

## *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, February 18, 2024*

*Black History Month*

*Women Heart Month*

*2024 Lenten Season*

*First Sunday in Lent*

*Ushers:*

*Tyrone Mundell and Daryl Smith*

*Order of Service*

*Sister Venita Stratford-Smith, Worship Leader*



**Prelude .....Ms. Carol Tatum**

**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 Venita Stratford-Smith**

**Leader:** Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!

**People:** Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

**Leader** Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!

**People:** For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

**Hymn of Praise ..... Choir / Congregation**

## ***“Jesus Keep Me Near The Cross”***

1. Jesus, keep me near the cross; there a precious fountain,  
free to all, a healing stream, flows from Calvary's mountain.

### ***Refrain:***

In the cross, in the cross, be my glory ever,  
till my raptured soul shall find rest beyond the river.

2. Near the cross, a trembling soul, love and mercy found me;  
there the bright and morning star sheds its beams around me.

### ***(Refrain)***

3. Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes before me; help me walk from day to day  
with its shadow o'er me. ***(Refrain)***

4. Near the cross I'll watch and wait, hoping, trusting ever, till I reach the golden strand just beyond  
the river. ***(Refrain)***

### **Prayer of Confession and Assurance *(Unison)***

You have given us a world of beauty, and we have spoiled it. A world to feed us, and so many go hungry. A world of riches, and we are unwilling to share. A world to care for, and we think only of ourselves. Forgive us, gracious God, for those times your heart is saddened by our selfishness.

For those times we have no thought

for others, no cares but ours. Enable us to see this world anew as a gift from you, to be shared and nurtured, and those who live upon it to be loved and cared for. We ask this that your name may be glorified, through the beauty of this world, and the service of our lives. **Amen.**

**The Lord's Prayer *(Recite)*.....Choir and Congregation**

**The Invocation.....Sister Venita Stratford-Smith**

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

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

Guide us, O GOD, by your Word and Holy Spirit, that in your light we may see light, in your truth find freedom, and in your will discover your peace, through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Scripture Reading #1 .....Sister Venita Stratford-Smith**

*(Genesis 9:8–17, Common English Bible)*

<sup>8</sup> God said to Noah and to his sons with him, <sup>9</sup> “I am now setting up my covenant with you, with your descendants, <sup>10</sup> and with every living being with you—with the birds, with the large animals, and with all the animals of the earth, leaving the ark with you. <sup>11</sup> I will set up my covenant with you so that never again will all life be cut off by floodwaters. There will never again be a flood to destroy the earth.”

<sup>12</sup> God said, “This is the symbol of the covenant that I am drawing up between me and you and every living thing with you, on behalf of every future generation. <sup>13</sup> I have placed my bow in the clouds; it will be the symbol of the covenant between me and the earth. <sup>14</sup> When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, <sup>15</sup> I will remember the covenant between me and you and every living being among all the creatures. Floodwaters will never again destroy all creatures. <sup>16</sup> The bow will be in the clouds, and upon seeing it I will remember the enduring

covenant between God and every living being of all the earth's creatures." <sup>17</sup> God said to Noah, "This is the symbol of the covenant that I have set up between me and all creatures on earth."

**Scripture Reading #2** ..... **Sister Venita Stratford-Smith**  
(1 Peter 3:18–22, *Common English Bible*)

<sup>18</sup> Christ himself suffered on account of sins, once for all, the righteous one on behalf of the unrighteous. He did this in order to bring you into the presence of God. Christ was put to death as a human, but made alive by the Spirit. <sup>19</sup> And it was by the Spirit that he went to preach to the spirits in prison. <sup>20</sup> In the past, these spirits were disobedient—when God patiently waited during the time of Noah. Noah built an ark in which a few (that is, eight) lives were rescued through water. <sup>21</sup> Baptism is like that. It saves you now—not because it removes dirt from your body but because it is the mark of a good conscience toward God. Your salvation comes through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who is at God's right side. Now that he has gone into heaven, he rules over all angels, authorities,

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

**Black History Moments** ..... **Sister Venita Stratford-Smith**

**Acknowledgement of Visitors /**

**Announcements** ..... **Sister Venita Stratford-Smith**

**Blessing of the Offering** ..... **Sister Venita Stratford-Smith**  
**Offertory**

**Scripture Reading #3 (Gospel)** ..... **Sister Venita Stratford-Smith**  
(Matthew 4:1–11, *Common English Bible*)

<sup>4</sup> Then the Spirit led Jesus up into the wilderness so that the devil might tempt him. <sup>2</sup> After Jesus had fasted for forty days and forty nights, he was starving. <sup>3</sup> The tempter came to him and said, "Since you are God's Son, command these stones to become bread."

<sup>4</sup> Jesus replied, "It's written, *People won't live only by bread, but by every word spoken by God.*"

<sup>5</sup> After that the devil brought him into the holy city and stood him at the highest point of the temple. He said to him, <sup>6</sup> "Since you are God's Son, throw yourself down; for it is written, *I will command my angels concerning you, and they will take you up in their hands so that you won't hit your foot on a stone.*"

<sup>7</sup> Jesus replied, "Again it's written, *Don't test the Lord your God.*" <sup>[c]</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Then the devil brought him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. <sup>9</sup> He said, "I'll give you all these if you bow down and worship me."

<sup>10</sup> Jesus responded, "Go away, Satan, because it's written, *You will worship the Lord your God and serve only him.*" <sup>11</sup> The devil left him, and angels came and took care of him.

**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.**

# *The Baptismal Covenant II*

*Holy Baptism for Children and Others Unable to  
Answer for Themselves*

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE SERVICE**

Brothers and sisters in Christ:  
Through the Sacrament of Baptism  
we are initiated into Christ's holy Church.  
We are incorporated into God's mighty acts of salvation  
and given new birth through water and the Spirit.  
All this is God's gift, offered to us without price.

## **PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES**

*A representative of the congregation presents the candidate:*

I present ***Isabella Dustin*** for baptism.

## **RENUNCIATION OF SIN AND PROFESSION OF FAITH**

On behalf of the whole Church, I ask you:  
Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness,  
reject the evil powers of this world,  
and repent of your sin?

**I do.**

Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you  
to resist evil, injustice, and oppression  
in whatever forms they present themselves?

**I do.**

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior,  
put your whole trust in his grace,  
and promise to serve him as your Lord,  
in union with the Church which Christ has opened  
to people of all ages, nations, and races?

**I do.**

Will you nurture this child  
in Christ's holy Church,  
that by your teaching and example she may be guided  
to accept God's grace for herself,  
to profess her faith openly,  
and to lead a Christian life?

**I will.**

Do you, as Christ's body, the Church,  
reaffirm both your rejection of sin  
and your commitment to Christ?

**We do.**

Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life  
and include this person now before you in your care?

With God's help we will proclaim the good news  
and live according to the example of Christ.

We will surround this person  
with a community of love and forgiveness,  
that she may grow in her service to others.

We will pray for her,  
that she may be a true disciple  
who walks in the way that leads to life.

Let us join together in professing the Christian faith  
as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Do you believe in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
[who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and will come again to judge the living and the dead.]**

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
[the holy catholic\* church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.]**

## **THANKSGIVING OVER THE WATER**

The Lord be with you.  
And also with you.

**Let us pray.**

Eternal Father:

When nothing existed but chaos,  
you swept across the dark waters  
and brought forth light.

In the days of Noah  
you saved those on the ark through water.  
After the flood you set in the clouds a rainbow.  
When you saw your people as slaves in Egypt,  
you led them to freedom through the sea.  
Their children you brought through the Jordan  
to the land which you promised.

**\*\*Sing to the Lord, all the earth.  
Tell of God's mercy each day.**

In the fullness of time, you sent Jesus,  
nurtured in the water of a womb.  
He was baptized by John and anointed by your Spirit.  
He called his disciples  
to share in the baptism of his death and resurrection  
and to make disciples of all nations.

**\*\*Declare Christ's works to the nations,  
his glory among all the people.**

Pour out your Holy Spirit,  
to bless this gift of water and those who receive it,  
to wash away their sin  
and clothe them in righteousness  
throughout their lives,  
that, dying and being raised with Christ,  
they may share in his final victory.

**\*\*All praise to you, Eternal Father,  
through your Son Jesus Christ,  
who with you and the Holy Spirit  
lives and reigns forever.  
Amen.**

## **BAPTISM WITH LAYING ON OF HANDS**

*Pastor, laying hand on the newly baptized:*

The Holy Spirit work within you,  
that being born through water and the Spirit,  
you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Now it is our joy to welcome  
our new sisters and brothers in Christ.

Through baptism  
you are incorporated by the Holy Spirit  
into God's new creation  
and made to share in Christ's royal priesthood.  
We are all one in Christ Jesus.

With joy and thanksgiving we welcome you  
as members of the family of Christ.

### **COMMENDATION AND WELCOME**

#### ***The pastor addresses the congregation:***

Members of the household of God,  
I commend this person to your love and care.  
Do all in your power to increase her faith,  
confirm her hope, and perfect her in love.

#### ***The congregation responds:***

We give thanks for all that God has already given you  
and we welcome you in Christian love.  
As a member together with you  
in the body of Christ  
and in this congregation  
of The United Methodist Church,  
we renew our covenant  
faithfully to participate  
in the ministries of the Church  
by our prayers, our presence,  
our gifts, our service and our witness,  
that in everything God may be glorified  
through Jesus Christ.

#### ***The pastor addresses those baptized and their parents and sponsors using an appropriate gesture of blessing:***

The God of all grace,  
who has called us to eternal glory in Christ,  
establish you and strengthen you  
by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
that you may live in grace and peace.

I present to you ***Isabella Dustin.***

**Hymn of Preparation..... St. Mark's Choir**

**Inspirational Message..... Rev. Eugene W. Matthews**

### ***"It's Testing Time"***

*4 Then the Spirit led Jesus up into the wilderness so that the devil might tempt him.*

*Matthew 4:1, Common English Bible*

**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 — 02/11/2024	
In-Person	42
YouTube	13
Total	55

## 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.



**Black History Month Youth Sunday:** All youth are invited to service next Sunday, February 25 for a Special Black History Month service. Following the service, we will celebrate BHM with light refreshments, a craft, and BHM Bingo.

All are encouraged to bring or invite a young person to the service. Feel free to wear Black History month gear or African attire. If you plan to bring or invite a young person, please notify Sister Jaime (240-535-1336) so arrangements can be made for all who would like to participate. **Adult and parent participation is highly encouraged!**

**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.

*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. **We will have a meeting on Monday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, Zoom**

**information will be provided.**

**Thursday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>** (6:30 p.m.) — **Choir rehearsal.** Tina will update the choir through text.

**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/stmarks/md>)

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](mailto:reveugene@comcast.net).

Delores Stratford, Keith Davis, Elba Hernandez, Nathaniel Watkins, Judith James, Isabella Dustin, Joseph Ballard, Robert (Bobby) Marshall, Oscar Johnson, Harold (Bubby) Awkward, Jr., Tyrone Awkward, William (Jimmy) Scott, Charles Gregg, 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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