

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, April 28, 2024

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Ushers: Gemma DeSouza-Ottley and Thomas Matthews

Order of Service

Sister Erica Roy, 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 Erica Roy

Leader: Come, let us turn to the Lord.

People: Who has made the world and all that is in it.

Leader: Come, let us give praise to our God.

People: Who acts in love for all humankind.

Leader: Come, let us bow down in worship.

People: And let us proclaim God's love to all generations.

**ALL: O God, you are our rock and salvation and truly
LOVE You!**

“Love Lifted Me”

- 1 I was sinking deep in sin, Far from the peaceful shore,
Very deeply stained within, Sinking to rise no more;
But the Master of the sea Heard my despairing cry,
From the waters lifted me – Now safe am I.

Refrain:

- Love lifted me, Love lifted me, When nothing else could help,
Love lifted me;
Love lifted me, Love lifted me, When nothing else could help,
Love lifted me.
- 2 All my heart to Him I give, Ever to Him I'll cling,
In His blessed presence live, Ever His praises sing.
Love so mighty and so true Merits my soul's best songs;
Faithful, loving service, too, To Him belongs. ***[Refrain]***
 - 3 Souls in danger, look above, Jesus completely saves;
He will lift you by His love Out of the angry waves.
He's the Master of the sea, Billows His will obey;
He your Savior wants to be – Be saved today. ***[Refrain]***

Prayer of Confession and Assurance (*Unison*)

God of unconditional love, we confess that we have not fully loved one another as you have loved us. We have ignored the needs of those around us. We have tended to our own comfort and convenience at the expense of others. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven. Melt the hardness of our hearts, that we may be renewed in your love. Assure us of your pardon that we may know the power of your forgiveness. We pray in the name of Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer (*Recited*)

The Invocation.....**Sister Erica Roy**
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 peace, through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Scripture Reading #1Sister Erica Roy

(Acts 8:26–40, Common English Bible)

²⁶ An angel from the Lord spoke to Philip, “At noon, take the road that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a desert road.) ²⁷ So he did. Meanwhile, an Ethiopian man was on his way home from Jerusalem, where he had come to worship. He was a eunuch and an official responsible for the entire treasury of Candace. (Candace is the title given to the Ethiopian queen.) ²⁸ He was reading the prophet Isaiah while sitting in his carriage. ²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, “Approach this carriage and stay with it.”

³⁰ Running up to the carriage, Philip heard the man reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, “Do you really understand what you are reading?”

³¹ The man replied, “Without someone to guide me, how could I?” Then he invited Philip to climb up and sit with him. ³² This was the passage of scripture he was reading:

*Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter
and like a lamb before its shearer is silent
so he didn't open his mouth.*

³³ *In his humiliation justice was taken away from him.
Who can tell the story of his descendants
because his life was taken from the earth?*

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, about whom does the prophet say this? Is he talking about himself or someone else?”

³⁵ Starting with that passage, Philip proclaimed the good news about Jesus to him. ³⁶ As they went down the road, they came to some water.

The eunuch said, “Look! Water! What would keep me from being baptized?” ³⁸ He ordered that the carriage halt. Both Philip and the eunuch went down to the water, where Philip baptized him.

³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Lord's Spirit suddenly took Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰ Philip found himself in Azotus. He traveled through that area, preaching the good news in all the cities until he reached Caesarea.

Scripture Reading #2Sister Erica Roy
(1 John 4:7–21, Common English Bible)

⁷ Dear friends, let's love each other, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God. ⁸ The person who doesn't love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how the love of God is revealed to us: God has sent his only Son into the world so that we can live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: it is not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son as the sacrifice that deals with our sins.

¹¹ Dear friends, if God loved us this way, we also ought to love each other. ¹² No one has ever seen God. If we love each other, God remains in us and his love is made perfect in us. ¹³ This is how we know we remain in him and he remains in us, because he has given us a measure of his Spirit. ¹⁴ We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the savior of the world. ¹⁵ If any of us confess that Jesus is God's Son, God remains in us and we remain in God. ¹⁶ We have known and have believed the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who remain in love remain in God and God remains in them. ¹⁷ This is how love has been perfected in us, so that we can have confidence on the Judgment Day, because we are exactly the same as God is in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear expects punishment. The person who is afraid has not been made perfect in love. ¹⁹ We love because God first loved us. ²⁰ Those who say, "I love God" and hate their brothers or sisters are liars. After all, those who don't love their brothers or sisters whom they have seen can hardly love God whom they have not seen! ²¹ This commandment we have from him: Those who claim to love God ought to love their brother and sister also.

Selection St. Mark's Choir

Acknowledgement of Visitors /

AnnouncementsSister Erica Roy

Blessing of the OfferingSister Erica Roy
Offertory

Scripture Reading #3 (Gospel).....Sister Erica Roy
(*John 15:1–8, Common English Bible*)

15 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vineyard keeper. **2** He removes any of my branches that don't produce fruit, and he trims any branch that produces fruit so that it will produce even more fruit. **3** You are already trimmed because of the word I have spoken to you. **4** Remain in me, and I will remain in you. A branch can't produce fruit by itself, but must remain in the vine. Likewise, you can't produce fruit unless you remain in me. **5** I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, then you will produce much fruit. Without me, you can't do anything. **6** If you don't remain in me, you will be like a branch that is thrown out and dries up. Those branches are gathered up, thrown into a fire, and burned. **7** If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. **8** My Father is glorified when you produce much fruit and in this way prove that you are my disciples.

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

“All You Need Is Love”

“Dear friends, let's love each other, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God.”
(1 John 4:7 (CEB))

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 — 04/21/2024	
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, 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.

Monday, April 29th (7:30 p.m.) — Farewell Committee Zoom meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85433720948>; Meeting ID: 854 3372 0948

Thursday, May 2nd (6:30 p.m.) — **Choir rehearsal.** Tina will update the choir through text.



Saturday, May 11th (9:00 a.m.) — **Hand Car Wash and Food for Sale** in the parking lot of St. Mark's (601 Eighth Street, Laurel). Sponsored by Emancipation Committee.

*This is not goodbye,
This is not Farewell...*

Sunday, June 23rd (10:00 a.m.) — **Pastor's Goodbye/Farewell.**

VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!

The opportunity to **VOTE** will exist twice this year: The Primary Election (May): The General Election (November). Many persons have marched, protested and died in order that we now have the privileges to cast our ballots. Please be informed, pray, **VOTE** and encourage your family and friends exercise their right to "**VOTE**"

Dr. George DeFord's recent book **"Oh, My Child, My Child"** has just been released. The book is available on Amazon: \$17. I wholly endorse everyone's investment of time and money regarding this writing by Dr. DeFord. **He will be available next Sunday with books and will autograph.**

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.

Rico Harper, 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, 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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