

St. Mark's United Methodist Church

601 Eighth Street | Laurel, Maryland 20707

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“We come together at St. Mark’s to praise God, celebrate His love for us, and grow together in Christ by equipping the people of God to implement and spread His Word to the world.”

Rev. Eugene W. Matthews, Pastor

443.257.2730 | reveugene@comcast.net

Rev. Dr. George F. DeFord, Pastor Emeritus

Bishop LaTrelle Millet Easterling

Baltimore/Washington Conference

Rev. Sarah Schlieckert

District Superintendent

for the Southern Annapolis Region



Welcome, as we gather here to worship!

Sunday, March 5, 2023

Women History Month

Second Sunday in Lent

Ushers:

Gemma Desouza-Ottley and Sharon Thomas

Order of Service

Brother Charles Gregg, Worship Leader

Prelude Rev. Henry Tindel

Lighting of the Candles Usher

Gathering Song..... St. Mark's Choir/Congregation

“Sweet, Sweet Spirit”

There's a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place, and I know that it's the spirit of the Lord; There are sweet expressions on each face, and I know they feel the presence of the Lord. Sweet holy Spirit, sweet heavenly Dove, stay right here with us filling us with your love; and for these blessings we lift our hearts in praise; without a doubt we'll know that we have been revived when we shall leave this place.

Greeting/Call to Worship Brother Charles Gregg

Leader: Lent is a season of traveling with God!

People: A time of feeling God's presence in new ways.

Leader: This is a season we have been asking how to deal with life's questions.

People We have been reminded that we do not travel alone.

Leader: This is a season we have heard the call of God to new ways.

People: This is a season of being made new as people of God.

ALL: This is a season of traveling with God and having our questions answered.

Hymn of Praise Choir / Congregation

“I Am Thine, O Lord”

1. I am thine, O Lord, I have heard thy voice,
and it told thy love to me;
but I long to rise in the arms of faith
and be closer drawn to thee.

Refrain:

Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
to the cross where thou hast died.
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
to thy precious, bleeding side.

2. Consecrate me now to thy service, Lord,
by the power of grace divine;
let my soul look up with a steadfast hope,
and my will be lost in thine. ***(Refrain)***
3. O the pure delight of a single hour
that before thy throne I spend,
when I kneel in prayer, and with thee, my God,
I commune as friend with friend! ***(Refrain)***
4. There are depths of love that I cannot know
till I cross the narrow sea;
there are heights of joy that I may not reach
till I rest in peace with thee. ***(Refrain)***

Prayer of Confession and Assurance *(Unison)*

Loving Creator, we are often a confused people. In a world that so often seems to turn in a blur we can get caught up in the craziness of day to day living. We often lose sight of who we really are and where we are going. When this happens, forgive us. When we are tempted to blame others for our missteps, stop us. Intervene in our lives and guide us to renew our lives with you. Assure us that even in those moments when we turn from you, still you seek us out and forgive us.
Amen.

The Invocation..... **Brother Charles Gregg**
Song of Meditation..... **St. Mark's Choir**

The Prayer of Illumination *(In Unison)*

O Lord, pour out on us the spirit and understanding as the scriptures are read today. And may that understanding open our hearts and minds to what it is you are communicating to us this day. In the name of Jesus we pray. **Amen.**

Scripture Reading #1 **Brother Charles Gregg**
(*Exodus 17:1–7, Common English Bible*)

17 The whole Israelite community broke camp and set out from the Sin desert to continue their journey, as the Lord commanded. They set up their camp at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ² The people argued with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.”

Moses said to them, “Why are you arguing with me? Why are you testing the Lord?”

³ But the people were very thirsty for water there, and they complained to Moses, “Why did you bring us out of Egypt to kill us, our children, and our livestock with thirst?”

⁴ So Moses cried out to the Lord, “What should I do with this people? They are getting ready to stone me.”

⁵ The Lord said to Moses, “Go on ahead of the people, and take some of Israel’s elders with you. Take in your hand the shepherd’s rod that you used to strike the Nile River, and go. ⁶ I’ll be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Hit the rock. Water will come out of it, and the people will be able to drink.” Moses did so while Israel’s elders watched. ⁷ He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites argued with and tested the Lord, asking, “Is the Lord really with us or not?”

Scripture Reading #2 **Brother Charles Gregg**
(*Romans 4:1–5, 13–17, Common English Bible*)

4 So what are we going to say? Are we going to find that Abraham is our ancestor on the basis of genealogy? ² Because if Abraham was made righteous because of his actions, he would have had a reason to brag, but not in front of God. ³ What does the scripture say? *Abraham had faith in God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.* ⁴ Workers’ salaries aren’t credited to them on the basis of an employer’s grace but rather on the basis of what they deserve. ⁵ But faith is credited as righteousness to those who don’t work, because they have faith in God who makes the ungodly righteous.

¹³ The promise to Abraham and to his descendants, that he would inherit the world, didn’t come through the Law but through the righteousness that comes from faith. ¹⁴ If they inherit because of the Law, then faith has no effect and the promise has been canceled. ¹⁵ The Law brings about wrath. But when there isn’t any law, there isn’t any violation of the law. ¹⁶ That’s why the inheritance comes through faith, so that it will be on the basis of God’s grace. In that way, the promise is secure for all of Abraham’s descendants, not just for those who are related by Law but also for those who are related by the faith of Abraham, who is the father of all of us. ¹⁷ As it is written: *I have appointed you to be the father of many nations.*^[a] So

Abraham is our father in the eyes of God in whom he had faith, the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that don't exist into existence.

Selection St. Mark's Choir

Acknowledgement of Visitors /

Announcements Brother Charles Gregg

Blessing of the Offering Brother Charles Gregg
Offertory

Scripture Reading #3 (Gospel). Brother Charles Gregg

(John 3:1–17, Common English Bible)

3 There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a Jewish leader. **2** He came to Jesus at night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one could do these miraculous signs that you do unless God is with him.”

3 Jesus answered, “I assure you, unless someone is born anew, it’s not possible to see God’s kingdom.”

4 Nicodemus asked, “How is it possible for an adult to be born? It’s impossible to enter the mother’s womb for a second time and be born, isn’t it?”

5 Jesus answered, “I assure you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, it’s not possible to enter God’s kingdom. **6** Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. **7** Don’t be surprised that I said to you, ‘You must be born anew.’ **8** God’s Spirit blows wherever it wishes. You hear its sound, but you don’t know where it comes from or where it is going. It’s the same with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

9 Nicodemus said, “How are these things possible?”

10 “Jesus answered, “You are a teacher of Israel and you don’t know these things? **11** I assure you that we speak about what we know and testify about what we have seen, but you don’t receive our testimony. **12** If I have told you about earthly things and you don’t believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? **13** No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Human One. **14** Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so must the Human One be lifted up **15** so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. **16** God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won’t perish but will have eternal life. **17** God didn’t send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

The Gloria Patri – “Glory Be to the Father” (Hymnal, #71)

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. **Amen.**

Hymn of Preparation **St. Mark’s Choir**

Inspirational Message **Rev. Eugene W. Matthews**

“Trying to Get to 20/20”

But the people were very thirsty for water there, and they complained to Moses, why did you bring us out of Egypt to kill us, our children, and our livestock with thirst.

Exodus 17:3, Common English Bible

Praise and Prayer Concerns **Rev. Eugene W. Matthews**

Invitation / Altar Call **Rev. Eugene W. Matthews**

Invitation Selection

Holy Communion

Rev. Eugene W. Matthews, Celebrant

The Great Thanksgiving for Early in Lent

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.

You brought all things into being and called them good.

From the dust of the earth you formed us into your image and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

When rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights, you bore up the ark on the waters, saved Noah and his family, and made covenant with every living creature on earth.

When you led your people to Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights, you gave us your commandments and made us your covenant people.

When your people forsook your covenant, your prophet Elijah fasted for forty days and forty nights; and on your holy mountain, he heard your still small voice.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he
who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.

When you gave him to save us from our sin, your Spirit led him into the wilderness, where he fasted forty days and forty nights to prepare for his ministry.

When he suffered and died on a cross for our sin, you raised him to life,
presented him alive to the apostles during forty days, and exalted him at your right hand.

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

Now, when we your people prepare for the yearly feast of Easter, you lead us to repentance for sin and the cleansing of our hearts, that during these forty days of Lent we may be gifted and graced to reaffirm the covenant you made with us through Christ.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving, as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever. **Amen.**

And now, with the confidence of children of God, let us pray

The Lord's Prayer (*sung by choir*)

Breaking the Bread

Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.

The cup over which we give thanks is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

Giving the Bread and Cup

The body of Christ, given for you. Amen.

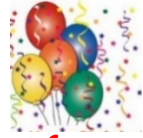
The blood of Christ, given for you. Amen.

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Benediction



Happy Birthday March Members



Birthday

Eli Coffen – 7th
RfYan Stratford – 10th
Adrian Hall – 13th
Barbara Gregg – 14th

Gemma DeSouza-Ottley — 15th
Chantel Ashley – 16th
Vauné Jones — 17th
Rev. Henry Tindal – 18th
Millicent George – 22nd

Anniversary

George & Ernestine Gibson – 10th (61)
Edwin & Gemma Ottley – 14th (4)
Rev. Eugene W. & Mrs. Jane Matthews – 31st (61)



Heavenly Birthdays

Martha Landrum – 14th
Mae Hill – 14th

Rev. John Jennings – 16th
Rev. Shirley Pulley – 20th
Lena Thomas – 25th

Announcements

Reminder from Pastor Matthews: With the new variants of Covid, please remember to wear your mask while you are in the sanctuary.

Worship Attendance — 02/26/2023

In-Person	54
Zoom	13
Total	67

February Average: 63

Pray Daily at Noon

Please remember to pray daily at NOON. Some areas to include in your prayer, can include the pandemic, racial healing, government leaders, educational challenges, and most importantly for our sick and shut-ins and each other.



The **Laurel TV** conducted an interview with **Mr. Gregg** about his **Stamp Collection**. Below is the Youtube link for your viewing:

<https://youtu.be/Szc9nEICGIM>.

Tuesday Women's Roundtable (6:30 p.m.) — Join Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88571184455?pwd=UmpvVERkcjkyVFVoVHR1YlJxK284Zz09>,

Meeting ID: 885 7118 4455; **Passcode:** 459563

One tap mobile: +13017158592, 88571184455#, *459563#

Wednesday Night Experience (7:15 p.m.) — This is our weekly Bible Study, based on the Wednesday reading in Upper Room. **Call in #267.807.9611; Access Code: 331960.**

Thursday, March 9th (7:00 p.m.) — **Choir rehearsal for Men only.**

Sunday March 12th (morning service) — **Annual Men's Day.** Our preacher for the hour will be **Pastor James E. Henson, Jr.** The men are asking for a sacrificial offering of \$100 (men) and \$50 (women).

Saturday, April 22nd (2:00 p.m.) — **“Shout Sister Shout” — Ford Theater, Washington, DC.** Donation: \$90 per person. Need 10 people to get this group rate. Contact Cynthia (301.776.2420). **All money due on Sunday, March 19th.** Please let me know if you would like to go on this outing.



Inspired by Gayle F. Wald's book *Shout, Sister, Shout!*, this new musical tells the story of Sister Rosetta Tharpe—one of America's most influential rock, R&B and gospel crossover singers and guitarists. Ambitious, courageous and uncompromisingly public, Tharpe became a pioneer of the women's movement for racial and sexual equality and musical legend who redefined the national and international music scene in the 1930s and 40s and beyond.

Special Note: Our members, Jerral and Umbrenda Fisher's niece had a fire in the Pennsylvania area and has been displaced with 6 children. Below is a link to a GoFundMe page with her story: [Fundraiser by Mori Barksdale : Recovering from Fire \(gofundme.com\)](#). I'm sure they will appreciate whatever you can do to help.

Sacred Grounds: Free Native Plants! Our Mother's Day Native Plant giveaway has been scheduled for **Sunday, May 14, 2023**. To receive plants, please register online at <https://www.nwf/NativePlantPledge>. If you have questions, please contact Jackie Jones.

Note from Finance: First, let us give a big thank you to all that have been giving. This is a reminder that there are several ways to get your offering to the church:

1. You can drop it off at the church and place it in church mailbox
2. You can mail it to the church (601 Eighth Street, Laurel, MD 20707)
3. You can use on-line giving (Give–St. Marks — <https://www.shelbygiving.com/app/giving/stmarks/md>)

Again, thank you. Just remember, even during the pandemic, the church building still has obligations that need to be met.



*“Proclaiming Christ to the generations...
Equipping disciples to transform the world”*

Special Prayers / Sick and Shut-In List: If you hear of anyone that needs special prayer or is taken to the hospital, please contact: Rev. Eugene Matthews (443.257.2730), reveugene@comcast.net.

Special prayers for Kamille Quick and family, her great grandfather “John Lezama,” passed away suddenly in his apartment on Saturday morning.

Rev. Henry Tindal, Rev. George F. DeFord, Janet Carey, Lafayette Harvey, All branches of the Military, Bernice Jackson, Brenda Jackson, Floyd Hughes Sr., Shawn Settles, Jannette Shuford-Reeves, Chantel Ashley, Beverly Wright, Phillip Reese, Naomi Williams (Ms. Cynthia’s Mom), Leah Henry, Sonja Smith, Marvin Hebron, Francis Desouza (Gemma’s son), Eric Smith, Nena Hughes, Gloria Thomas, Wanda Dumas, Tyrone Mundell, Ernestine Gibson, James Matthews, Birdie Walker, Paul Browder, Lamar Payne, Kevin Miller, Hannah Polk

Eunice Dumas

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