



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

**Special Prayers / Sick and Shut-In List:** If you hear of anyone that is in need of special prayer or is taken to the hospital, please contact: Rev. Eugene Matthews (443.257.2730 (cell), 410.379.0600 (home), [reveugene@comcast.net](mailto:reveugene@comcast.net))

*Condolence to the family of  
Sister Patricia Christine Briggs*

*Celebration of Life*

*Wednesday, September 29, 2021*

*Visitation: 10:00 am | Funeral: 11:00 am*

*Stewart Funeral Home*

*4001 Benning Road, N.E. | Washington, DC 20019*

Mary Taylor (LáAngel’s Mom), Leah Henry, Sonja Smith, Marvin Hebron, Shelford Henry, Francis Desouza (Gemma’s son), Eric Smith, Brian Bailey, Joyce Gibson, Nena Hughes, Gloria Thomas, Jeanette Reeves, Rev. George F. DeFord, Wanda Dumas, Tyrone / Pat Mundell, Joan Moore, Larry Powell, Ernestine Gibson, Mildred Awkward, Grace Elaine Catchings, James Matthews, Birdie Walker, Paul Browder, Phillip Reese, Lamar Payne, Kevin Miller, Nancy Daniels, Hannah Polk

**Eunice Dumas**

1909 Sheffield Court  
Severn, MD 21144  
410.551.2435

**Umbrenda Fisher**

9160 Charlton Place  
Douglasville, GA 39135

**Laura Dotson**

Autumn Lake Healthcare  
9001 Cherry Lane  
Laurel, MD 20707  
301.498.8558

**Ruth Miller**

1206 Peachwood Lane  
Bowie, MD 20716  
240.245.4560

**Edlin Chambers**

14904 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Laurel, MD  
347.423.2764

**St. Mark’s United Methodist Church**

601 Eighth Street | Laurel, Maryland 20707

301.776.8885 | [stmarksfmd@gmail.com](mailto:stmarksfmd@gmail.com)



*“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**

401.379.0600 | 443.257.2710 (cell) | [reveugene@comcast.net](mailto:reveugene@comcast.net)

**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, September 26, 2021*

*Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost*

*Annual Homecoming*

*“God of the Past, God of the Present, and  
God of the Future”*

*Order of Service*

*Sister Erica Roy, Worship Leader*

**Prelude** ..... **Brother Fernando G. Allen, Sr.**

**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**.....**Sister Erica Roy**

**Leader:** Welcome home St. Mark’s.

**People:** **Home is not a building or a place we come.**

**Leader:** Home is not just where we came from.

**People:** **Home is more than people and memories.**

**Leader:** Home is more than sentimentality or tradition.

**People:** **Home is a hug of acceptance.**

# Holiday Food Drive for LARS

LARS will provide holiday meal baskets to over 200 families and seniors in need this holiday season. Please help keep the food pantry full by donating any unwanted food in your own pantry or by filling up a basket for LARS next time you do your grocery shopping. Grocery gift cards can also be donated to LARS families.

### Helpful Holiday Items:

Canned yams  
Cornbread mix  
Cranberry sauce

Gravy  
Instant potatoes  
Cooking Oil

Cake Mix  
Rice  
Box Stuffing ONLY

### Gift cards to your local grocery stores



### Please remember to check expiration dates!

Donations can also be dropped off at LARS  
Mon, Wed, Fri 9-1:30pm & Monday 5-7:00pm

Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services, Inc.  
311 Laurel Avenue  
Laurel, MD 20707  
301-776-0442  
[www.laureladvocacy.org](http://www.laureladvocacy.org)

For more information/ questions on food donations, contact Jazmin Haley-Warren  
301-776-0442 ext. 1032 or [jwarren@laureladvocacy.org](mailto:jwarren@laureladvocacy.org)

For information about LARS’ Holiday Program, contact Karina Valenzuela  
301-776-0442 ext. 1030 or [kvalenzuela@laureladvocacy.org](mailto:kvalenzuela@laureladvocacy.org)

3. You can use on-line giving (Give–St. Marks — <https://www.shelbygiving.com/app/giving/stmarksldm>)
4. Reach out to member of finance, they will try to accommodate you.

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

Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services, Inc.  
2021 Holiday Program

**What is LARS' Holiday Program?**

LARS' Holiday Program is an opportunity for individuals, families, community groups, congregations, and businesses to assist Laurel residents who are in need of support during the upcoming holiday season.

**About the Holiday Program:**

LARS' Holiday Program has three components:

Adopt –A- Family Program: Each family participating in the Adopt-A-Family program will complete a wish list for each child in the home. This wish list will include the child's interests, wants, and needs. Donors can adopt a particular number of children and provide gifts for those children based on the information included on their wish list. We do allow parents to include personal and household needs, but it is up to the donor to decide whether or not they would like to provide anything from that list. The gifts are delivered by the donor to LARS and distributed to the adopted families on our December distribution day.

Giving Week: In order to extend support to as many families as possible, those who are not able to participate in the Adopt-A-Family program are encouraged to visit LARS during Giving Week to receive gifts for their children. In order to make Giving Week happen, we are looking for individuals to provide loose/unwrapped gifts and gift cards. These gifts can include (but are not limited to) books, games, or toys for children birth to 18 years of age. This enables case managers to provide children with gifts suitable for their age/interest.

Holiday Food Help: In November and December, LARS will be providing holiday food to the families participating in LARS' Adopt-A-Family program and to seniors who request holiday food assistance. On the Monday and Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving and during Giving Week, LARS will extend holiday food assistance to as many additional individuals and families in the Laurel community as supplies will allow. Donations of food and grocery store gift cards allow us to provide holiday food to more and more families each year.



**2020 Program Impact:**

This past holiday season, LARS was able to provide gifts to about **395 Children** through the Adopt-A-Family program and through loose gifts and gift cards donated by generous members of the Laurel community and beyond. Over **202 families** and seniors were able to cook a holiday meal, thanks to donations of turkeys, hams, chickens, fresh produce, and other essentials to LARS' food pantry.

**Ways to participate:**

1. Support a family through the Adopt-A-Family program
2. Donate loose gifts & gift cards to be distributed during Giving Week
3. Donate holiday food or gift cards to local grocery stores
4. Volunteer during the holiday season

**Partner with LARS this holiday season!**

In the coming months, Laurel families will be requesting holiday assistance from LARS. Please, consider how you can partner with LARS this holiday season. To sign up or request more information, visit our website and/or complete a quick survey:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe438rRBOdFJlXIS-SuE2VsaWniRfRm\\_KutHXDKISIEvWKDA/view/form?usp=link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe438rRBOdFJlXIS-SuE2VsaWniRfRm_KutHXDKISIEvWKDA/view/form?usp=link)

**Contact:**

Karina Valenzuela, Lead Case Manager  
Phone: (301) 776-0442 Ext. 1030  
Fax: 301-604-7076  
E-mail: [kvalenzuela@laureladvocacy.org](mailto:kvalenzuela@laureladvocacy.org)

**Leader:** Home is the laughter around the table breaking bread.

**People:** Home is seeing where God is leading us.

**All:** Welcome home to St. Mark's UMC, where we are better together. Amen

Hymn of Praise.....St. Mark's Choir/Congregation

*“Amazing Grace”*

1. Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see.
2. ‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved; how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.
3. Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come; ‘tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
4. The Lord has promised good to me, his word my hope secures; he will my shield and portion be, as long as life endures.
5. Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail, and mortal life shall cease, I shall possess, within the veil, a life of joy and peace.
6. When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.

**Homecoming Prayer (Unison)**

O Lord, our God, we gather together on this Homecoming Sunday to give you thanks and praise for your greatness. We praise you for your mighty works in the life of our congregation as well as in the whole world. We know that your power is limitless, your overwhelming healing and your love is never failing and to you we offer thanks and praise. In the name of Jesus our risen Lord we pray. **Amen.**

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

**The Invocation.....Sister Erica Roy**  
**Song of Meditation ..... St. Mark's Choir**

## Special Presentations

### The Prayer of Illumination (*Unison*)

Holy God, Word made flesh, let us come to this word open to being surprised. Silence our agendas; banish our assumptions; cast out our casual detachment. Confound our expectations; clear the cobwebs from our ears; penetrate the corners of our hearts with this word. We know that you can, we pray that you will, and we wait with great anticipation. **Amen.**

**Scripture Reading #1** .....**Sister Erica Roy**  
(*Esther 7:1–6, 9–10; 9:20–22, New King James Version*)

### Haman Hanged Instead of Mordecai

7 So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther. <sup>2</sup> And on the second day, at the banquet of wine, the king again said to Esther, “What *is* your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what *is* your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!”

<sup>3</sup> Then Queen Esther answered and said, “If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. <sup>4</sup> For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. Had we been sold as male and female slaves, I would have held my tongue, although the enemy could never compensate for the king’s loss.”

<sup>5</sup> So King Ahasuerus answered and said to Queen Esther, “Who is he, and where is he, who would dare presume in his heart to do such a thing?”

<sup>6</sup> And Esther said, “The adversary and enemy *is* this wicked Haman!”

So Haman was terrified before the king and queen.

<sup>9</sup> Now Harbonah, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, “Look! The gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke good on the king’s behalf, is standing at the house of Haman.”

Then the king said, “Hang him on it!”

## Announcements

**Pastor’s Hrs.** — Tuesday and Thursday (11:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.)  
**Millicent Hrs.** — Tuesday and Thursday (10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.)

### 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.



“A FRESH START (NOW)” — We desire to have many members as possible active in all the various areas of Ministry.

**Wednesday Night Experience** (7:00 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, September 23<sup>rd</sup>** (7:00 p.m.) — **Choir Rehearsal**

**Monday, September 27<sup>th</sup>** (7:00 p.m.) — **Special Church Conference.** A presentation entitled: “**Sacred Grounds**” — This is an interfaith endeavor relative to planting native plants and flowers at the church and homes. Here is the Zoom information:

<https://nwf-org.zoom.us/j/2027976889>

Meeting ID: 2027976889

One tap mobile  
+16465588656, 2027976889# US  
888.475.4499, 2027976889# US Toll-free

**Monday, October 11<sup>th</sup>** (6:00 p.m.) — **Annual Church Conference** (This will be virtual)

**Sunday, October 17<sup>th</sup>** (10:00 a.m.) — 132<sup>nd</sup> Church Anniversary. Additional information forthcoming.

**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, place in the mailbox (Cynthia and David Burley check it regularly) (**This will save you postage**)
2. You can mail it to the church ([601 Eighth Street, Laurel, MD 20707](#))

*The Rev. Dr. George F. DeFord*  
*Retired Elder of the Baltimore-Washington Conference*  
*The United Methodist Church*

Rev. Dr. George F. DeFord is a native of Baltimore, Maryland. He is the son of the late George B. and Inez J. DeFord and the eldest of six siblings. He is married to Lila A. DeFord, affectionately known, “as his girlfriend and wife, who is one and the same.” Together they are the parents of Andre, Dante, and Christopher, who deceased May 28, 2018. They are also the proud grandparents of Dante, Jr. (D2) and Christopher, Jr. (CJ).

Rev. DeFord benefits from undergraduate and graduate education from Morgan State University, Coppin State University, and Howard University, with Bachelor of Arts, Master of Education, Master of Divinity, and Doctor of Ministry respectively.

Rev. DeFord is in his thirty-eighth year of ordained ministry having served the following congregations and extension ministry: St. Mark’s, Laurel, MD, 11 years; Mount Zion, Baltimore, MD, 3 years; Ebenezer, Washington, DC, 4 years; Metropolitan, Indian Head, MD, 8 years; Regional Guide, Southern Region, 3 years; and Smith Chapel, Pisgah, MD, 8 years.

Rev. DeFord is the founding president of the Morgan State University, Southern Maryland Alumni Chapter, chartered May 2005. From the George DeFord Scholarship Fund, nearly \$80,000 plus have been awarded to first-time awardees and continuing scholars, matriculating at Morgan State University.

Rev. and Mrs. DeFord make their home in Pomfret, Maryland.

Rev. and Mrs. DeFord are COVID-19 survivors. They attribute their recovery to the grace and mercy of Almighty God. Their sustaining verse of Holy Scripture is: “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” (*Isaiah 43:2 KJV*) Thanks be to God!

<sup>10</sup> So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king’s wrath subsided.

**Scripture Reading #2** .....**Sister Erica Roy**  
(*James 5:13-20, New King James Version*)

**Meeting Specific Needs**

<sup>13</sup> Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. <sup>14</sup> Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup> And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup> Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

<sup>17</sup> Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. <sup>18</sup> And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

**Bring Back the Erring One**

<sup>19</sup> Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, <sup>20</sup> let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

**Selection** ..... **St. Mark’s Choir**

**Blessing of the Offering** .....**Sister Erica Roy**  
**Offertory**

**Introduction of Speaker** ..... **Rev. Eugene W. Matthews**

**Scripture Reading #3** .....**Sister Erica Roy**  
(*Mark 9:38–50, New King James Version*)

**Jesus Forbids Sectarianism**

<sup>38</sup> Now John answered Him, saying, “Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us.”

<sup>39</sup> But Jesus said, “Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. <sup>40</sup> For he who is not against us is on our side. <sup>41</sup> For whoever gives you a cup

of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

### **Jesus Warns of Offenses**

<sup>42</sup> “But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea. <sup>43</sup> If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— <sup>44</sup> where

‘Their worm does not die  
And the fire is not quenched.’

<sup>45</sup> And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— <sup>46</sup> where

‘Their worm does not die  
And the fire is not quenched.’

<sup>47</sup> And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire— <sup>48</sup> where

‘Their worm does not die  
And the fire is not quenched.’

### **Tasteless Salt Is Worthless**

<sup>49</sup> “For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. <sup>50</sup> Salt *is* good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.”

### **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. Dr. George F. DeFord**  
*Retired Elder of the Baltimore-Washington Conference*  
*The United Methodist Church*

## **“A Future With Hope”**

*Jeremiah 29:11–14 (The Message)*

<sup>10-11</sup> This is God’s Word on the subject: “As soon as Babylon’s seventy years are up and not a day before, I’ll show up and take care of you as I promised and bring you back home. I know what I’m doing. I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for.

<sup>12</sup> ”When you call on me, when you come and pray to me, I’ll listen.

<sup>13-14</sup> ”When you come looking for me, you’ll find me.

“Yes, when you get serious about finding me and want it more than anything else, I’ll make sure you won’t be disappointed.”  
God’s Decree.

“I’ll turn things around for you. I’ll bring you back from all the countries into which I drove you”—God’s Decree—”bring you home to the place from which I sent you off into exile. You can count on it.

### **Praise and Prayer Concerns**

#### **Invitation / Altar Call**

##### **Invitation Selection**

#### **Announcements**

#### **Benediction**