

St. Mark's United Methodist Church

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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, January 7, 2024

Epiphany of the Lord

Holy Communion

Ushers:

Gemma DeSouza-Ottley and Sharon Thomas

Order of Service

Sister Cynthia Augustus, Worship Leader

Prelude Rev. Henry Tindel

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: Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

People: From everlasting to everlasting, you are God!

Leader: We have come to sing of your goodness in this New year.

People: You are greatly praised for our past and for the future.

Leader: Thank you for your extravagant generosity in bringing us to the beginning of 2024 and on this Epiphany Day of Our Lord.

People: WE, YOUR PEOPLE HAVE COME TO PRAISE AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR GOODNESS AND MERCY.

All: Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the Glory Forever.

Hymn of Praise..... Choir / Congregation

“Holy, Holy, Holy”

- 1 Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee. Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty! God in three persons, blessed trinity!
- 2 Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee, casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea; cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee, which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.
- 3 Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee, though the eye of sinfulness thy glory may not see, only thou art holy; there is none beside thee, perfect in pow’r, in love, and purity.
- 4 Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty! All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth, and sky, and sea. Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty! God in three persons, blessed trinity!

A Prayer for the New Year (*Unison*)

Creator God, you make all things new in heaven and on earth. We come to you in this new year with new desires and old fears, new decisions and old controversies, new dreams and old weaknesses. Because you are a God of faith, we enter your gates with thanksgiving and praise; we have come into your presence with gladness and with a joyful noise, and above all, we have come to serve and bless you name. **Amen.**

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

The Prayer of Illumination (*In Unison*)

Almighty God, in you are hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Open our eyes, ears, minds, and spirits, in new and fresh ways in this new year that we may fully understand your way and wisdom for us as we hear your written word. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Scripture Reading #1 **Sister Cynthia Augustus**
(*Isaiah 60:1–6, Common English Bible*)

- 60** Arise! Shine! Your light has come;
the Lord’s glory has shone upon you.
- ² Though darkness covers the earth
and gloom the nations,
the Lord will shine upon you;
God’s glory will appear over you.
- ³ Nations will come to your light
and kings to your dawning radiance.
- ⁴ Lift up your eyes and look all around:
they are all gathered; they have come to you.
Your sons will come from far away,
and your daughters on caregivers’ hips.
- ⁵ Then you will see and be radiant;
your heart will tremble and open wide,

because the sea's abundance will be turned over to you;
the nations' wealth will come to you.
⁶ Countless camels will cover your land,
young camels from Midian and Ephah.
They will all come from Sheba,
carrying gold and incense,
proclaiming the Lord's praises.

Scripture Reading #2 **Sister Cynthia Augustus**
(*Ephesians 3:1–12, Common English Bible*)

3 This is why I, Paul, am a prisoner of Christ for you Gentiles.

² You've heard, of course, about the responsibility to distribute God's grace, which God gave to me for you, right? ³ God showed me his secret plan in a revelation, as I mentioned briefly before (⁴ when you read this, you'll understand my insight into the secret plan about Christ). ⁵ Earlier generations didn't know this hidden plan that God has now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets through the Spirit. ⁶ This plan is that the Gentiles would be coheirs and parts of the same body, and that they would share with the Jews in the promises of God in Christ Jesus through the gospel. ⁷ I became a servant of the gospel because of the grace that God showed me through the exercise of his power.

⁸ God gave his grace to me, the least of all God's people, to preach the good news about the immeasurable riches of Christ to the Gentiles. ⁹ God sent me to reveal the secret plan that had been hidden since the beginning of time by God, who created everything. ¹⁰ God's purpose is now to show the rulers and powers in the heavens the many different varieties of his wisdom through the church. ¹¹ This was consistent with the plan he had from the beginning of time that he accomplished through Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² In Christ we have bold and confident access to God through faith in 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**
(*Matthew 2:1–12, Common English Bible*)

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod, magi came from the east to Jerusalem. ² They asked, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We've seen his star in the east, and we've come to honor him."

³ When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, and everyone in Jerusalem was troubled with him. ⁴ He gathered all the chief priests and the legal experts and asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They said, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what the prophet wrote:

⁶ *You, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
by no means are you least among the rulers of Judah,*

*because from you will come one who governs,
who will shepherd my people Israel.”*

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the magi and found out from them the time when the star had first appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search carefully for the child. When you’ve found him, report to me so that I too may go and honor him.” ⁹ When they heard the king, they went; and look, the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. ¹¹ They entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² Because they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

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 Gift of A New Year”

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod, magi came from the east to Jerusalem. 2 They asked, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We’ve seen his star in the east, and we’ve come to honor him.” (Matthew 2:1–2 (CEB))

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

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

Invitation Selection — “I Need Thee Every Hour”

***The Great Thanksgiving for New Year, Epiphany, Baptism of the Lord,
or Covenant Reaffirmation***

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,
Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.

Before the mountains were brought forth, or you had formed the earth, from everlasting to everlasting, you alone are God.

You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets.

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,
in whom you have revealed yourself, our light and our salvation.

In his baptism and in table fellowship he took his place with sinners. Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to announce that the time had come when you would save your people.

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.

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.

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 (*God*), now and for ever. **Amen.**

And now, with the confidence of children of God, let us pray:

The Lord's Prayer

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.**

Benediction

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.**



Happy Birthday and Anniversary



Kenyetta Wilson Keys – 1st

Arthur Wright – 8th

Garnette Nicholson – 8th

Gail Gibson – 11th

Troy Gibson (TJ) — 11th

Breanna Keys – 15th

Desiree Vanloo – 16th

Tiease Awkward – 16th

Tyrone Awkward, Jr. – 16th

Ruth Miller – 22nd (87)

Floyd Hughes, Jr. – 23rd

Brian Keys – 23rd

Cameo Nicholson – 25th

Anniversary

Sukuline and Aloysius G. Kortu – 5th (2 yrs.)

Floyd & Nena Hughes – 7th (11 yrs.)



Heavenly Birthdays

Frances Davis – 5th

Michael Morgan – 13th

Announcements

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

Worship Attendance — 12/31/2023	
In-Person	59
YouTube	19
Total	78

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.) — Join Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84500345294?pwd=TUR4ZGpySU5ub0E1blhUQVNNQW9YQT09>, Meeting ID: 885 7118 4455; Passcode: 459563

Wednesday Night Experience (7:15 p.m.) — This is our weekly Bible Study, based on the Wednesday reading in Upper Room. Call in #267.807.9611; Access Code: 331960.

Usher Board — The Usher Board is looking for 2 ushers to serve one Sunday a month

This is not goodbye,
This is not farewell...*

Pastor's Goodbye/Farewell — If you have an interest in working on the committee to plan Rev. Matthews Goodbye/Farewell celebration, please let Cynthia know. Someone from Finance and Culinary is a must. Thank you.

Thursday, January 11th (6:30 p.m.) — Choir rehearsal

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.

Sunday, January 14th — Human Relations Sunday. Special giving Sunday, see flyer below.



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 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.

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

Eunice Dumas

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