

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 24, 2023

*Fourth Sunday of Advent:
“Receiving God’s Hope”*

Christmas Day: “Candle of Love”

Ushers:

Ralph Laquerre and Thomas Matthews

Order of Service

Jaime and Eli Coffen, Worship Leaders

Prelude..... Rev. Henry Tindal

Lighting of the Candles Usher

Gathering SongSt. 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.....Eli Coffen

Leader: On this Sunday prior to Christmas Day, we rejoice in the Angel’s message to the world: Fear not , for behold I bring you good news of great joy which shall be to all people: for to you is born this day in

the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord (*Luke 2: 10-11*)
and also the word's of Mary the Mother of Jesus: My soul magnifies
the Lord; and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

People: For he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.

Leader: The Mighty one has done great things for me and Holy is his name.

People: Indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him.

Leader: He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away
empty.

People: He has come to the aid of his child Israel, in remembrance of his
mercy.

Lighting of the Fourth Advent Candle —
“Receiving God’s Hope”
Gemma Desouza

Lighting of the Christmas Candle —
“Candle of Love”
Venita Stratford-Smith

Hymn of PraiseSt. Mark’s Choir / Congregation

“Jesus the Light of the World”

- 1 Hark the herald angels sing.
Jesus, the light of the world.
Glory to the new-born King.
Jesus, the light of the world.

Refrain:

We’ll walk in the light, beautiful light.
Come where the dewdrops of mercy shine bright.
Oh, shine all around us by day and by night.
Jesus, the light of the world.

- 2 Joyful, all ye nations, rise.
Jesus, the light of the world.
Join the triumph of the skies.
Jesus, the light of the world. *[Refrain]*
- 3 Christ, by highest heav'n adored.
Jesus, the light of the world.
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Jesus, the light of the world. *[Refrain]*
- 4 Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace.
Jesus, the light of the world.
Hail, the Sun of righteousness!
Jesus, the light of the world. *[Refrain]*

Prayer of Confession and Assurance (*Unison*)

God of incarnation, make known your will this Christmas that as children of the new birth in Christ Jesus, we may reflect the nativity light of Bethlehem, even the Light of the world, Christ Jesus , that never dims.

Leader:On this Holy Day , our hearts need to be a cradle of “LOVE”, tenderly holding the Savior of the world. Let our Confession prepare us for this awesome duty.

Silent Confession (*Congregation*)

Leader:The grace of God has appeared for all, in the Name of Jesus, you are forgiven. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer (*sung*)

The Invocation**Jaime Coffen**
Song of Meditation **St. Mark's Choir**

The Prayer of Illumination (*In Unison*)

The grace of God has been manifested in the giving of his SON, may we receive this new birth as we hear the scriptures being read today. LORD, bring a new appropriation and a new birth in hearing your WORD this morning. **Amen.**

Scripture Reading #1.....Jaime Coffen

(2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16, Common English Bible)

⁷ When the king was settled in his palace, and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, ² the king said to the prophet Nathan, “Look! I’m living in a cedar palace, but God’s chest is housed in a tent!”

³ Nathan said to the king, “Go ahead and do whatever you are thinking, because the Lord is with you.”

⁴ But that very night the Lord’s word came to Nathan: ⁵ Go to my servant David and tell him: This is what the Lord says: You are not the one to build the temple for me to live in. ⁶ In fact, I haven’t lived in a temple from the day I brought Israel out of Egypt until now. Instead, I have been traveling around in a tent and in a dwelling. ⁷ Throughout my traveling around with the Israelites, did I ever ask any of Israel’s tribal leaders I appointed to shepherd my people: Why haven’t you built me a cedar temple?

⁸ So then, say this to my servant David: This is what the Lord of heavenly forces says: I took you from the pasture, from following the flock, to be leader over my people Israel. ⁹ I’ve been with you wherever you’ve gone, and I’ve eliminated all your enemies before you. Now I will make your name great—like the name of the greatest people on earth. ¹⁰ I’m going to provide a place for my people Israel, and plant them so that they may live there and no longer be disturbed. Cruel people will no longer trouble them, as they had been earlier, ¹¹ when I appointed leaders over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies.

And the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make a dynasty for you.

Scripture Reading #2.....Eli Coffen

(Romans 16:25–27, Common English Bible)

²⁵ May the glory be to God who can strengthen you with my good news and the message that I preach about Jesus Christ. He can strengthen you with the announcement of the secret that was kept quiet for a long time. ²⁶ Now that secret is revealed through what the prophets wrote. It is made known to the Gentiles in order to lead to their faithful obedience based on the command of

the eternal God. ²⁷ May the glory be to God, who alone is wise! May the glory be to him through Jesus Christ forever! Amen.

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

Acknowledgement of Visitors /

Announcements.....Jaime Coffen

Blessing of the Offering.....Jaime Coffen

Special Blessing Offering

Offertory

Scripture Reading #3 (Gospel)Eli Coffen

(Luke 1:26–38, Common English Version, please stand)

²⁶ When Elizabeth was six months pregnant, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a city in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin who was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David's house. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ When the angel came to her, he said, "Rejoice, favored one! The Lord is with you!" ²⁹ She was confused by these words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God is honoring you. ³¹ Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great and he will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. ³³ He will rule over Jacob's house forever, and there will be no end to his kingdom."

³⁴ Then Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen since I haven't had sexual relations with a man?"

³⁵ The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come over you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the one who is to be born will be holy. He will be called God's Son. ³⁶ Look, even in her old age, your relative Elizabeth has conceived a son. This woman who was labeled 'unable to conceive' is now six months pregnant. ³⁷ Nothing is impossible for God."

³⁸ Then Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said." Then the angel left her.

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**

“The Lord Is With You”

“When the angel came to her, he said, “Rejoice, favored one! The Lord is with you!” (Luke 1:28 (CEB))

Invitation / Praise and Concerns

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

Benediction

Announcements

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

Worship Attendance — 12/17/2023	
In-Person	39
YouTube	17
Total	56

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.) — **On hiatus**

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

Sunday, December 31st (morning service) – The service for next Sunday will consist of our **Celebration of NEW YEAR’s EVE/Watchnight (DAY) Worship.**

Selecting a Pastor — If you have questionnaires, they are due today, If you have questionnaire and still have questions about what we are looking for in a pastor, Reach out to a member of SPRC to share your thoughts: Jaime Coffen, Venita Stratford-Smith, Andrea Gibson, Nena Hughes, Desire Vanloo, Tony Latney, Robert Catchings

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.

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>)



*“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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unto
US a *Child*
is **BORN**
unto
us a *Son*
is **GIVEN**

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