

## *St. Mark's United Methodist Church*

*601 Eighth Street | Laurel, Maryland 20707*

*301.776.8885 | [stmarkslmd@gmail.com](mailto:stmarkslmd@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*

*443.257.2730 | [reveugene@comcast.net](mailto: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, December 3, 2023*

*First Sunday of Advent:*

*“God’s Restoration – Hope”*

## *Order of Service*

*Ushers:*

*Gemma Ottley-Desouza and Sharon Thomas*

*Brother Thomas Matthews, Worship Leaders*

**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 ..... Brother Thomas Matthews**

**Leader:** The Liberator is on his way!

**People:** We are awaiting his arrival.

**Leader:** The Liberator will arrive soon.

**People:** Blest be the name of our God who comes.

**Leader:** Lift up your hearts in worship.

**ALL:** WE celebrate the Deliverer of Zion.

**Hymn of Praise.....St. Mark’s Choir / Congregation**

### *“Oh Come All Ye Faithful”*

- 1 O come, all ye faithful,  
Joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;

Come and behold him  
Born the King of angels:  
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

2 Sing, choirs of angels,  
Sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of Heaven above;  
Glory to God  
In the highest:  
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

3 Yea, Lord, we greet thee,  
Born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be glory given;  
Word of the Father,  
Now in flesh appearing:  
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

*Lighting of the Advent Candle —  
“God’s Restoration – Hope”  
Cynthia Whitfield and Larry Powell*

**Prayer of Confession and Assurance** *(Leader/Congregation)*

Leader: Oftentimes the pain of waiting causes us discouragement. In our discouragement we begin to doubt that God really does care. Let us confess our pain before a listening God.

**ALL:** Ancient of days, we confess that Jesus told us to prepare ourselves for doing great things, and too often we have fooled around, majoring in minor issues. Isaiah called us to hammer our swords into plowshares and be finished with fighting. Yet, we daily fight enemies, both within and without. Forgive our sin. Help us to see that heaven’s ear is open to us and that you are in every place seeing the evil and the good. Help us to believe that our waiting is not in vain. Fill us, we pray, with a fresh vision of shalom. Amen.

**The Invocation**..... **Brother Thomas Matthews**  
**Song of Meditation** ..... **St. Mark’s Choir**

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

Gracious God, we thank you for the signs of hope, that are contained in your Holy Writ. May our ears, hearts, minds and spirit be open to receive them as the scriptures are read in our hearing this morning. **Amen.**

**Scripture Reading #1** ..... **Brother Thomas Matthews**  
*(Isaiah 64:1–9, Common English Bible)*

64 If only you would tear open the heavens and come down!  
Mountains would quake before you

<sup>2</sup> like fire igniting brushwood or making water boil. If you would make your name known to

your enemies,  
the nations would tremble in your presence.

<sup>3</sup> When you accomplished wonders beyond all our expectations;  
when you came down, mountains quaked before you.

<sup>4</sup> From ancient times,  
no one has heard,  
no ear has perceived,  
no eye has seen any god but you  
who acts on behalf of those who wait for him!

<sup>5</sup> You look after those who gladly do right;  
they will praise you for your ways.

But you were angry when we sinned;  
you hid yourself when we did wrong.

<sup>6</sup> We have all become like the unclean;  
all our righteous deeds are like a menstrual rag.  
All of us wither like a leaf;  
our sins, like the wind, carry us away.

<sup>7</sup> No one calls on your name;  
no one bothers to hold on to you,  
for you have hidden yourself from us,  
and have handed us over to our sin.

<sup>8</sup> But now, Lord, you are our father.  
We are the clay, and you are our potter.  
All of us are the work of your hand.

<sup>9</sup> Don't rage so fiercely, Lord;  
don't hold our sins against us forever,  
but gaze now on your people, all of us:

**Scripture Reading #2** ..... **Brother Thomas Matthews**  
(1 Corinthians:1:3–9, Common English Bible)

<sup>3</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup> I thank my God always for you, because of God's grace that was given to you in Christ Jesus. <sup>5</sup> That is, you were made rich through him in everything: in all your communication and every kind of knowledge, <sup>6</sup> in the same way that the testimony about Christ was confirmed with you. <sup>7</sup> The result is that you aren't missing any spiritual gift while you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. <sup>8</sup> He will also confirm your testimony about Christ until the end so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> God is faithful, and you were called by him to partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Selection** ..... **St. Mark's Choir**

**Acknowledgement of Visitors /**

**Announcements** ..... **Brother Thomas Matthews**

**Blessing of the Offering** ..... **Brother Thomas Matthews**

**Offertory**

**Scripture Reading #3 (Gospel)..... Brother Thomas Matthews**  
(Matthew 13:24–37, Common English Version, please stand)

<sup>24</sup> Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like someone who planted good seed in his field. <sup>25</sup> While people were sleeping, an enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat and went away. <sup>26</sup> When the stalks sprouted and bore grain, then the weeds also appeared.

<sup>27</sup> “The servants of the landowner came and said to him, ‘Master, didn’t you plant good seed in your field? Then how is it that it has weeds?’

<sup>28</sup> “‘An enemy has done this,’ he answered.

“The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us to go and gather them?’

<sup>29</sup> “But the landowner said, ‘No, because if you gather the weeds, you’ll pull up the wheat along with them. <sup>30</sup> Let both grow side by side until the harvest. And at harvesttime I’ll say to the harvesters, “First gather the weeds and tie them together in bundles to be burned. But bring the wheat into my barn.”’”

<sup>31</sup> He told another parable to them: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and planted in his field. <sup>32</sup> 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.”

<sup>33</sup> 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.”

<sup>34</sup> Jesus said all these things to the crowds in parables, and he spoke to them only in parables. <sup>35</sup> This was to fulfill what the prophet spoke:

*I’ll speak in parables;*

*I’ll declare what has been hidden since the beginning of the world.*

<sup>36</sup> Jesus left the crowds and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.”

<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied, “The one who plants the good seed is the Human One.

**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..... Dr. Rev. George F. DeFord**

***“Scheduled But Unknown Arrival Time”***

*(Mark 31–37, CEB)*

**Invitation / Praise and Concerns**

**Altar Call ..... Dr. Rev. George F. DeFord**

# *Holy Communion*

## *Thanksgiving and Communion*

### **THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

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, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. You have made from one every nation and people to live on all the face of the earth, 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. 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. He commissioned us to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth and to make disciples of all nations, and today his family in all the world is joining at his holy table.

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.

Renew our communion with your Church throughout the world, and strengthen it in every nation and among every people to witness faithfully in your name.

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 Father, now and for ever. **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.**

**Dismissal with Blessing**

Go forth in peace. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **Amen.**

**Benediction**



# Happy Birthday and Anniversary December Members



## Birthday

<i>Sandra Johnson – 4<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>LáAngel Hall – 25<sup>th</sup></i>
<i>Jane Matthews – 8<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Eugenia Matthews – 26<sup>th</sup></i>
<i>Reginald Matthews – 14<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Sylvia Kenney – 27<sup>th</sup></i>
<i>Dwayne Simms – 15<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Erica Roy – 27<sup>th</sup></i>
<i>Grace Elaine Catchings – 21<sup>st</sup></i>	<i>Ellen Hall – 29<sup>th</sup></i>
<i>Lynn Jennrich – 22<sup>nd</sup></i>	<i>Keith Wright, Jr. – 29<sup>th</sup></i>
<i>Tenaya Gibson – 23<sup>rd</sup></i>	<i>Joyce Gibson – 30<sup>th</sup></i>
<i>Starr Kenney – 24<sup>th</sup></i>	

## Anniversary

<i>Michael &amp; Janet Carey (40 yrs.) – 14<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Horace &amp; Tasman Allen (5<sup>th</sup> yr) – 31<sup>st</sup></i>
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## Heavenly Birthdays

<i>Delores Tyler – 2<sup>nd</sup></i>	<i>Melva (Peaches) King – 9<sup>th</sup></i>
<i>Douglas Powell – 3<sup>rd</sup></i>	<i>Theodore Ramsey Whitfield – 18<sup>th</sup></i>
<i>Tracy Valle – 5<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Ancil Harding – 23<sup>rd</sup></i>

The Christmas and Year ending Seasons is a customary time when most of us receive financial requests in support of our Alma Maters, along with asking from many non-profit, charitable organizations. This year I have decided to intentionally add **St. Mark's** to my special Christmas list. This is an invitation for members and friends of St. Mark's to join with me in making a **special gift** to the **Church** on **Sunday, December 24, 2023**. Our gifts will be in celebration and thankfulness to God for the **GIFT** in the personage of Jesus Christ our Savior.

*Pastor Matthews*

## Announcements

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

Worship Attendance — 11/26/2023	
In-Person	55
YouTube	17
Total	72



## 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, our youth and most importantly for our sick and shut-ins and each other.



**Tuesday Women's Roundtable** (6:30 p.m.) — **Book Study** — **Purpose Driven Life**. Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88571184455?pwd=UmpvVERkcjkyVFVoVHRlYlJxK284Zz09>; Meeting ID: 885 7118 4455; Passcode: 459563

**Wednesday Night Experience** (7:15 p.m.) — This study is based on the Upper Room reading for Wednesday. **Call in info:** 267.807.9611, **Access Code:** 331960.

**Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup>** (6:30 p.m.) — Choir rehearsal

**Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup>** (7:00 p.m.) — Rehearsal with Queens Chapel (at church) for Christmas Program

**Attention Women: Roundtable Recharge Retreat**, April 25<sup>th</sup>–April 27<sup>th</sup> at the Maritime Conference Center in Linthicum. For additional information, please **Nena Hughes**. \$100 deposit will hold your reservation.

**Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>** (5:00 p.m.) Christmas Concert at Queens Chapel UMC — **“Sharing Good Tidings of Great Joy” Luke 2:10**. Refreshments following concert. Choir made up of local churches.

## LARS “Adopt-A-Family” Christmas Program

St. Mark's is participating in the **LARS “Adopt-A-Family”** Christmas Program. We are sponsoring 4 children. Please select the item(s) you would like to donate from the Wishlist sheet (*back of bulletin, items have been updated*). Once items are purchased, please notify Sandy Johnson (410.530.0399 and/or email: [sandra7767@msn.com](mailto:sandra7767@msn.com)) or Millicent George ([stmarkslmd@gmail.com](mailto:stmarkslmd@gmail.com)). **Items should be wrapped or placed in gift bags. PLEASE** write the Family Number, Child's Initials, age, and gender on each individual gift.

Bring the gifts to St. Mark's on **Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>** or no later than **Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>**. You can also drop the gifts off at the church on Tuesday, **December 5<sup>th</sup>** or **Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup>** between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. **Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>** is the final drop off date. We're praying every St. Mark's member will participate. Thank you for being a blessing to these 4 children.

### Adopt A Family — Family #39 Wish List

Child's Initial (SMC), Age (1), Gender (Female):	Child's Initial (EMC), Age (3), Gender (Male):
Stuffed animals	Basketball
Moon Lamp	Remote Control Car
Robotic Pet	Remote Control Car
Toy with Lights and Music	Building Blocks
Hair Accessories	Wooden Puzzles
Kids Play Kitchen	Musical Instrument
Gift Card (at least 4, still need at least 2 gift cards, you can make a donation to gift care)	Gift Card (at least 4, still need at least 2 gift cards, you can make a donation to gift care)

### Adopt A Family — Family #43 Wish List

Child's Initial (YE), Age (7), Gender (Male, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade):	Child's Initial (JE), Age (14), Gender (Male, 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade):
<del>Smart Watch</del>	<del>Smart Watch</del>
Legos	Microscope
Scooter	Scooter
Gift Card (at least 4, still need at least 2 gift cards, you can make a donation to gift care)	Gift Card (at least 4, still need at least 1 gift card, you can make a donation to gift care)

**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/stmarksmd>)



***“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](mailto:reveugene@comcast.net).

Joseph Ballard, Robert (Bobby) Marshall, Oscar Johnson, Harold (Bubby) Awkward, Jr., Tyrone Awkward, William (Jimmy) Scott, Charles Gregg, 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, Phillip Reese, Naomi Williams (Ms. Cynthia's Mom), Leah Henry, Sonja Smith, Marvin Hebron, Eric Smith, Gloria Thomas, Wanda Dumas, Tyrone Mundell, Ernestine Gibson, James Matthews, Birdie Walker, Paul Browder, Lamar Payne, Kevin Miller, Hannah Polk

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