

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, December 10, 2023

*Second Sunday of Advent:
“Preparing the Way – Peace”*

Order of Service

Ushers:

Francis Desouza and Tyrone Mundell

Sister Cynthia Augustus, 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 Sister Cynthia Augustus

Leader: Today we are watching for signs of God’s arrival.

People: Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary.

Leader: We can see the outward signs of preparation.

People: Lord, prepare us on the inside for your arrival.

Leader: We recognize the decorated trees, electric stars, and glitter will soon lose their attraction.

People: Lord prepare us to be the sanctuary acceptable for your arrival.

Leader: With clean hearts and watchful eyes, let us worship God in spirit and truth.

All: Alleluia! Alleluia! AMEN!

*Lighting of the Advent Candle —
“Preparing the Way – Peace”
Deborah Ford and Sandra Johnson*

Hymn of Praise St. Mark’s Choir / Congregation

“Hark the Herald Angels Sing”

1. Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King;
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
with th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King!"
2. Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord;
late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th' incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!"
3. Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of
Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King!"

Prayer for Peace – Attributed to St. Francis of Assis (*Unison*)

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so

much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, in pardoning that we are pardoned and that in dying that we are born to eternal life. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer (*sung*)

The Invocation **Sister Cynthia Augustus**
Song of Meditation.....**St. Mark's Choir**

The Prayer of Illumination (*In Unison*)

God of abundance, you have and sent to us Jesus Christ to make us heirs to it all. We listen today with grateful hearts for your Word that will become a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our pathway. .With a sense of great anticipation; speak to us through your Holy Word this day.

Amen.

Scripture Reading #1 **Sister Cynthia Augustus**
(*Isaiah 40:1–11, Common English Bible*)

40 Comfort, comfort my people! says your God.

² Speak compassionately to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her compulsory service has ended, that her penalty has been paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins!

³ A voice is crying out: "Clear the Lord's way in the desert! Make a level highway in the wilderness for our God! ⁴ Every valley will be raised up, and every mountain and hill will be flattened. Uneven ground will become level, and rough terrain a valley plain. ⁵ The Lord's glory will appear, and all humanity will see it together;
the Lord's mouth has commanded it."

⁶ A voice was saying: "Call out!" And another said, "What should I call out?" All flesh is grass; all its loyalty is like the flowers of the field. ⁷ The grass dries up and the flower withers when the Lord's breath blows on it. Surely the people are grass. ⁸ The grass dries up; the flower withers, but our God's word will exist forever.

⁹ Go up on a high mountain, messenger Zion! Raise your voice and shout, messenger Jerusalem! Raise it; don't be afraid; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" ¹⁰ Here is the Lord God, coming with

strength, with a triumphant arm, bringing his reward with him and his payment before him. ¹¹ Like a shepherd, God will tend the flock; he will gather lambs in his arms and lift them onto his lap. He will gently guide the nursing ewes.

Scripture Reading #2 Sister Cynthia Augustus
(2 Peter 3:8–15a, Common English Bible)

⁸ Don't let it escape your notice, dear friends, that with the Lord a single day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like a single day. ⁹ The Lord isn't slow to keep his promise, as some think of slowness, but he is patient toward you, not wanting anyone to perish but all to change their hearts and lives. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. On that day the heavens will pass away with a dreadful noise, the elements will be consumed by fire, and the earth and all the works done on it will be exposed.

¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be? You must live holy and godly lives, ¹² waiting for and hastening the coming day of God. Because of that day, the heavens will be destroyed by fire and the elements will melt away in the flames. ¹³ But according to his promise we are waiting for a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

¹⁴ Therefore, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found by him in peace—pure and faultless. ¹⁵ Consider the patience of our Lord to be salvation, just as our dear friend and brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given to him,

Selection St. Mark's Choir

Acknowledgement of Visitors /

Announcements Sister Cynthia Augustus

Blessing of the Offering Sister Cynthia Augustus
Offertory

Scripture Reading #3 (Gospel)..... Sister Cynthia Augustus
(Mark 1:1–8, Common English Version, please stand)

1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ, God’s Son, **2** happened just as it was written about in the prophecy of Isaiah:

*Look, I am sending my messenger before you. He will prepare your way, **3** a voice shouting in the wilderness: “Prepare the way for the Lord; make his paths straight.”*

4 John the Baptist was in the wilderness calling for people to be baptized to show that they were changing their hearts and lives and wanted God to forgive their sins. **5** Everyone in Judea and all the people of Jerusalem went out to the Jordan River and were being baptized by John as they confessed their sins. **6** John wore clothes made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. **7** He announced, “One stronger than I am is coming after me. I’m not even worthy to bend over and loosen the strap of his sandals. **8** I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

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 Message Dr. Rev. Louis Shockley, Jr.

“The Hopes and Expectations of Advent”

(Isaiah 40:1-11, CEB)

Invitation / Praise and Concerns

Altar Call Dr. Rev. Louis Shockley, Jr.

Benediction

Announcements

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

Worship Attendance — 12/3/2023	
In-Person	47
YouTube	18
Total	65

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=UmpvVERkcjkyVFVoVHR1YlJxK284Zz09>; 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 14th (6:30 p.m.) — Choir rehearsal

Friday, December 15th (7:00 p.m.) — Rehearsal with Queens Chapel (at church) for Christmas Program

Sunday, December 17th (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.

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

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

LARS “Adopt-A-Family” Christmas Program



Today is the last day to drop off your contributions, gift cards are still being accepted. We want to thank everyone for blessing these 4 children during this holiday season.

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.

Judith James, Isabella Dustin, 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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