest that Pastor Brian attended.



Christmas Schedule

FESTIVAL CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

Tuesday, December 24, 7:00PM

CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP

Wednesday, December 25, 10:00AM

Joint service with St. George's Episcopal Church

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

Sunday, December 29, 10:00AM

Joint service of Lessons & Carols with St. George's Episcopal Church

Special Time!

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

Sunday, January 5, 2025, 9:00AM

THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

Monday, January 6, 6:00PM

Joint service with St. George's Episcopal Church

Presiding Bishop Eaton's Christmas Message



In her Christmas message, ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton calls our attention to the word "joy" in the angel's proclamation to the shepherds. "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of a great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11). Eaton reminds us that the message of Christmas is **joy**, not happiness. Happiness is transient and humanmade. But joy given by God is deep and strong and unshakable. "Joy is a sign of the reign of God...Perhaps that is why in the middle of the night, to terrified shepherds, outside of a small town, God chose to send the angels to announce the birth of Jesus. No distraction. No interference. Just the simple, deep, profound gift of true and lasting joy." Watch the video message here: <https://bit.ly/3D9ULKc>

Making a Joyful Noise unto the Lord!

On Sunday, December 8, a wonderful group shared the joy of Christmas with residents of local care facilities, including some of our own church members. We visited Colonnade Senior Living in O'Fallon, Charter Senior Living and Mercy Rehab and Care in Swansea, and Freeburg Care Facility. The residents made our visit even better by singing along to their favorite Christmas songs.



Interested in Yoga at St. Mark?

Formal classes will be held for 45 minutes on Thursday evenings at 6:15PM beginning on January 2, 2025 in the Parish Hall. A donation of \$5.00 is asked for each session. Please bring your own mat and water bottle for classes.

Practicing yoga can help with body flexibility, strength, mobility, and balance. It also requires you to shift into a more relaxed state, which can help decrease stress, increase focus, and promote a stronger connection with yourself. You can't ask for a more pose-ative experience!

Angel Tree Project and more!

THANK YOU to everyone who participated in St. George's and St. Mark joint Angel Tree Project Christmas Drive through Lutheran Child & Family Services this year. Our faith communities generously provided gifts for **over 70 children!**

In addition to all the gifts donated by members, three (3) Thrivent Action Team grants provided a total of \$750 for gifts. A small portion of St. Mark's monetary donations were used to purchase gently worn coats and sweatshirts for Franklin School students in need. A special monetary donation was designated for new socks and leggings for the Franklin School students. Pictures are worth a thousand words so here's a few to show the amazing project results! Additional pictures are on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall.



St. Mark Offerings for 12/15: General Fund: \$7,253.65; Food Pantry: \$2,331.77