

St. Mark's United Methodist Church

601 Eighth Street | Laurel, Maryland 20707

301.776.8885 | 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

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, May 5, 2024

*Sixth Sunday of Easter
Holy Communion*

Ushers: Francis Desouza and Ralph Laguerre

Order of Service

Brother Thomas Matthews, Worship Leader

Prelude Elder Kelvin Brown

Lighting of the Candles

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 Brother Thomas Matthews

Leader: We gather in the name of God, our creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

People: Sing to God a new song!

Leader: With all creation, we rejoice in God's abundant grace and mercy.

People: Sing a new song!

Leader: Befriended by Christ, we open our hearts to God's love.

People: Sing to God a new song!

**ALL: Led by the Spirit, we now lift our voices in worship to
God, as we sing a familiar new Song!**

Hymn of Praise..... St. Mark's Choir / Congregation

“What A Friend We Have in Jesus”

1. What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.
2. Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged; take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer.
3. Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge; take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in
prayer! In his arms he'll take and shield thee; thou wilt find a
solace there.

Prayer of Confession and Assurance (*Unison*)

O God, we confess that we have not lived up to your calling to live as your friends and to continue your work in the world. We have failed to love all others as you have first loved us. We have struggled to see ourselves as your beloved friends. We have not cultivated our relationship with you. Forgive us for the ways that we have not trusted in you or lived according to your will. Yet, in all of our failures, help us to know the power of your love that continues to support us and lift us up, giving us assurance of your pardon. We pray this in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

**The Invocation..... Brother Thomas Matthews
Song of Meditation St. Mark's Choir**

The Prayer of Illumination (*In Unison*)

O God, your Word is more precious than fine gold, than purest honey. As we turn to the scriptures today, send your Holy Spirit to infuse your Word with truth and grace. May the good news of your love shine through each of us and extend to the entire family of God. In Jesus name we pray. **Amen.**

Scripture Reading #1 Brother Thomas Matthews
(*Acts 10:44–48, Common English Bible*)

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on everyone who heard the word. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶ They heard them speaking in other languages and praising God. Peter asked, ⁴⁷ “These people have received the Holy Spirit just as we have. Surely no one can stop them from being baptized with water, can they?” ⁴⁸ He directed that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited Peter to stay for several days.

Scripture Reading #2 Brother Thomas Matthews
(*1 John 5:1–6, Common English Bible*)

⁵ Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born from God. Whoever loves someone who is a parent loves the child born to the parent. ² This is how we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep God’s commandments. ³ This is the love of God: we keep God’s commandments. God’s commandments are not difficult, ⁴ because everyone who is born from God defeats the world. And this is the victory that has defeated the world: our faith. ⁵ Who defeats the world? Isn’t it the one who believes that Jesus is God’s Son?

⁶ This is the one who came by water and blood: Jesus Christ. Not by water only but by water and blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

Selection St. Mark’s Choir

Acknowledgement of Visitors /

Announcements Brother Thomas Matthews

Blessing of the Offering Brother Thomas Matthews
Offertory

Scripture Reading #3 (Gospel)..... Brother Thomas Matthews
(*John 15:9–17, Common English Bible*)

⁹ “As the Father loved me, I too have loved you. Remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. ¹¹ I

have said these things to you so that my joy will be in you and your joy will be complete. ¹² This is my commandment: love each other just as I have loved you. ¹³ No one has greater love than to give up one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ I don't call you servants any longer, because servants don't know what their master is doing. Instead, I call you friends, because everything I heard from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You didn't choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you could go and produce fruit and so that your fruit could last. As a result, whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you. ¹⁷ I give you these commandments so that you can love each other.

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 Society of Friends”

“¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ I don't call you servants any longer, because servants don't know what their master is doing. Instead, I call you friends, because everything I heard from my Father I have made known to you.” (John 15:14–15 (CEB))

Praise and Prayer Concerns Rev. Eugene W. Matthews

Invitation / Altar Call Rev. Eugene W. Matthews

Invitation Selection

Holy Communion
The Great Thanksgiving for
Easter Day or Season

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, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and 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, brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey, and set before us on the way of life.

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. 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. By your great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of your Son from the dead and to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. Once we were no people, but now we are your people, declaring your wonderful deeds in Christ, who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always in the power of your Word and Holy 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.”

On the day you raised him from the dead he was recognized by his disciples in the breaking of the bread, and in the power of your Holy Spirit your Church has continued in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup.

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, now and for ever. **Amen.**

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

The Lord’s Prayer (*St. Mark’s Choir*)

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.**

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.**

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.

Thursday, May 9th (6:30 p.m.) — **Choir rehearsal**



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.

Sunday, May 12th (following service) — **Mother's Day Native Plant Giveaway.** We will have native plants available after worship for everyone. If you would like plants, please fill out the Native Plant Pledge form in your bulletin **today** and give it to an Usher or Jackie Jones. Thank you for participating and helping our environment.

Sunday, May 19th (morning service) — **Blessing of Motorcycles**

Monday, June 3rd (7:30 p.m.) — **Farewell Committee Zoom meeting:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85433720948>;
Meeting ID: 854 3372 0948

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

Sunday, June 23rd (10:00 a.m.) — **Pastor's Goodbye/Farewell.** The theme is **"I'm Done – Stick A Fork In It!"** — *Well done, good and faithful servant!* A barbeque is being planned to feature some of Pastor Matthew's favorite foods. Please come out and share this celebration with us.

VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!

The opportunity to **VOTE** will exist twice this year: The Primary Election (**May 14th**) and the General Election (**November 12th**). 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"** **Early voting for Primary Election going on now (May 2nd thru May 9th)**

Dr. George DeFord's recent book "**Oh, My Child, My Child**" has just been released. **He will be available today 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, 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

Eunice Dumas
1909 Sheffield Court
Severn, MD 21144
410.551.2435

Umbrenda Fisher
9160 Charlton Place
Douglasville, GA 39135

Edlin Chambers
14904 4th Street
Laurel, MD
347.423.2764

Grace Elaine Catchings
15505 Clayburn Drive
Laurel, MD 20707
301.312.7465 (Grace cell)

Ruth Miller
1206 Peachwood Ln.
Bowie, MD 20716
240.245.4560