

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

The Second Sunday of Advent

December 4, 2022

8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.



St. Mark's Episcopal Church
134 N. Division Ave.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503
www.stmarksgr.org

Welcome to St. Mark's

Welcome to historic St. Mark's, a vibrant community of faith, which has gathered for worship since 1836 and in the current building since 1848. If this is your first visit with us, please know that we are delighted you are here. Please, introduce yourself and be sure to sign our guest sign-in sheet in the foyer and/or fill-out a Visitor's Welcome Card. Also, please take a welcome folder on the Welcome Desk.



Safety: Everyone entering the St. Mark's Parish House is encouraged to wear a mask. Guests and visitors are asked to sign the register. The wooden doors to the Parish House will be locked fifteen minutes after Services begin with a security guard on duty to be of assistance. Upon leaving a restroom, please wash hands with warm soapy water and sanitize. Many thanks.

Weekly Worship and Prayer at St. Mark's: Sundays at 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.; Compline on Mondays and Thursdays at 8:00 p.m. via Facebook live. The bulletin is identical for both Sunday Services with musical elements not included in the 8:00 a.m. Service. We offer a mid-week Eucharist Service in St. Mary's Chapel each Wednesday at noon.

The Breakfast Café, a program of our outreach ministry, is at 8:15 a.m. every Saturday. If you would like more information, please contact Judy Freeman at judyfw@comcast.net.

Children's Formation: Sundays throughout the fall, we will be holding our children's formation series during 10:30 services. This includes formation, nursery care, and every third Sunday, Eucharist for All Ages. This is an inclusive service that gets children and youth involved. This Fall's theme is the 12 disciples. Come join us!

Junior and Senior High Youth: Grand Rapids Episcopal Youth: G.R.E.Y. is a joint youth ministry between St. Mark's and St. Andrew's Episcopal Churches for youth in grades 6-12. We have weekly formation gatherings during the school year and service and social activities throughout the year. Please contact our Director of Youth Ministry, Jeff Brown, for more information: jeffatgrey@gmail.com.

Adults: We offer the *Education for Ministry* seminar during the program year, an *Inquirers' Class* for those preparing for Confirmation, Reception, or Reaffirming one's faith and seasonal Sunday forums at 8:30 a.m. Please, see Fr. Christian for more details. We also offer a book study for adults. For the book group, please contact Carmela McIntire at carmela0067@att.net.

A Note about Cell Phones: We ask that you turn off your cell phone; if you are on call, please turn it to vibrate when you enter the church.

Rest Rooms are located on the main level of the Parish House under the exit sign at the top of the Foyer ramp.

Parking on Sundays: Limited parking is available in the Parish Lot. Please, consider the free metered parking on Pearl, Ionia, Lyon, Fountain and other streets near the church, the upper and lower levels of the GRCC building on Fountain Street and the Ellis Parking Lot at 210 Ionia just west of Lyon Street. For the Ellis Lot: Please, pick up an exit ticket from an Usher, a Greeter or on the little table where the bulletins are in the north transept. Parking is free on Sunday only. A white ticket is required to accompany the parking ticket and to exit the lot.

St. Mark's Full- and Part-time Staff

The Rev. Dr. Christian Brocato, Rector (FT)
The Rev. Susan York, Priest Associate
The Rev. Jan Gockerman, Deacon
Megan Harding, Parish Administrative Associate (FT)
Pam Stevenson, Finance Manager (FT)
Dr. Gregory Crowell, Director of Music
Alexis VanZalen, Organ Scholar
Evan Knill, Director of Children's Ministry
Jeff Brown, Director of Youth Ministry
Kate Pyles, Director of Communications Ministry
Ronnie Bowen, Sexton
Craig Mosley, Sexton Associate
Doris Molina, Weekend Sexton

The Gathering of God's People

Our prayer begins with the offering of music to help us prepare for the words and actions to follow in the Service.

The Prelude — Variations on “Comfort, Comfort Ye My People”

Georg Böhm

Lector I **The Welcome**

Introit — “O people of Sion, behold, the Lord will come to save the nations, and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your heart.”

Standing as able, we continue our prayer as clergy and ministers are called forth from the congregation to assist us as leaders in worship.

Gathering Hymn - Blue Hymnal No. 57: Lo! He comes with clouds descending

Helmsley

Welcome and Invitation to a Holy Advent (*standing as able*)

Presider: †Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People: **And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever. Amen.**

Presider: Advent, a season of waiting and preparation, celebrates the coming of our Savior and the promised salvation for God's people. This time of waiting is also a time for us to work for peace and justice. It is a time for us to consider our priorities as we walk in the light that God gives us. During Advent, we celebrate Christ's coming by lighting the candles of our Advent wreath to remind us of the hope Christ brings to the world and God's unbroken love for us.

Presider: Stir up your power, O Christ, and come,

People: **That by your protection we may be rescued from darkness and saved by your mighty deliverance.**

Presider: Today as we light the second Advent candle, we are reminded that the flickering of the flame reminds us that our waiting is a time of both contemplation and action. (The second Advent candle is lit.)

Presider: Let us pray together.

People: **Dear God, through your Spirit you spoke to the Prophets, and the people prayed and waited for a Messiah to come. Through your Spirit, speak to each of us that we may feel your presence and know your desire for us in our Advent waiting. Amen.**

Hymn: O come, O come, Emmanuel

Veni, veni, Emmanuel

Cantor: Stanza III

O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
Who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times didst give the law,
In cloud, and majesty, and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel

All: Stanza IV

**O come, thou Branch of Jesse's tree,
Free them from Satan's tyranny
That trust thy mighty power to save,
And give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!**

The Confession

Intercessor: Let us confess our sins to God and to one another.

All: **Have mercy upon us, most merciful God; in your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone; and so uphold us by your Spirit that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Absolution

Presider: †Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

6 He shall come down like rain upon the mown field, *
like showers that water the earth.

7 In his time shall the righteous flourish; *
there shall be abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more. *Antiphon*

18 Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, *
who alone does wondrous deeds!

19 And blessed be his glorious Name for ever! *
and may all the earth be filled with his glory. Amen. Amen. *Antiphon*

The Christian Scripture

Romans 15:4-13

Lector II: A Reading from the Letter to the Romans.

Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

"Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name"; and again he says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people"; and again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him"; and again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope." May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Lector II: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's People.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

The Gospel Hymn — Blue Hymnal 76: On Jordan's banks the Baptist's cry

Winchester New

The Gospel (*Standing as able*)

Matthew 3:1-12

Gospeler: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People: **Glory to you, O Christ.**

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. "I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

Gospeler: The Gospel of Christ.

People: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

The Homily

Silence is observed for reflection.

The Rev. Dr. Christian Brocato

The Nicene Creed (*Please note the language for the Spirit.*)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made a man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son, the Spirit is worshiped and glorified. The Spirit has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the †resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of the People (*Standing as able*)

The following prayers are offered to God on behalf of all people, those children of all ages gathered here in-person or praying with us online, and those around the world.

Lector I: O God of many names, God beyond all names; the beginning and the end of every story, the meaning of every life; infinite Mystery both hidden and revealed: We pray: **O God, hear us.**

Lector II: O Holy One, blessed are you who join us together in the communion of Christ's Body. Renew and energize your holy Church here at St. Mark's and throughout the world, that we may be a resurrection people, manifesting your steadfast love in our common life of praise and service. We pray: **O God, hear us.**

Lector I: O Perfect Wisdom, direct and rule the hearts of the leaders and shapers of society, raise up prophets of justice and peace, and empower your people for the holy vocation of repairing the world. May we entrust all our labors to the work of Providence. We pray: **O God, hear us.**

Lector II: O Deliverer, you unlock every door and make a way where there is no way. Set free all who are afflicted or distressed in body, mind or spirit. Resurrect their hope, grant them peace and refreshment, and restore their joy. We pray: **O God, hear us.**

Lector I: O Morning Star, bright splendor of the light eternal, illumining all things with your radiance: Come, enlighten all who sit in darkness, and those who dwell in the shadow of violence and death. Grant us your peace, and teach us to live in the dawn of your unfailing promise. We pray: **O God, hear us.**

Lector II: O Compassionate One, hold us in your mercy: heal the sick, especially those for whom we have promised to pray, mend the broken, protect the vulnerable, shelter the refugee, strengthen the weary, rescue the lost, and give courage to all who struggle. We pray: **O God, hear us.**

Lector I: O Desire of every heart, the answer to our longing: You are the strong force which draws us into the mystery of love divine. Lead us ever deeper into your Way. Bless those who have died and those who mourn their passing. Our Altar flowers today are provided by Deb Nordman in loving memory of her husband, Randy Nordman. We also mourn the loss of Wendell Chivis, who passed away on Thursday. We pray: **O God, hear us.**

Lector II: O God who has come, God who does come, God who is yet to come: Make us ready and alert to welcome and receive you in the stranger, the loving act, the moment of grace, the presence of healing, the birth of possibility, the gift of wonder. Let every heart prepare you room. We pray: **O God, hear us.**

Lector I: For what else, or whom else, shall we pray? (Pause to add additional prayers.) We pray: **O God, hear us.**

Presider II: O Emmanuel, God-with-us, you show us the face of divinity and reveal the fullness of our humanity. Come: renew your creation, restore us all in Christ, and enable us to become your faithful and loving people. We pray in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

*Adapted: www.episcopalcafe.com

The Peace

Presider I: The peace of Christ be with you always.

All: **And also with you.**

Presider: Let us offer one another a sign of that peace.

Announcements

While special music is offered, our monetary gifts are received for the benefit of the mission of St. Mark's. The Table is prepared, and the collected gifts are presented to be blessed by God. The Liturgy of the Table asks God to receive our gifts of bread and wine and ourselves as we are blessed by God in the Holy Eucharist.

Offertory Music — Creator of the Stars at Night

Michael Praetorius

Presentation Hymn

Conditor alme siderum

(Spoken at 8 a.m. and sung at 10:30 a.m. **Please note the new tune and the text**)

Praise God the Fath - er and the Son, and with the Spir - it, Three in One.

Praise Trin - i - ty, O Mys - ter - y, both now and ev - er blest will be. A - men.

The Liturgy of the Table

The Invitation

BCP, Church of England, Eucharistic Prayer E

Bread and wine have been received, and we now call upon God, the Father, through the Son, to consecrate them through the power of the Holy Spirit.

(Spoken at 8 a.m. and sung or spoken or sung at 10:30 a.m.)

Celebrant *People*
The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Celebrant *People*
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Celebrant
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People
It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Presider: O God, we give you thanks because when Jesus humbled himself to come among us in human flesh, he fulfilled the plan you formed long ago and opened for us the way of salvation.

So now, we watch for the day, knowing that the salvation promised us will be ours when Christ will come again in glory. And so, we gladly thank you with St. Mark and all saints and angels, praising you, and as we pray:

(Contemporary) **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

(Spanish) **Padre nuestro, que estas en el cielo, santificado sea tu nombre; venga a nosotros tu reino, hágase tu voluntad, en la tierra como en el cielo, danos hoy nuestro pan de cada día, perdona nuestras ofensas, como también nosotros perdonamos a los que nos ofenden, no nos dejes caer en la tentación y libranos del mal. Porque tuyo es el reino, el poder, y la gloria por los siglos de los siglos. Amen.**

As the following words are offered, the Presider breaks the consecrated bread and wine and hold them up so that all may see and respond. Hosts are prepared with wine added in advance of the Service. Each host contains both consecrated bread and wine.

The Breaking of the Bread and the Reception of the Sacrament *(Spoken at 8 a.m.)*

O Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the sins of the world,
 have mer-cy up-on us. O Lamb of God, that
 tak-est a-way the sins of the world, have mer-cy up-on
 us O Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the
 sins of the world, grant us thy peace.

Presider: The gifts of God for the people of God.

All: Let us take them in remembrance that Christ died for us and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

Presider: As is our tradition, all are invited to the Holy Eucharist at the Table of the Lord. If you prefer to receive a blessing, please cross your hands over your chest, and you will receive a blessing. Please follow the guide of the ushers to receive Communion which contains combined elements of consecrated bread and wine. If you prefer a host without wine, gluten free consecrated hosts are available and are without wine. If you wish, please feel free to dip your host into consecrated wine offered in a cup for intinction.

We come to the Altar-at-the-Crossing to kneel or stand to receive the Eucharist. Gluten free wafers are also available. The Eucharist contains consecrated bread and wine combined prior to the Service and now the Body and Blood of Jesus while also remaining bread and wine.

The Distribution of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Minister: The body and blood of Christ.

All: Amen.

Communion Hymn — Red Hymnal 11: Prepare ye the way of the Lord

James E. Moore

Post-Communion Hymn: Lead me, Lord (*Stanzas 1, 2 and repeat stanza 1*)

1. Lead me, Lord, lead me in thy right-cous-ness, make Thy way
2. Lead me, Lord, lead me in true hol-i-ness, teach me to
plain be-fore my face. For it is thou, Lord, thou, Lord,
love and trust in thee. Thou art our God, the God of our sal-
on-ly, that mak-est me dwell in safe-ty.
va-tion, all na-tions shall praise thy ho-ly name.

Post-communion Prayer (*Please stand as you are able*)

Presider: Let us pray together:

People: **Loving God, we give you thanks for restoring us in your image and nourishing us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood. Now send us forth a people, forgiven, healed, renewed; that we may proclaim your love to the world and continue in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.**

The Blessing

Presider II: Life is short, and we do not have much time to gladden the hearts of those who make the journey with us. So, be swift to love and make haste to be kind. And the blessing of the †God who made us, who loves us, and who travels with us be with us now and forevermore we pray. **Amen.**

The Hymn of Sending Forth — Blue Hymnal 65: Prepare the way, O Zion

Bereden väg för Herran

Here, we are sent into the world having been nourished and fed for the journey of life. We will go with thanksgiving to be light in the world for those all around us.

The Sending Forth

Deacon: Friends in Christ, let us go forth to love and serve God and all God's people. Alleluia. Alleluia.

All: Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Alleluia.

The Postlude — Postlude on "Comfort, Comfort Ye My People"

Böhm

You are invited to participate in the tradition at St. Mark's to remain seated until all the candles are extinguished and the postlude has ended, fitting ways to conclude our worship together. Following the Service, please join us for further fellowship in the Parish Hall just across the foyer from the Sanctuary.

A reminder that when the Rector preaches, his homily is available on the Resource Table in the north transept. Please, feel free to take a copy for further reflection. All homilies are videoed and can be found at www.stmarksgr.org at the Media tab and on YouTube at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Grand Rapids, MI. The 10:30 a.m. Eucharist is live-streamed and can be found on the Parish's website at www.stmarksgr.org and on our Facebook page and YouTube channel both with links on our website.

Offertory and Ways to Give to St. Mark's Episcopal Church

- 1.) Place check or cash in the offering plate
- 2.) Electronic Giving (email Pam for form – see the attachment in our e-news)
- 3.) Vanco Mobile App from any mobile device
- 4.) Pay by text - text 616-205-9714 from your phone and send a payment
- 5.) Mobil App Square cash - Cashtag: \$stmarksgr Web address: cash.me/\$stmarksgr
- 6.) Mail a check to the church
- 7.) Online at our website at www.stmarksgr.org through PayPal
- 8.) Remember St. Mark's in your Estate Planning
- 9.) Gifts or Transfer of Stock



Total budget for 2022: \$673,270

Pledged Amount for 2022: \$484,255

Received Yr. to Date (Pledges, Gifts and Income): \$552,567

Proposed Budget (2023): \$724,000

Pledges Needed (2023): \$500,000

Pledges Received to Date: \$501,724

Thanks to all who financially support the Ministry of St. Mark's. Please know that additional pledges can be received at any time. Any questions whatsoever, please feel free to contact our Finance Manager, Pam Stevenson or our Treasurer, Marc Vander Velde.

The St. Mark's Prayer List

The Sick

The Ash Family
The Bedford Family
Charlie Coplin
Anthony DeMello
Jennifer Julius
Tom Klein
Anais Laurent
George Linde
Jean McCormick
John Oatley
Marie Pearthree
Rev. David Pike
Mary Rollins
Craig Timm
Jim Todd
Jeanne Zylstra

Those in Military Service

Col. Timothy Brower, Sr. USA
HC. Yamar Chivis USN
Henry Dykema, USNG
Cpt. Nathan Gaggin, USAF
Col. Gabriel Monsalvo, USMC
Lt. Col. Todd Murray, USAF
1st Sgt. Deidre Piechocki, USA

Discernment for Ordained Ministry

Rachel Ravellette
Cathy Stevens

Homebound Parishioners

Sue Allen
Nita and Chuck DeGraaf
John Gracki
Irene Haizman
Mary Rollins
Irene Savara
Shirley VanDerBos
Roma Warmington
John Wells
Jean Zylstra

Officers of the Vestry

Nancy Dodge, Senior Warden
Dawn Buller, Junior Warden
Brian Topolewski, Clerk
Marc VanderVelde, Treasurer

Members of the Vestry

Kate Dykema
Judy Freeman
Joshua Gonzales
Chuck Hoyt
Gloria Lara
Jon Anderson
Amy Richards-Duncan
Mike Armour

Upcoming Events

Advent II Dec. 4: Christmas Tree Lighting and Carols at 4:30 p.m. followed by the Sacred Sounds Concert at 5:00 p.m.

Advent Sunday Forums Dec. 4, 11 and 18, 9:30 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

Catholic Information Center Advent Event "From Grieving to Joy," Dec. 6, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Advent Wednesday Forums, Dec. 7 and 14: supper at 6:00 p.m., forum from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.,

Advent III, Dec. 18, 5:00 p.m., Sacred Sounds Advent Festival of Lessons and Carols

Labyrinth, December 21, prayer from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Family Eucharist Service and Pageant at 5:00 p.m. and Festival Candlelight Service at 10:00 p.m.

Christmas Day Eucharist Service at 10:30 a.m. (only)

New Year's Day (Sunday) Services at 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Announcements

eNews: Please visit our website at www.stmarksgsr.org and click on the scroll that says “Newsletter” for our weekly announcements, opportunities and news. This is the same as our electronic newsletter (eNews) to which you may subscribe to receive in your email each week by filling out one of our Welcome Cards and placing it on Megan’s desk.

Visit the resource table in the north transept: We offer Advent Daily Devotional Booklets, The Daily Bread, Day by Day and so much more!

Christmas Tree Lighting and Carols, this afternoon at 4:30 p.m.: Bundle up and join us for Christmas Carols and the blessing and lighting of the newly planted Christmas tree on the lawn of the Parish Hall. Stay for the Sacred Sounds Concert at 5:00 p.m.

Sacred Sounds Concert tonight at 5:00 p.m.: Hannah De Priest, soprano, is praised for her impeccable singing and vivid performances. She is in high demand on both sides of the Atlantic. Joining this Prize Winner of the 2021 International Cesti Vocal Competition is the celebrated pianist Michael Pecak. You will not want to miss this event. This concert is free but donations to the Sacred Sounds program will be graciously accepted. The concert will be followed by a reception in the Parish Hall.

We continue collecting items for Westminster Food Pantry on the first Sunday of each month: Our food local food pantry is very grateful for our generous support and we appreciate the many items and donations you are able to provide. Although we take the collection to the pantry after the first Sunday of each month, we appreciate your donation at any time. December’s featured item is cereal and January cans of soup. Questions? Please contact our deacon, Jan, who is instrumental in our connection to this community ministry.

Advent Event: From Grieving to Joy, December 6, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.: Please, join me and others for prayer, reflection and discussion at the Catholic Information Center, 360 Division Ave. South (See flyer in the Parish House Foyer) as we gather for an evening in Advent. I volunteer at the CIC and hope that you will want to be with us for this unique Advent opportunity. Also, there is need for a few volunteers at the Center on the following: Preparation of packets on Tuesday, Nov. 29, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Set-up on Tuesday, Dec. 6 at 1:00 p.m. Clean-up after the event on Tuesday, Dec. 6 8:45-9:30 p.m. If you can help, please, contact at church or via my cell or sign-up at the Welcome Desk in the Parish Hall.
~Blessings, Christian+

The Kent Philharmonic Orchestra presents a Christmas Concert for All Ages, Friday Evening December 9, 7:30 p.m.: The Kent Philharmonic Orchestra presents a holiday concert featuring The Carol Symphony by Victor Hely-Hutchison. The orchestra will also perform A Christmas Festival and Sleigh Ride by Leroy Anderson and excerpts from the Nutcracker Suite by Peter Tchaikovsky. The St. Cecilia Auditorium is located at 24 Ransom NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. Tickets are available at the door.

The Parish Life/Hospitality Civic Theater annual holiday musical on Sunday, December 11 for the 2:00 matinee: This year they are performing Mary Poppins! We have the group rate if we have 20 or more. Tickets are \$28.00 for adults and \$16.00 for students. That is a \$7.00 savings with the group rate. We also are planning on a complimentary luncheon at the church prior to the play. Please send your check to Pam Stevenson, our bookkeeper. Remember that your check will insure your reservation. Deadline for reservations is December 2.

Sanctuary Giving Tree: Our annual Giving Tree is dedicated this year to providing additional winter clothing to our homeless neighbors and Breakfast Cafe guests. While we had a generous outpouring of gifts in October to provide many of these items, we are experiencing an increase in the number of newly homeless neighbors. Please consider bringing hats, scarves, gloves, and socks to carefully place on or below the tree in the south transept. These items will be distributed at the Christmas Breakfast Cafe in December. Thank you for your generosity. ~ *Outreach and Social Justice Ministry*

Episcopal 101: An Inquirer's Journey, January to April 2023: If you wish to be received into the Episcopal Church, to be confirmed in the Episcopal Church or to reaffirm your faith as an Episcopalian, please, consider this opportunity at St. Mark's. All participants will be expected to prepare the materials whether in attendance or not, and that only a minimum number of sessions can be missed. A variety of days and times will be offered to try and accommodate as many schedules as possible. If needed, I will schedule a make-up session or two. A sign-up sheet is available at the Welcome Desk in the foyer of the Parish House or you can contact me as well. Many thanks. ~ *Christian+*

Sunday Forums in Advent: Join us for Advent Sunday forums in the Canterbury Room on Dec. 4, 11 and 18. Teams of individuals from the Adult Formation Ministry will lead presentations and discussions on "All Earth is Waiting: Good News for God's Creation at Advent." Sessions will be from 9:30 to 10:15. Please, join us if you are able in the Canterbury Room. ~ *Adult Formation Ministry*

Wednesdays in Advent: Please, join us for several unique opportunities in Advent on Wednesdays, Dec. 7 and 14. On Dec. 7 and 14, we will have a light supper together and then retreat to the St. Mary's Chapel for a combination of reflections and prayers by candlelight from 6:30-7:30. The themes will be longing, hoping for hope, active anticipation and preparation and Taizé-style chants will be part of our evening together, as we journey together in Advent toward Christ's coming again. On Dec. 18, the Parish Labyrinth will be on display for prayer in the Parish Hall from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Please, come and pray with this unique method for prayer and meditation. *Adult Formation Ministry*

Labyrinth Walk offered Dec. 21: On Dec. 18 there will be a candlelight Labyrinth Walk in the Parish Hall from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.. You're invited to pause in the final hectic days of this season, to be still and be in communion with God and other pilgrims. If you're not familiar with walking the labyrinth, it is an ancient spiritual practice, a walking meditation, a path of prayer, used by Christians since the fourth century. The Labyrinth represents a journey to our own center and back again out into the world. Come any time and stay as long as you wish.

An Advent Festival of Lessons and Carols, Dec. 18, 5:00 p.m.: Please join us in this yearly celebration of special readings and music for Advent.