

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, July 30, 2023

Ninth Sunday After Pentecost

Ushers:

Kamille Quick, Jeremiah Laguerre and Eli Coffen

Order of Service

Cynthia Whitfield, Worship Leader

Prelude Rev. Henry Tindal

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 Cynthia Whitfield

Leader: Praise the Lord! We gather and give thanks to God.

People: **How incredible are the works of our God!**

Leader: The Lord is gracious and merciful, faithful and just.

People: **Holy and awesome is God's name.**

Leader: Wisdom begins with respect for the Lord.

People: **May our praise go on forever.**

All: **We have come today to thank and praise God for Jesus.**

Hymn of Praise St. Mark's Choir / Congregation

"Glory, Glory, Hallelujah!"

Glory, glory, hallelujah! Since I laid my burdens down.

Glory, glory, hallelujah! Since I laid my burdens down.

Friends don't treat me like they used to since I laid my burdens down.

Friends don't treat me like they used to since I laid my burdens down.

I'm goin' home to live with Jesus since I laid my burden down.

I'm goin' home to live with Jesus since I laid my burden down.

Glory, glory, hallelujah! Since I laid my burdens down.

Glory, glory, hallelujah! Since I laid my burdens down.

Prayer of Confession and Assurance *(In Unison)*

Gracious God, what we must confess today is more obvious. We haven't always paid any attention to you when you called us to task. Even when we've heard you loud and clear, we like Jonah have said "NO". Thank you for believing in us beyond our failures. Thank you for giving us a chance now to say "YES". **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

The Invocation Sister Cynthia Whitfield

Song of Meditation.....St. Mark's Choir

The Prayer of Illumination *(In Unison)*

Holy Spirit, settle our hearts and minds as we read the scripture today.

Help us to hear them in a new way. May our meditations and actions be acceptable to God and may the peace of Christ be with us. **Amen.**

Scripture Reading #1 Sister Cynthia Whitfield

(Genesis 29:15–28, Common English Bible)

¹⁵ Laban said to Jacob, "You shouldn't have to work for free just because you are my relative. Tell me what you would like to be paid."

¹⁶ Now Laban had two daughters: the older was named Leah and the younger Rachel. ¹⁷ Leah had delicate eyes, but Rachel had a beautiful

figure and was good-looking. ¹⁸ Jacob loved Rachel and said, “I will work for you for seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter.”

¹⁹ Laban said, “I’d rather give her to you than to another man. Stay with me.”

²⁰ Jacob worked for Rachel for seven years, but it seemed like a few days because he loved her. ²¹ Jacob said to Laban, “The time has come. Give me my wife so that I may sleep with her.” ²² So Laban invited all the people of that place and prepared a banquet. ²³ However, in the evening, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he slept with her. ²⁴ Laban had given his servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah as her servant. ²⁵ In the morning, there she was—Leah! Jacob said to Laban, “What have you done to me? Didn’t I work for you to have Rachel? Why did you betray me?”

²⁶ Laban said, “Where we live, we don’t give the younger woman before the oldest. ²⁷ Complete the celebratory week with this woman. Then I will give you this other woman too for your work, if you work for me seven more years.” ²⁸ So that is what Jacob did. He completed the celebratory week with this woman, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife.

Scripture Reading #2 Sister Cynthia Whitfield
(*Romans 8:26–39, Common English Bible*)

²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit comes to help our weakness. We don’t know what we should pray, but the Spirit himself pleads our case with unexpressed groans. ²⁷ The one who searches hearts knows how the Spirit thinks, because he pleads for the saints, consistent with God’s will. ²⁸ We know that God works all things together for good for the ones who love God, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ We know this because God knew them in advance, and he decided in advance that they would be conformed to the image of his Son. That way his Son would be the first of many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ Those who God decided in advance would be conformed to his Son, he also called. Those whom he called, he also made righteous. Those whom he made righteous, he also glorified.

³¹ So what are we going to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He didn't spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. Won't he also freely give us all things with him?

³³ Who will bring a charge against God's elect people? It is God who acquits them. ³⁴ Who is going to convict them? It is Christ Jesus who died, even more, who was raised, and who also is at God's right side. It is Christ Jesus who also pleads our case for us.

³⁵ Who will separate us from Christ's love? Will we be separated by trouble, or distress, or harassment, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

We are being put to death all day long for your sake.

We are treated like sheep for slaughter.

³⁷ But in all these things we win a sweeping victory through the one who loved us. ³⁸ I'm convinced that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord: not death or life, not angels or rulers, not present things or future things, not powers ³⁹ or height or depth, or any other thing that is created.

SelectionSt. Mark's Choir

Acknowledgement of Visitors /

Announcements Sister Cynthia Whitfield

Blessing of the Offering Sister Cynthia Whitfield
Offertory

Scripture Reading #3 (Gospel)..... Sister Cynthia Whitfield
(Matthew 13:31–33, 44–52, Common English Bible)

³¹ He told another parable to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and planted in his field. ³² It's the smallest of all seeds. But when it's grown, it's the largest of all vegetable plants. It becomes a tree so that the birds in the sky come and nest in its branches."

³³ He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast, which a woman took and hid in a bushel of wheat flour until the yeast had worked its way through all the dough."

⁴⁴ "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure that somebody hid in a field, which someone else found and covered up. Full of joy, the finder sold everything and bought that field.

⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. ⁴⁶ When he found one very precious pearl, he went and sold all that he owned and bought it.

⁴⁷ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that people threw into the lake and gathered all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸ When it was full, they pulled it to the shore, where they sat down and put the good fish together into containers. But the bad fish they threw away. ⁴⁹ That's the way it will be at the end of the present age. The angels will go out and separate the evil people from the righteous people, ⁵⁰ and will throw the evil ones into a burning furnace. People there will be weeping and grinding their teeth.

⁵¹ "Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked.

They said to him, "Yes."

⁵² Then he said to them, "Therefore, every legal expert who has been trained as a disciple for the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings old and new things out of their treasure chest."

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 PreparationSt. Mark's Choir

Inspirational MessageRev. Eugene W. Matthews

"Understandings About the Kingdom of Heaven"

⁵¹ "Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked. They said to him, "Yes."

⁵² Then he said to them, "Therefore, every legal expert who has been trained as a

disciple for the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings old and new things out of their treasure chest.”

Joshua 24:15, CEB

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

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

Invitation Selection

Benediction

Announcements

Wearing a mask while in the sanctuary is at your discretion.

Worship Attendance — 07/23/2023

In-Person	47
Zoom	12
Total	59

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.



Tuesday Women's Roundtable (6:30 p.m.) — **On hiatus**

Wednesday Night Experience (7:15 p.m.) — **On hiatus**

Thursday, August 3rd (6:30 p.m.) — **Choir Rehearsal**

Sunday, August 13th (2:00 p.m.) — **Crab Feast** to benefit Emancipation Day.

(8400 Mission Rd, Jessup MD). **Donation:\$75 per person.** For tickets or additional info: Tina Thomas-Matthews, Patricia Mundell, Larry Powell. **Flyer on bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.**

Registration for the 11th Annual St. Mark's Emancipation Day In-Person and Virtual Diabetes 5K Run/Walk/Fun Walk is open. To register or donate go to <https://bit.ly/stmarks5k>.

Note from Finance: First, 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/stmarkslmd>)

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.

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

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