

CHRISTMAS EVE, 2023



Family-Friendly Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, December 24, 2023 | 5:00 PM

781 Peachtree Street, NE | Atlanta, Georgia 30308 | stmarkumc.org | 404.873.2636



Sunday, December 24, 2023

Christmas Eve is a celebrated time in the Christian church, and especially here at Saint Mark United Methodist Church. It is a time when we celebrate the birth of the Christ Child – God taking human form and coming to live among us. It is because of Jesus’ coming that we can truly celebrate for it is through him we know the love of God and have forgiveness of sins. It is a high and holy occasion, and we are privilege to celebrate the advent of Jesus Christ, and to worship God together with you.

Each year, during all of our Christmas Eve Services, the offering collected goes directly to the ministries of our church. The ministries include our Breakfast and Supper Clubs, where we provide hot meals to many persons who are food insecure and unhoused in the midtown area. Each Saturday, we feed approximately 85 men and women at our Breakfast Club, and over 80 each Tuesday afternoon at our Supper Club. At the end of 2023, we will have fed over eight thousand five hundred men and women. We are able to do this life-saving act of kindness because of your giving.

You will have the opportunity, again during this service to give. And again, your gift will touch the lives of so many. Please know your giving is making a difference in the life of someone in need.

There are multiple ways you can give. You can make a check payable to Saint Mark UMC. You can also give online at our website (www.stmarkumc.org) or via the QR code at the back of this worship bulletin.

On this Christmas Eve, we light our candles, remembering that Christ, the Light of the world has come, and “shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome Him.” This is the truth of why we celebrate, and I pray you will continue to let the light of Christ shine through you into all the world.

Merry Christmas,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carolyn".

Pastor Carolyn.

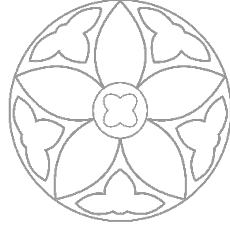


Welcome All!

On behalf of the Saint Mark United Methodist Church Children's and Youth Departments, welcome to Saint Mark! We are so glad that you have chosen to celebrate Christmas Eve with us. This evening, our program will be carried out almost entirely by our children and youth, along with some help from your family. As part of this program, you are invited and welcome (yes, you!) to participate with us in this interactive Christmas story.

To become part of our Nativity scene, simply pick out the costume that you would like to wear, put it on, and come to the stage when your character is called. In the typical fashion of our church, we invite everyone, no matter your age, race, gender, or orientation to be fully a part of our service. No matter who you are or where you are from, you are a child of God, and you are welcome here!

From all of us at Saint Mark, thank you for being with us and Merry Christmas! We hope to see you again soon. If you have questions or would like to know more about our programming, please email the Director of Children's Ministry, Madi Dunn (mdunn@stmarkumc.org).



Family-Friendly Christmas Eve Service

**You are invited to stand as you are able in body and spirit.*

Music as we Gather

The Welcome and a Walk-through of Today's Service

Costumes are in the back of the sanctuary. Select a costume.

As we sing, you are invited to come forward as your character is called.

The Prelude

A Tender Rose Has Blossomed

John M. Rasley

The Nativity

Part 1: Mary and Joseph

Carol

UMH No. 230 v. 1 | O Little Town of Bethlehem

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see the lie;
above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

Reading

Part 2: The Animals

Carol

UMH No. 217 v. 1 | Away in the Manger

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.**

Reading

Part 3: Angels

Carol

UMH No. 240 v. 1 | Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

**Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
with th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

Reading

Part 4: Shepherds

Carol

UMH No. 251 v. 1 | Go Tell It on the Mountain

**Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.
While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.
Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.**

Reading

Part 5: Wise Persons and the Star

Carol

UMH No. 254 v.1 | We Three Kings

**We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar, field and fountain,
moor and mountain, following yonder star.
O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.**

Reading

Part 6: Conclusion

Carol

UMH No. 246 v.1 | Joy to the World

**Joy to the world; the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King:
let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.**

The Blessing

God of every nation and people, from the very beginning of creation, you have made manifest your love. When our need for a Savior was great, you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary. To our lives he brings joy and peace, justice, mercy and love.

Lord, bless all who look upon this manger. May it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus, and raise up our thoughts to him, who is God-with-us and Savior of all, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

The Lighting of the Christ Candle

The Washington Family

Let us pray: We are grateful for the life and light of your Son, our Savior, Jesus the Christ. We acknowledge the darkness in a world and in our own lives, and we ask for mercy and courage to become people of light. Shine into our hearts, forgive, heal and make us whole.

The Invitation to the Offertory & The Offertory Prayer

The Offertory

Sweet Little Jesus Boy

Minister Sheila Stephens, Soloist

Spiritual

*The Doxology

D Bm A A7 D/F# G D A7 D A7

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all

7 D G A7 D A7 D A7 Bm A A7

creatures here below. Praise God above, ye

12 D/F# G D A7 D A7 D G A7 D A7 D

heaven-ly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

18 A7 D Bm F#m D G A7 D A

No - el, No - el, No - el, No - el,

22 Bm D/A G D A7/E D/F# D/A A7 D

born is the King of Is - ra - el.

Words: Thomas Ken, 1674
Music: Trad. English Carol

THE FIRST NOEL
Irr. with Refrain

The Celebration of Holy Communion

The Invitation to the Lord's Table

The Breaking of the Bread

The Communion of the People

The Communion Carol
UMH No. 219 | What Child is This?

Minister Sheila Stephens, Soloist

The Lighting of Our Candles

You are invited to "light" your candles now.

*The Carol of Dedication
UMH No. 239 | Silent Night, Holy Night

**Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child, Holy infant so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night, holy night, shepherds' quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!**

**Silent night, holy night Son of God, love's pure light;
radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus Lord at thy birth, Jesus Lord at thy birth.**

**Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing, Alleluia to our King.
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!**

*The Blessing

The Postlude
Fantasia on "Forest Green"

Lani Smith

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Worship Team

Liturgists:	Rev. Dr. Carolyn Stephens, <i>Senior Pastor</i> Minister Sheila Stephens Madi Dunn, <i>Children's Minister</i>
Nativity Story Readers:	Haylie Cundiff and Danni Washington
Advent Wreath:	The Washington Family
Music:	Justin Bowen, <i>Interim Director of Fine Arts</i> V. Lee Edwards, <i>Guest Organist</i>
Communion Steward:	Roger Brown
Communion Servers:	Haylie Cundiff, Robbie Cundiff, Danni Washington, and Gabi Washington
Usher Team:	Joel Black and The Cundiff Family
Greeter Team:	The Cohen Family

We Welcome You

As a United Methodist Church, we are proud to be a congregation with open hearts, open minds, and open doors. We strive to be a congregation that embodies God's absolute love and hospitality, proclaiming Jesus as our savior and as our model of the ultimate embodiment of God's love. We believe that all persons are of sacred worth and dignity as part of God's good creation. Saint Mark United Methodist Church welcomes all persons into the full life and ministry of our congregation, regardless of race, culture, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, family, or socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability, or faith history.



Attendance

Please sign the attendance pad located at the end of your row or scan this QR code to register your attendance and share prayer requests using our online Connection Card.

Prayer Requests

Let us pray for you. Prayer request cards are in the pews. Please return your request to the offering plate or the prayer boxes in the Narthex.

Tithes & Offerings

Please place your offering in the plate during this afternoon's service, or use the Secure Giving App, or Saint Mark's assigned number for text donations is 844-703-1444 and the keyword is 'operating'. To give via text, text the word 'operating', a space, and the amount you would like to give. For example, to give \$25, text 844-703-1444 operating 25. Your generosity allows us to love, accept and serve the people of our community.



- Using your Smartphone's camera, scan the QR Code.
- Follow the prompts.

Year-End Giving

Any gifts to the church that you would like to be credited for 2023 **must be dated and postmarked no later than December 31, 2023**. You can also drop off your gift using the newly installed mailbox outside the Church Office doors.

Questions? Contact Deana in the church office at 404-873-2636, ext. 14.

New Year's Eve at Saint Mark

Sunday, December 31, 2023 | 10 am

We will have one service at 10 AM New Year's Eve morning in the Sanctuary. The service will be live streamed on Facebook and YouTube.

Church Offices Closed

The Church Offices will be closed from December 25, 2023 – January 1, 2024. We will reopen at 10 AM on Tuesday, January 2, 2024.

Restrooms

Men's & Women's restrooms are located just outside the chapel. As you exit the sanctuary turn left. Once you reach the chapel, turn left then immediately right. The Women's restroom is the third door on the left. For the men's restroom, pass the Women's restroom and the Men's restroom is just around the corner. Gender Neutral restrooms are available downstairs. As you leave the sanctuary turn left, take the set of stairs down just before the balcony stairs on the left. The restrooms are on the first landing. Please see an usher for assistance.

Children's Ministry Volunteers Needed

The Children's Ministry needs four to six volunteers to help facilitate our nursery on an alternating schedule. If you LOVE babies and toddlers and can provide a one and a half to two-hour service once a month, WE NEED YOU! Please contact Madi Dunn at mdunn@stmarkumc.org.

Winter Weather Donations Needed

As the weather begins to turn colder, it becomes more challenging for our unhoused neighbors to stay warm. We are requesting donations of blankets, gloves, and sleeping bags. Please bring any of these items to church and drop them off on Sunday mornings in the appropriate donation bin in the hallway between the narthex and chapel.

Fifth Saturday Breakfast Club

Saturday, December 30, 2023 | 9 am

We need volunteers to help serve a hot meal to our food insecure neighbors on Saturday morning, December 30th. If you would like to volunteer, we need you. Please contact Mary Abbott Waite at mawaite100@aol.com or 404-217-3614 to volunteer or show up at the Office doors no later than 9 AM. Thank you.



We Invite You to Stay Connected with Saint Mark

Visit www.stmarkumc.org and subscribe to the newsletter on the homepage. We send our Remarks newsletter every Wednesday, a message from our Senior Pastor every Friday, and a Sunday Morning at Saint Mark email.

El Viñedo Local Restaurant

730 Peachtree Street NE | Suite 100 | Atlanta, Georgia 30308
Across from Redeemer Lutheran

Christmas Eve Hours

- Dinner 5PM to 9PM

Did you know that **El Viñedo Local** offers a 10% discount for Saint Mark United Methodist Church members every Sunday, including today, Christmas Eve? Stop by, support a local business, and let them know you are from Saint Mark.

Disciple Bible Study—Year 2

Disciple 2 Fast Track Bible Study is a 24-week in-depth review of Genesis/Exodus and Luke/Acts. The study comprises 15 to 30 minutes a day of bible reading and dynamic group discussions during the weekly meetings. This study will immerse you in 4 important books of the Bible and will enhance your spiritual journey as a disciple of Christ. Please note that it is not necessary to take Disciple 1 prior to taking Disciple 2.

We are organizing a new class that will meet 12 times this spring and 12 times in the fall. We are considering several times for the class...

- 1) During the Sunday School hour;
- 2) After the Wednesday night dinner or
- 3) A virtual class Tuesday evening

The new class will begin in late January and Paul Winslow will lead the class. The book for the first session is \$17 and scholarships are available. If interested, please let **Paul Winslow** know your preferred time at plwinslow3@gmail.com or **757-646-3278**.