

MARK TIMES

NEWS and NOTES for December 21, 2025

Monday, December 22:	1:00PM	Caroling at Westfield
Tuesday, December 23:	10:00AM	Christmas Decorating
Wednesday, December 24:	7:00PM	Christmas Eve Divine Liturgy
Thursday, December 25:	10:00AM	Christmas Day Liturgy with St. George's
December 25 & 26:	<i>Church Offices Closed</i>	

Adult Forum: *What was the Star of Bethlehem?*

For the past 2,000 years, people have wondered about the identity and nature of the **Star of Bethlehem**. And for hundreds of years, some of the world's smartest people have tried to use science to find the answer. However, no matter which astronomical phenomenon is suggested, there is one *massive* problem: **Nearly all modern science-based solutions ignore how ancient people thought about and examined the sky.** During today's Adult Forum, we'll look at some of the suggestions and explore how the ancients – including the Magi – may have interpreted what they actually saw.

Cleaning & Decorating Days

We will finish decorating for Christmas at **10:00AM** on **Tuesday, December 23**. This is a joint effort by the altar guilds of St Mark and St George's, but ALL are encouraged to come and help!



Winterizing Worship

While always a **last resort**, it is possible that severe conditions plus insufficient time for road treatments might lead to the cancelling of a Sunday morning service. If this happens, we will make every effort to communicate the cancellation of church to you.

We will utilize **six different modes of communication** in an attempt to contact you: we will send an “**email blast**,” Pastor will send **text messages** to everyone whose number he has in his phone or in the directory; we will put a cancellation message on the **church voicemail** and on the **church website**; our church will be put on the **KMOV (Channel 4), KSDK (Channel 5) & KTVI (Channel 2) church cancellation lists**; the notice will be on our **Facebook** page a couple of times; and we will send out an automated “**RoboCall**” with the cancellation announcement. **If we can't reach you in one of these ways, then your contact information with the church probably needs to be updated.** Please contact the office to do so.

Communication may be the greatest challenge in canceling worship, but there is another challenge that is right behind it. **The loss of a Sunday worship also means the loss of a Sunday's income.** If church is cancelled or you simply decide not to risk travel, please consider making your next Sunday offering “a double,” or give a little more over subsequent weeks to offset that loss. Electronic giving is also an option.

Thank you for your consideration and understanding!

Christmas Schedule

FESTIVAL CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

Wednesday, December 24, 7:00PM



CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP

Thursday, December 25, 10:00AM

Joint service with St. George's Episcopal Church

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

Sunday, December 28, 10:00AM

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

Special
Time!

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

Sunday, January 4, 2026, 9:00AM

THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

Tuesday, January 6, 2026 10:00AM

Joint service with St. George's in the chapel

PLEASE use your code for the chapel door; do NOT unlock it with a key or using the bar!

The Wednesday before Thanksgiving, St. George's choir members departing after rehearsal found the chapel door to have been unlocked at some point during the evening. Since both choirs were rehearsing that night, we want to strongly emphasize to our folks that the doors should NEVER be unlocked with a key or by securing the crash bar *unless* a worship service is being held in the chapel. Doing so at any other time creates a safety risk to anyone using the building while expecting the door to be secure.

NEW ALSO, when you leave the chapel, please make sure the door is secure. The door mechanism has been glitchy and sometimes does not reengage. Turn the handle and pull on the door; if it opens, then be sure the handle is in the correct (horizontal) position and close the door back. That *should* reengage the locking mechanism. Turn the handle and pull on the door; if it opens, share the information with someone and do all you can to secure the door.

Presiding Bishop Curry's Christmas Message

In his Christmas message to the church, Bishop Yehiel Curry delivers a children's sermon, describing the night when Jesus was born. "One silent night, far away in a town called Bethlehem, the stars twinkled brighter than ever. And the angels were there too. It was as if the whole sky was whispering: 'Something wonderful is happening.'"

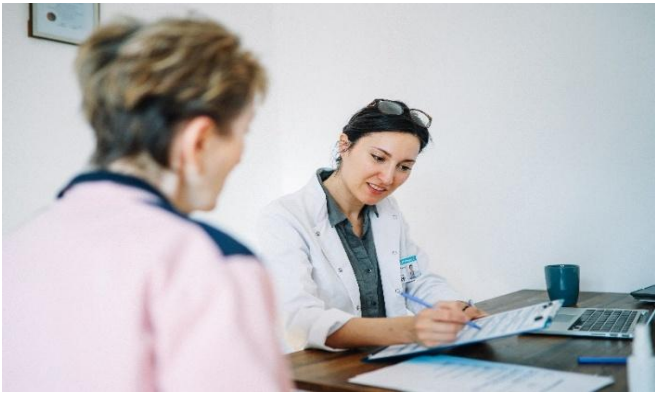
Curry emphasizes that "whispers make us stop, listen and pay attention" and reminds us that, this Christmas, we should listen closely because "the heavens are still whispering: 'Jesus is here. God loves you. Share that love with the world.'"

We thank the children, pastors and staff of Ascension Lutheran Church in Waukesha, Wis. and Hephatha Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, for their participation in the recording of this Christmas message.

Download the video: <https://bit.ly/4pLBBqL>

Read the message: <https://resources.elca.org/wp-content...>

Offerings (12/14): General Fund: \$7,257.78; Staff Gift: \$285; Angel Tree: \$232.28;
Christmas Flowers: \$20; Thrivent Choice: \$75



**St Mark Lutheran Church
Parish Nurse Corner
Rebecca Schnitzius RN
December 2025**

Influenza Vaccinations

In December, we typically observe Influenza Vaccination Week. This serves as a reminder to inform everyone that it is not too late to get a flu vaccine. Flu season typically peaks between December and February but can last into Spring. The importance of this reminder is to help prevent severe flu-related illness, hospitalizations, and especially deaths.

The flu vaccine protects vulnerable groups such as young children (infants under six months, young children, adults 65+, pregnant people, and those with chronic conditions like diabetes, heart disease, or lung disease who are at higher risk. The vaccine protects the community by shielding people who cannot get the shot, such as infants or immunocompromised individuals. Even if the vaccine doesn't prevent infection entirely, it lessens symptoms and lowers the chance of serious complications.

The symptoms of influenza are usually sudden-onset. The symptoms that are usually seen first are tiredness, fever, aches, and chills. At the first signs of the flu, contact your physician and he may give you an antiviral medication to help fight the disease. If you do get the flu, please stay home to prevent spreading it to the more vulnerable populations.

The peak hospitalization rate is predicted to be high again this year because of an influenza strain with severe outcomes and lower rates of immunization due to a lot of misinformation and disinformation being spoken about regarding immunizations in general.

As long as influenza is circulating in the population, it is not too late to get the flu vaccine. Remember, it takes about two weeks for the vaccine to become effective, so the sooner you get it, the more protection you will have.

Handwashing Awareness

Handwashing is such a simple act, but it's one of the most powerful tools we have for staying healthy.

Why Handwashing Matters

- Removes germs, bacteria, and viruses that can spread illness.
- Prevents foodborne diseases when preparing or eating meals.
- Protects vulnerable groups like children, the elderly, and those with weaker immune systems.
- Reduces the spread of respiratory infections (like colds, flu, and COVID-19).

Proper Handwashing Steps

1. Wet hands with clean, running water (warm or cold).
2. Apply soap and lather well.
3. Scrub thoroughly for at least 20 seconds:
 - Palms
 - Backs of hands
 - Between fingers
 - Under nails
 - Thumbs
 - Wrists
4. Rinse under clean, running water.
5. Dry with a clean towel or air dry.
6. A fun tip: singing "*Happy Birthday*" twice takes about 20 seconds, the perfect timing guide.

Key Times to Wash Hands

- Before eating or preparing food
- After using the bathroom
- After coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose
- After touching garbage
- After handling pets or cleaning up after them
- When coming home from public places