

# Second Sunday of Advent

December 8, 2024

8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist (in-person and live-streamed)



**St. Mark's Episcopal Church**  
134 N. Division Ave  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
[www.stmarksgr.org](http://www.stmarksgr.org)  
616.456.1684

## Welcome to St. Mark's!

... a vibrant community of faith, which has gathered for worship since 1836 and in the current building since 1848. If this is your first visit with us, know that we are delighted you are here. Please, introduce yourself and be sure to sign our guest sign-in sheet in the foyer and/or fill-out a Visitor's Welcome Card. Also, please take a welcome folder on the Welcome Desk.

**Church Office Hours: Monday—Thursday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday— 9 a.m. to noon.**

**Weather Policy:** St. Mark's will post closures to WZZM 13, WOOD TV8, Facebook and our website by 7:00 a.m. or as soon as possible. The decision on afternoon and evening activities will be made separately, posted by noon.

**Reserved Accessible Spaces:** Note, there are three designated spaces for those with assistive devices or in need of extra space, two in the north transept and one on the north side of the nave. Please, leave those spaces available and the adjoining pews for family members.

**Safety:** The outer doors to the Parish House will be locked fifteen minutes after Services begin with a security guard on duty to be of assistance. Upon leaving a restroom, please wash hands with warm soapy water and sanitize. Please, pay attention to the nearest exit in the Sanctuary. An announcement will be made in case of an emergency. Children will be ushered out of the building to a designated place for safety away from the Church complex.

**Parking on Sundays:** Limited parking is available in the Parish Lot. If you are able, please, consider not parking in the Parish Lot to reserve access for those less mobile. Consider the free metered parking on Pearl, Ionia, Lyon, Fountain and other streets near the church, the Kendall Lot across the street when the gate is up, the upper levels of the GRCC building on Fountain Street (only until 2 p.m.), and the Ellis Parking Lot at 210 Ionia just west of Lyon Street. For the Ellis Lot: vouchers for free parking on Sundays are available from an Usher, a Greeter or on the Resource Table in the north transept (must be used along with original parking ticket).

**Rest Rooms** are located on the main level of the Parish House under the exit sign at the top of the Foyer ramp. Additional rest rooms are located on the second level of the Parish House; those able to use stairs are encouraged to use upper-floor restrooms.

**Weekly Worship and Prayer at St. Mark's:** Eucharist on Sundays at 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Midweek Eucharist on Wednesdays at noon from September through May. Compline (Night Prayer) on Mondays at 8:00 p.m. via Facebook live. All are always welcome!

**Children's Ministry:** Sundays, we offer children's formation during 10:30 services. This includes formation, nursery care and church school. For more information please contact Jeff Brown, Director of Faith Formation, at [jeffb@stmarksgr.org](mailto:jeffb@stmarksgr.org).

**Youth Ministry: Grand Rapids Episcopal Youth:** G.R.E.Y. is a joint youth ministry between St. Mark's and St. Andrew's Episcopal Churches for youth in grades 6-12. We have regular formation gatherings during the school year and service as well as social activities throughout the year. Please contact our Director of Faith Formation, Jeff Brown, for more information: [jeffatgrey@gmail.com](mailto:jeffatgrey@gmail.com).

**Adult Formation Ministry:** *Adult Forums* are offered on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings at different times of the year. *Episcopal 101: An Inquirer's Journey* is offered yearly for adults especially those seeking Confirmation, Reception into the Episcopal Church or to Reaffirm one's faith. A multi-year seminar, *Education for Ministry* (EFM), is offered during the program year. Please, contact Doug Karsen for more information at [karsencd@gmail.com](mailto:karsencd@gmail.com).

**Breakfast Café Ministry:** A program to nourish our neighbors with a hot meal, is at 8:15 a.m. every Saturday. If you would like more information and to possibly volunteer, please contact Judy Freeman at [judyfw@comcast.net](mailto:judyfw@comcast.net).

**Land Acknowledgment:** St. Mark's recognizes that our property sits on land of the indigenous people of the Three Fires. It is our privilege to occupy this land while recognizing and acknowledging with sadness the deep wounds created many years ago by our forebears.

St. Mark's eNews: For the fullest expression of St. Marks' activities, see the weekly eNews in your email or our website.

Cell Phones: We ask that you silence your cell phone; if you are on call, please turn it to vibrate when you enter the church.

### St. Mark's Full-Time\* and Part-Time Staff

The Rev. David Blank, Interim Rector\*  
The Rev. Jan Gockerman, Deacon

Pam Stevenson, Finance Manager\*  
Kate Assarian, Administrative Associate\*  
Dr. Gregory Crowell, Director of Music  
Jeff Brown, Director of Faith Formation\*  
Alexis VanZalen, Organ Scholar

Mike Armour, Operations Manager  
Ronnie Hammond, Sexton  
Craig Mosley, Sexton Associate, Video  
Marquice Jackson, Weekend Sexton  
Jamie Interrial, Security Representative  
Eric Gable, Webmaster

## The Gathering of God's People

**The Prelude** — The Advent of Our King

Raymond Haan

**Welcome and Greeting** — *Lector I*

**Introit** — Christ Is Coming

Edward Bonnemere

**Gathering Hymn** — Blue Hymnal 56, vv. 1-4: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Veni, veni, Emmanuel

**Welcome and Invitation to a Holy Advent** (*You may stand.*)

*Presider:* †Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

*People:* **And blessed be God's reign, now and forever. Amen.**

*Presider:* Advent, a season of waiting and preparation, celebrates the coming of our Savior and the promised salvation for God's people. This time of waiting is also a time for us to work for peace and justice. It is a time for us to consider our priorities as we walk in the light that God gives us. During Advent, we celebrate Christ's coming by lighting the candles of our Advent wreath to remind us of the hope Christ brings to the world and God's unbroken love for us.

*Presider:* Stir up your power, O Christ, and come,

*People:* **That by your protection we may be rescued from darkness and saved by your mighty deliverance.**

*Presider:* Today, as we light the second Advent candle, we are reminded that the flickering of the flame reminds us that our waiting is a time of both contemplation and action. (*The second Advent candle is lit.*)

*Presider:* Let us pray together.

*People:* **Dear God, through your Spirit you spoke to the Prophets, and the people prayed and waited for a Messiah to come. Through your Spirit, speak to each of us that we may feel your presence and know your desire for us in our Advent waiting. Amen.**

Peo - ple, look East. The time is near of the crown - ing of the  
year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble, trim the hearth and set the  
ta - ble. Peo-ple, look East and sing to - day: Love, the guest is on the way.

### Collect of the Day

*Deacon:* God be with you.

*All:* **And also with you.**

*Deacon:* Let us pray.

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

# The Liturgy of the Word

## The First Reading

*Malachi 3:1-4*

*Lector I:* A Reading from the Prophet Malachi.

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight-- indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

*Lector I:* Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's People.

*All:* **Thanks be to God.**

## Canticle 16 — The Song of Zechariah

*Benedictus Dominus Deus*

*(Prayed responsively by half verse at 8 a.m.; Antiphon intoned by the choir and repeated by all at 10:30 a.m.)*



In the ten-der com-pas-sion of God the dawn from on high shall break up-on us.

*Luke I: 68-79*

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; \*  
**he has come to his people and set them free.**

He has raised up for us a mighty savior, \*  
**born of the house of his servant David.**

*Antiphon*

Through his holy prophets he promised of old,  
that he would save us from our enemies, \*  
**from the hands of all who hate us.**

He promised to show mercy to our fathers \*  
**and to remember his holy covenant.**

*Antiphon*

This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham, \*  
**to set us free from the hands of our enemies,**

Free to worship him without fear, \*  
**holy and righteous in his sight**  
**all the days of our life.**

*Antiphon*

You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, \*  
**for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,**

To give his people knowledge of salvation \*  
**by the forgiveness of their sins.**

*Antiphon*

In the tender compassion of our God \*  
**the dawn from on high shall break upon us,**

To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, \*  
**and to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

*Antiphon*

## The Second Reading

*Philippians 1:3-11*

*Lector II:* A reading from Paul's Letter to the Philippians.

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

*Lector II:* Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's People.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**The Gospel Hymn — Blue Hymnal No. 76 vv. 1-3: On Jordan's Banks** (*continue after Gospel*) *Winchester New*

**The Gospel** (*You may stand.*)

*Luke 3:1-6*

*Deacon:* The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

**All: Glory to you, O Christ.**

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

*Deacon:* The Gospel of Christ.

**All: Praise to you, O Christ.**

**The Gospel Hymn** (*continued*) — **Blue Hymnal No. 76 vv. 4-5: On Jordan's Banks**

*Winchester New*

**The Homily**

*The Rev. David Blank, Interim Rector*

**The Nicene Creed**

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## **Prayers of the People** (*You may stand.*)

*Lector I:* We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons: Sean, Presiding Bishop; Skip, our Assisting Bishop; Bonnie and Rayford, Bishops of Michigan and Northern Michigan; Moises, Bishop of the Dominican Republic and Craig, ELCA Bishop of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod; Diocesan Staff of the Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes. We remember the Province of the Episcopal Church of Sudan. We pray:

**All: That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.**

*Lector II:* \*God of many names, God beyond all names; the beginning and the end of every story, the meaning of every life; infinite Mystery both hidden and revealed: We pray:

**All: O God, hear us.**

*Lector I:* Blessed are you who join us together in the communion of Christ's Body. Renew and energize your holy Church here at St. Mark's and throughout the world, that we may be a resurrection people, manifesting your steadfast love in our common life of praise and service. We pray: **O God, hear us.**

*Lector II:* O Perfect Wisdom, direct and rule the hearts of the leaders and shapers of society, raise up prophets of justice and peace, and empower your people for the holy vocation of repairing the world. May we entrust all our labors to the work of Providence. We pray: **O God, hear us.**

*Lector I:* O Deliverer, you unlock every door and make a way where there is no way. Set free all who are afflicted or distressed in body, mind or spirit. Resurrect their hope, grant them peace and refreshment, and restore their joy. We pray: **O God, hear us.**

*Lector II:* O Compassionate One, hold us in your mercy: heal the sick especially those for whom we have promised to pray, mend the broken, protect the vulnerable, shelter the refugee, strengthen the weary, rescue the lost, and give courage to all who struggle. We pray: **O God, hear us.**

*Lector I:* O Desire of every heart, the answer to our longing: You are the strong force which draws us into the mystery of love divine. Lead us ever deeper into your Way. Bless those who have died and those who mourn their passing. We pray: O God, hear us.

*Lector II:* God who has come, God who does come, God who is yet to come: Make us ready and alert to welcome and receive you in the stranger, the loving act, the moment of grace, the presence of healing, the birth of possibility, the gift of wonder. Let every heart prepare you room. We pray: **O God, hear us.**

*Lector I:* We pray for our congregation, vestry, staff and search committee during this time of transition. We pray for direction and a call for St. Mark's next rector. We pray: **O God, hear us.**

*Lector II:* For what else, or whom else, shall we pray? (*Pause.*) We pray: **O God, hear us.**

*Deacon:* O Emmanuel, God-with-us, you show us the face of divinity and reveal the fullness of our humanity. Come: renew your creation, restore us all in Christ, and enable us to become your faithful and loving people. We pray in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

*\*Adapted: [www.episcopalcafe.com](http://www.episcopalcafe.com)*

## **The Peace**

*Presider:* The peace of Christ be with you always.

**All: And also with you.**

*Presider:* Let us offer one another a sign of that peace.

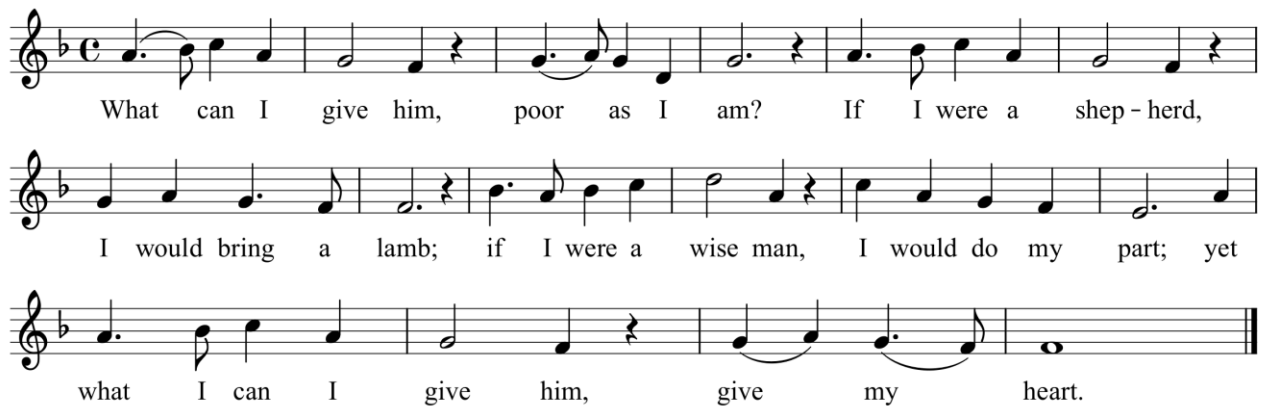
## **Announcements**

**Offertory Music** — Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

*Ralph Prime*

**Presentation Hymn** (*Spoken at 8 a.m. and sung at 10:30 a.m.*)

*Gustav Holst*



What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shep-herd,  
I would bring a lamb; if I were a wise man, I would do my part; yet  
what I can I give him, give my heart.

**The Liturgy of the Table**

**The Invitation**

BCP, Church of England, Eucharistic Prayer E

*Presider:* The Lord be with you.

*All:* **And also with you.**

*Presider:* Lift up your hearts.

*All:* **We lift them to the Lord.**

*Presider:* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

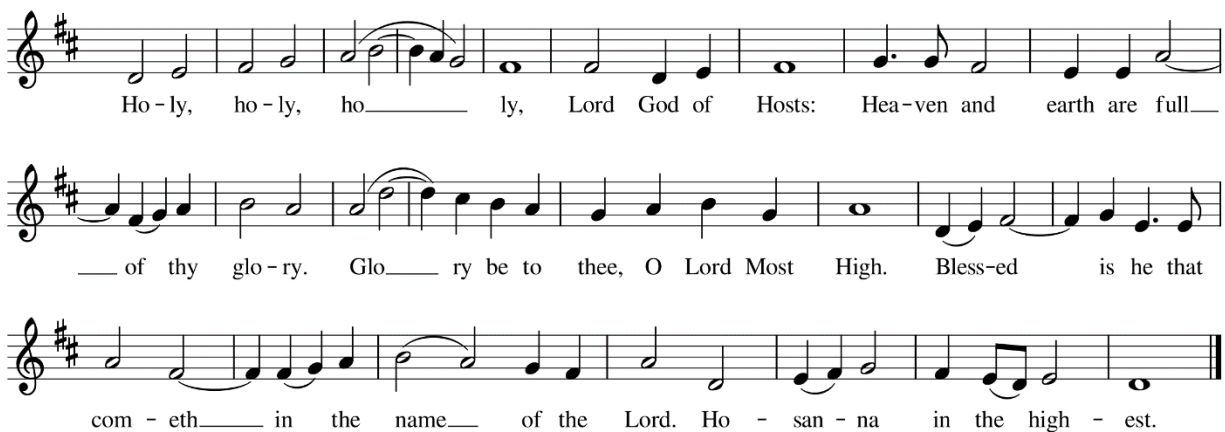
*All:* **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

*Presider:* O God, we give you thanks because when Jesus humbled himself to come among us in human flesh, he fulfilled the plan you formed long ago and opened for us the way of salvation.

So now, we watch for the day, knowing that the salvation promised us will be ours when Christ will come again in glory. And so, we gladly thank you with St. Mark and all saints and angels praising you, and as we pray:

**Sanctus**

*Healey Willan*



Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly, Lord God of Hosts: Hea-ven and earth are full—  
— of thy glo-ry. Glo-ry be to thee, O Lord Most High. Bless-ed is he that  
com-eth in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high-est.

*Presider:* We praise and bless you, loving Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; and as we obey his command, † send your Holy Spirit, upon these gifts that broken bread and wine outpoured may be for us † the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died, Jesus had supper with his friends, and, taking bread, he praised you. He broke the bread, gave it to them and said: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended, he took the cup of wine. Again, he praised you, gave it to them and said: Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did, in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross. Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation, we proclaim his death and resurrection until he comes in glory:

**All: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

*Presider:* God of all life, help us to work together for that day when your kingdom comes and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth. †Look with favor on your people. Gather us in your loving arms and bring us with St. Mark and all the saints to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory are yours, O loving Father, for ever and ever.



### The Lord's Prayer

*Presider:* Please pray the Lord's Prayer in whichever language or version you prefer.

(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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

(Contemporary) **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

(Spanish) **Padre nuestro, que estas en el cielo, santificado sea tu nombre; venga a nosotros tu reino, hágase tu voluntad, en la tierra como en el cielo, danos hoy nuestro pan de cada día, perdona nuestras ofensas, como también nosotros perdonamos a los que nos ofenden, no nos dejes caer en la tentación y libranos del mal. Porque tuyo es el reino, el poder, y la gloria por los siglos de los siglos. Amen.**

### The Breaking of the Bread and the Reception of the Sacrament *(Spoken at 8 a.m.)*

*Healey Willan*

The image shows a musical score for a hymn in 3/2 time, key of D major. The lyrics are: "O Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the sins of the world, have mer-cy up-on us. O Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the sins of the world, have mer-cy up-on us. O Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the sins of the world, grant us thy peace." The score consists of five staves of music with lyrics written below. The key signature changes from one sharp (D major) to two sharps (F# major) in the final line.



*Presider:* The gifts of God for the people of God.

**All: Let us take them in remembrance that Christ died for us and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.**

**Instruction for Receiving Communion:** *All are invited to receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist, bread and wine, the Body and Blood of Jesus. Following the distribution of bread, please feel free to dip your host into the cup. Gluten-free bread is available upon request. If you prefer to receive a blessing, come forward with hands crossed over your chest. Please follow the Ushers' direction to the communion rail and fill in from right to left. All are welcome at the Table of the Lord.*

**Healing Prayer:** *When present in the South Transept, healing ministers offer a brief and simple prayer.*

### **The Distribution of the Sacrament**

*Eucharistic Minister:* The body and blood of Christ.

**All: Amen.**

### **Communion Hymn — Blue Hymnal No. 67: Comfort, Comfort Ye My People**

*Psalm 42*

**Post-communion Prayer** (*Please stand as you are able.*)

*Deacon or Presider:* Let us pray together:

**All: Loving God, we give you thanks for restoring us in your image and nourishing us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood. Now send us forth a people, forgiven, healed, renewed; that we may proclaim your love to the world and continue in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.**

### **The Blessing**

*Presider:* Life is short, and we do not have much time to gladden the hearts of those who make the journey with us. So, be swift to love and make haste to be kind. And the blessing of the †God who made us, who loves us, and who travels with us be with us now and forevermore we pray. **Amen.**

**The Hymn of Sending Forth — Blue Hymnal No. 53: Once He Came in Blessing** *Gottes Sohn ist kommen*

### **The Sending Forth**

*Deacon:* Friends in Christ, let us go forth to love and serve God and all God's people. Alleluia. Alleluia.

**All: Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Alleluia.**

**The Postlude — Magnificat**

*J.E. Kindermann*

*Thank you for being with us today. We are all invited to participate in the St. Mark's tradition to remain seated until the postlude has ended and the candles are extinguished. Then join us in the Parish Hall for further fellowship. The 10:30 a.m. Service is live-streamed on Facebook and YouTube and can be found at [stmarksgr.org](http://stmarksgr.org) and on YouTube.*

## **Church Spotlight** Sacred Sounds at St. Mark's presents Lessons and Carols, December 15<sup>th</sup>

**4:30 p.m.** Informal caroling, cocoa and lighting of the patio Christmas tree

**5:00 p.m.** Performance

**6:00 p.m.** Special reception

## The St. Mark's Prayer List

*Contact the church office to add names to the prayer list. Names may be removed after one month unless requested.*

### The Sick and Other Needs

Alissa Almont      Sue Allen  
 Dave Atkinson     Susan Andrews  
 Jayne Austin       Nita DeGraaf  
 Barb Balsler       John Gracki  
 Bill Bellinger      Mary Rollins  
 Sally Bowie         Irene Savara  
 Ed Cox               Roma Warmington  
 Terry Dusendang   Jean Zylstra  
 Ruth Hammond  
 Alena Kirova  
 Kathryn Marmion  
 Laura Maslonka  
 Jackie McCarthy  
 Chris McClain  
 Carmela McIntire  
 Bill Nasser  
 Ed Nicholson  
 Bea Rocco  
 Javier Ronquillo  
 Dan Scripsema  
 Meghan  
 VanderMale  
 Roger York

### In Military Service

B.G. Timothy Brower, Sr. USA  
 PV2. Cailen Donahue McLea, USA  
 Spc. Henry Dykema, ARNG  
 Cpt. Nathan Gaggin, USAF  
 Col. Lt. Gabriel Monsalvo, USMC  
 Col. Todd Murray, USAF  
 2LT. John Nicholson, USA

### Members of the Vestry

Dawn Buller, Sr. Warden  
 Judy Freeman, Jr. Warden  
 Brian Topolewski, Clerk  
 Gloria Lara, Treasurer  
 Jon Anderson  
 Ben Busman  
 Laura Kozminski  
 Emily Krueger  
 Penny Larsen  
 Dan McDonald  
 Carmela McIntire

Amy Richards-Duncan

### Search Committee

Bob Brower  
 Doug Busman  
 Nancy Dodge  
 Karen Hunter  
 Carmela McIntire  
 Shawn Miller  
 Heather Tafel  
 Darren Walhof  
 Jackie Yam

### Postulant for Holy Orders

Thon Deng  
 Cathy Stevens

## Offerings and Multiple Ways to Give to St. Mark's

Place check or cash in the offering plate

Electronic giving (email [pams@stmarksgr.org](mailto:pams@stmarksgr.org))



Vanco Mobile App from any mobile device:

Pay by text - text 616-205-9714 from your phone to send a payment

Mobile App Square Cash - Cashtag: \$stmarksgr Web address: [cash.me/\\$stmarksgr](https://cash.me/$stmarksgr)



Mail a check to the church

Online at our website at [www.stmarksgr.org](http://www.stmarksgr.org) through PayPal

Remember St. Mark's in your estate planning (A brochure is available at the Welcome Desk.)

Gifts or transfer of stock

## Parish Notes

**Welcome!** Guests, please sign the book in the front lobby. Fill out a Welcome Card (in the lobby podium) to get name tags, receive weekly eNews or officially join the St. Mark's Family in Faith.

**Ingathering "Thank You!"** A big thank you to the congregation for your generous outpouring of food for the Downtown Food Pantry. It was astounding! Thanks so much! ~Outreach Ministry

**Adult Formation, Sundays at 9:15 a.m.:** Join Father Dave in December for a four-week course discussing the seasons, assigned readings, feast days, holy days and commemorations. *Did you know the Church year begins today, on the First Sunday of Advent? When did blue become the color of Advent (not purple)? What is an epiphany? How many principal feasts are in the Church year? Why does the date for Easter change every year? Why do the colors change on the altar, lectern and pulpit?* Come learn about the Church.

**Cats at Civic Theater, Today, 2:00 p.m.** Enjoy the refreshments at Social Hour then walk over.

**Sandy Hook Memorial, Today, 4:30 p.m.:** The work of Moms Demand Action began after the 2012 school shooting in Sandy Hook, Connecticut, when 26 children and educators died. Each year we remember those and all lost to gun violence with a December vigil. Please join us in the St. Mark's Sanctuary as we remember our "why" and work toward a future free from gun violence. The event lasts just under an hour, including a 15-20 minute silent candlelit walk to Rosa Parks Circle and back.

**Compassionate Friends, Today, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.** Anyone grieving the loss of a child may find comfort in this annual gathering of the Compassionate Friends support group held in the Social Hall.

**Mitten Tree:** Donations of mittens, gloves, hats and socks may be placed on the tree in the Sanctuary until December 22nd. Help us make the tree beautiful by filling it with these much-needed items for our downtown neighbors, to be distributed at Breakfast Cafe. ~Outreach Ministry

**Building Planning Update:** Large size renderings and comment cards are available in the Social Hall.

**'Love God, Love God's World':** Join this exploration of creation care, every other Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.: December 18; January 8, 22; and February 5, 19. Contact Rich, hiskesr@gvsu.edu for materials.

**Blue Christmas, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m.** in St. Mary's Chapel followed by a simple soup supper. This season is not a time for joy for everyone. "Blue" Christmas is a time when we can, with others, reflect on the pain, the loneliness, and the sadness you may feel and offer it to God for healing and transformation. We pray you will find hope and comfort knowing that you are loved and not alone.

**Cookie Walk, December 15<sup>th</sup>, after the 10:30 a.m. Service:** St. Mark's annual Cookie Walk is back as part of our December festivities! Please sign up on the sheet at the Welcome Desk indicating how many dozen cookies you will bring. Bakers are invited to bring their cookies to the kitchen before the Service. Following the Service, all may purchase an assortment of cookies for \$5 per quart-size bag. Funds will go towards summer camp scholarships. Cash, check and Cash App accepted. Reach out to Jeff, jeffatgrey@gmail.com, Anne, aarmour5@gmail.com, or Michelle, michellesorrelle@gmail.com.

**Vestry Person of the Day:** Bring your questions or ideas to the Welcome Desk after Services!