

First Sunday of Advent

December 1, 2024

8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist (in-person and live-streamed)



St. Mark's Episcopal Church
134 N. Division Ave
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
www.stmarksgr.org
616.456.1684

Welcome to 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, 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.

Church Office Hours: Monday—Thursday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday— 9 a.m. to noon.

Weather Policy: St. Mark's will post closures to WZZM 13, WOOD TV8, Facebook and our website by 7:00 a.m. or as soon as possible. The decision on afternoon and evening activities will be made separately, posted by noon.

Reserved Accessible Spaces: Note, there are three designated spaces for those with assistive devices or in need of extra space, two in the north transept and one on the north side of the nave. Please, leave those spaces available and the adjoining pews for family members.

Safety: The outer 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. Please, pay attention to the nearest exit in the Sanctuary. An announcement will be made in case of an emergency. Children will be ushered out of the building to a designated place for safety away from the Church complex.

Parking on Sundays: Limited parking is available in the Parish Lot. If you are able, please, consider not parking in the Parish Lot to reserve access for those less mobile. Consider the free metered parking on Pearl, Ionia, Lyon, Fountain and other streets near the church, the Kendall Lot across the street when the gate is up, the upper levels of the GRCC building on Fountain Street (only until 2 p.m.), and the Ellis Parking Lot at 210 Ionia just west of Lyon Street. For the Ellis Lot: vouchers for free parking on Sundays are available from an Usher, a Greeter or on the Resource Table in the north transept (must be used along with original parking ticket).

Rest Rooms are located on the main level of the Parish House under the exit sign at the top of the Foyer ramp. Additional rest rooms are located on the second level of the Parish House; those able to use stairs are encouraged to use upper-floor restrooms.

Weekly Worship and Prayer at St. Mark's: Eucharist on Sundays at 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Midweek Eucharist on Wednesdays at noon from September through May. Compline (Night Prayer) on Mondays at 8:00 p.m. via Facebook live. All are always welcome!

Children's Ministry: Sundays, we offer children's formation during 10:30 services. This includes formation, nursery care and church school. For more information please contact Jeff Brown, Director of Faith Formation, at jeffb@stmarksgr.org.

Youth Ministry: 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 regular formation gatherings during the school year and service as well as social activities throughout the year. Please contact our Director of Faith Formation, Jeff Brown, for more information: jeffatgrey@gmail.com.

Adult Formation Ministry: *Adult Forums* are offered on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings at different times of the year. *Episcopal 101: An Inquirer's Journey* is offered yearly for adults especially those seeking Confirmation, Reception into the Episcopal Church or to Reaffirm one's faith. A multi-year seminar, *Education for Ministry* (EFM), is offered during the program year. Please, contact Doug Karsen for more information at karsencd@gmail.com.

Breakfast Café Ministry: A program to nourish our neighbors with a hot meal, is at 8:15 a.m. every Saturday. If you would like more information and to possibly volunteer, please contact Judy Freeman at judyfw@comcast.net.

Land Acknowledgment: St. Mark's recognizes that our property sits on land of the indigenous people of the Three Fires. It is our privilege to occupy this land while recognizing and acknowledging with sadness the deep wounds created many years ago by our forebears.

St. Mark's eNews: For the fullest expression of St. Marks' activities, see the weekly eNews in your email or our website.

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

St. Mark's Full-Time* and Part-Time Staff

The Rev. David Blank, Interim Rector*
The Rev. Jan Gockerman, Deacon

Pam Stevenson, Finance Manager*
Kate Assarian, Administrative Associate*
Dr. Gregory Crowell, Director of Music
Jeff Brown, Director of Faith Formation*
Alexis VanZalen, Organ Scholar

Mike Armour, Operations Manager
Ronnie Hammond, Sexton
Craig Mosley, Sexton Associate, Video
Marquice Jackson, Weekend Sexton
Jamie Interrial, Security Representative
Eric Gable, Webmaster

The Gathering of God's People

The Prelude — Savior of the Nations, Come

J.G. Walther

Welcome and Greeting — *Lector I*

Welcome and Invitation to a Holy Advent (*You may stand.*)

Presider: † Blessed be God, most holy, gracious and undivided Trinity.

All: **And blessed be God's reign, now and forever. Amen.**

Presider: Advent is a season of waiting and preparation to celebrate 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.

The Procession and Litany (*Spoken.*)

Lector or Presider: Holy God, Creator of heaven and earth,

All: **Have mercy on us.**

Lector: Holy and Mighty, Redeemer of the world,

All: **Have mercy on us.**

Lector: Holy Immortal One, Sanctifier of the faithful,

All: **Have mercy on us.**

Lector: Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, One God,

All: **Have mercy on us.**

Lector: Govern and direct your holy Church, especially here at St. Mark's; fill it with love and truth; and grant it that unity which is your will.

All: **Hear us, O Christ.**

Lector: Give your people grace to witness to your word and bring forth the fruit of your Spirit.

All: **Hear us, O Christ.**

Lector: Strengthen those who stand; comfort and help the fainthearted; strengthen the first responders and medical professionals across the world.

All: **Hear us, O Christ.**

Lector: Give us the will to use the resources of the earth to your glory and for the good of all.

All: **Hear us, O Christ.**

Lector: Comfort and liberate the lonely, the bereaved and the oppressed.

All: **Hear us, O Christ.**

Lector: Provide for the homeless, the hungry and the destitute.

All: **Hear us, O Christ.**

Lector: Guard and protect all children who are in danger.

All: **Hear us, O Christ.**

Lector: Shower your compassion on prisoners, hostages, refugees and all who are in trouble.

All: **Hear us, O Christ.**

Lector: Forgive our enemies, persecutors and slanderers, and turn their hearts.

All: **Hear us, O Christ.**

Presider: Give us true repentance; forgive us our sins of negligence and ignorance and our deliberate sins: and grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit to amend our lives according to your word. And may God forgive our sins, those things we have done and those things we have left undone, in the †Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Blessing of the Advent Wreath and Candle Lighting

Presider: Blessed are you, O God. You sent your Son to be the light of the world and to spread his light of love to all. †Bless this wreath and candles made by human hands. May increasing light be a sign to us of the approaching nearness of your Son, that we might prepare in joy for Christ's coming among

us and be ready to receive him at his coming again in glory; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Presider: Today as we light the first Advent candle, the flickering of the flame reminds us that our waiting is a time of both contemplation and action. *(The first Advent candle is lit.)* Let us pray together:

All: **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 will in our Advent waiting. Amen.**

Peo - ple, look East. The time is near of the crown - ing of the
year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble, trim the hearth and set the
ta - ble. Peo-ple, look East and sing to - day: Love, the guest is on the way.

Collect of the Day

Deacon or Presider: God be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

Deacon: Let us pray.

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Word

The Hebrew Scripture

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Lector I: A Reading from the Prophet Jeremiah

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness."

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

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 25:1-9

Ad te, Domine, levavi

(Prayed responsively by half verse at 8 a.m.; Antiphon intoned by the choir and repeated by all at 10:30 a.m.)

Lead me in your truth, O Lord _____ and teach me.

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul;
my God, I put my trust in you; *
let me not be humiliated,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.

Let none who look to you be put to shame; *
let the treacherous be disappointed in their schemes.

Antiphon

Show me your ways, O Lord, *
and teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth and teach me, *
**for you are the God of my salvation;
in you have I trusted all the day long.**

Antiphon

Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love, *
for they are from everlasting.

Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; *
**remember me according to your love
and for the sake of your goodness, O Lord.**

Antiphon

Gracious and upright is the Lord; *
therefore he teaches sinners in his way.

He guides the humble in doing right *
and teaches his way to the lowly.

All the paths of the Lord are love and faithfulness *
to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

Antiphon

The Christian Scripture

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Lector II: A reading from Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians.

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

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

All: **Thanks be to God.**

The Gospel Hymn — Blue Hymnal 57: Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending

Helmsley

The Gospel (You may stand.)

Luke 21:25-36

Deacon: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

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

Jesus said, "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

"Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Deacon: The Gospel of Christ.

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

The Homily

The Rev. David Blank, Interim Rector

The Nicene Creed

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 (*You may stand.*)

Lector I: We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons: Sean, Presiding Bishop; Skip, our Assisting Bishop; Bonnie and Rayford, Bishops of Michigan and Northern Michigan; Moises, Bishop of the Dominican Republic and Craig, ELCA Bishop of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod; St. Paul's of Flint and its Priest-in-Charge, Tom Manney; Trinity Church of Grand Ledge and its Rector, Gail Shafer; Church of the Good Shepherd of Allegan and its Priest Associate, Corwin Stoppel. We remember the Province of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan. We pray:

All: **That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.**

Lector II: *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:

All: **O God, hear us.**

Lector I: 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 II: 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 I: 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 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. We pray: **O God, hear us.**

Lector II: 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.*) We pray: **O God, hear us.**

Deacon or Presider: 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: 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

Offertory Music — The Grain Is Ripe

Philip Nunn

Presentation Hymn (*Spoken at 8 a.m. and sung at 10:30 a.m.*)

Gustav Holst

What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shep-herd,
I would bring a lamb; if I were a wise man, I would do my part; yet
what I can I give him, give my heart.

The Liturgy of the Table

The Invitation

BCP, Church of England, Eucharistic Prayer E

Presider: The Lord be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

Presider: Lift up your hearts.

All: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Presider: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: **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:

Sanctus

Healey Willan

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho ——— ly, Lord God of Hosts: Hea - ven and earth are full —
— of thy glo - ry. Glo ——— ry be to thee, O Lord Most High. Bless - ed is he that
com - eth ——— in the name ——— of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Presider: We praise and bless you, loving Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; and as we obey his command, †send your Holy Spirit, upon these gifts that broken bread and wine outpoured may be for us †the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died, Jesus had supper with his friends, and, taking bread, he praised you. He broke the bread, gave it to them and said: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended, he took the cup of wine. Again, he praised you, gave it to them and said: Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did, in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross. Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation, we proclaim his death and resurrection until he comes in glory:

All: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Presider: God of all life, help us to work together for that day when your kingdom comes and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth. †Look with favor on your people. Gather us in your loving arms and bring us with St. Mark and all the saints to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory are yours, O loving Father, for ever and ever.

Celebrant *People*
A - men.

The Lord's Prayer

Presider: Please pray the Lord's Prayer in whichever language or version you prefer.

(Traditional) **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

(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.

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

Healey Willan

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 iup - 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.

Instruction for Receiving Communion: All are invited to receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist, bread and wine, the Body and Blood of Jesus. Following the distribution of bread, please feel free to dip your host into the cup. Gluten-free bread is available upon request. If you prefer to receive a blessing, come forward with hands crossed over your chest. Please follow the Ushers' direction to the communion rail and fill in from right to left. All are welcome at the Table of the Lord.

Healing Prayer: When present in the South Transept, healing ministers offer a brief and simple prayer.

The Distribution of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Minister: The body and blood of Christ.

All: Amen.

Communion Hymn — Blue Hymnal No. 601: O Day of God, Draw Nigh

St. Michael

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

Deacon or Presider: Let us pray together:

All: 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: 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 61: “Sleepers, Wake!” A Voice Astounds Us *Wachet auf*

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 — Sleepers, Wake!

J.G. Walther

Thank you for being with us today. We are all invited to participate in the St. Mark’s tradition to remain seated until the postlude has ended and the candles are extinguished. Then join us in the Parish Hall for further fellowship. The 10:30 a.m. Service is live-streamed on Facebook and YouTube and can be found at stmarksgr.org and on YouTube.

Church Spotlight Global Gifts and Open Door Bakery

See what treats and treasures you find in the Social Hall this Sunday, between or after Services!

Global Gifts always has fresh and unique gift ideas + their fair trade supports international artisans.

Open Door Bakery, part of Degage Ministries, helps women build community and bakery retail skills.

Then take a moment to pack a ‘finals snack bag’ for the college students who meet here on Wednesdays for the Open Table lunch with the United Campus Christian Fellowship (UCCF).

The St. Mark's Prayer List

Contact the church office to add names to the prayer list. Names may be removed after one month unless requested.

The Sick and Other Needs

Alissa Almont Sue Allen
 Dave Atkinson Susan Andrews
 Jayne Austin Nita DeGraaf
 Barb Balsler John Gracki
 Bill Bellinger Mary Rollins
 Sally Bowie Irene Savara
 Ed Cox Roma Warmington
 Terry Dusendang Jean Zylstra
 Ruth Hammond
 Alena Kirova
 Kathryn Marmion
 Laura Maslonka
 Jackie McCarthy
 Chris McClain
 Carmela McIntire
 Bill Nasser
 Ed Nicholson
 Bea Rocco
 Javier Ronquillo
 Dan Scripsema
 Meghan
 VanderMale
 Roger York

In Military Service

B.G. Timothy Brower, Sr. USA
 PV2. Cailen Donahue McLea, USA
 Spc. Henry Dykema, ARNG
 Cpt. Nathan Gaggin, USAF
 Col. Lt. Gabriel Monsalvo, USMC
 Col. Todd Murray, USAF
 2LT. John Nicholson, USA

Members of the Vestry

Dawn Buller, Sr. Warden
 Judy Freeman, Jr. Warden
 Brian Topolewski, Clerk
 Gloria Lara, Treasurer
 Jon Anderson
 Ben Busman
 Laura Kozminski
 Emily Krueger
 Penny Larsen
 Dan McDonald
 Carmela McIntire
 Amy Richards-Duncan

Search Committee

Bob Brower
 Doug Busman
 Nancy Dodge
 Karen Hunter
 Carmela McIntire
 Shawn Miller
 Heather Tafel
 Darren Walhof
 Jackie Yam

Postulant for Holy Orders

Thon Deng
 Cathy Stevens

Offerings and Multiple Ways to Give to St. Mark's

Place check or cash in the offering plate

Electronic giving (email pams@stmarksgr.org)



Vanco Mobile App from any mobile device:

Pay by text - text 616-205-9714 from your phone to send a payment

Mobile App Square Cash - Cashtag: \$stmarksgr Web address: [cash.me/\\$stmarksgr](https://cash.me/$stmarksgr)



Mail a check to the church

Online at our website at www.stmarksgr.org through PayPal

Remember St. Mark's in your estate planning (A brochure is available at the Welcome Desk.)

Gifts or transfer of stock

Parish Notes

Welcome! Guests, please sign the book in the front lobby. Fill out a Welcome Card (in the lobby podium) to get name tags, receive weekly eNews or officially join the St. Mark's Family in Faith.

Ingathering "Thank You!" A big thank you to the congregation for your generous outpouring of food for the Downtown Food Pantry. It was astounding! Thanks so much! ~*Outreach Ministry*

New Adult Formation, Sundays at 9:15 a.m.: Join Father Dave in December for a four-week course discussing the seasons, assigned readings, feast days, holy days and commemorations. *Did you know the Church year begins today, on the First Sunday of Advent? When did blue become the color of Advent (not purple)? What is an epiphany? How many principal feasts are in the Church year? Why does the date for Easter change every year? Why do the colors change on the altar, lectern and pulpit?* Come learn about the Church.

Shopping for a Cause and Service Project, Today: Stop by the Social Hall between or after Services. Global Gifts (fair trade non-profit) and Open Door Bakery (program of Degage Ministries) will have fun gift items for purchase. We also have ~200 'finals snack bags' to fill for our college student lunch.

Mitten Tree: Donations of mittens, gloves, hats and socks may be placed on the tree in the Sanctuary until December 22nd. Help us make the tree beautiful by filling it with these much-needed items for our downtown neighbors, to be distributed at Breakfast Cafe. ~*Outreach Ministry*

Evening in December, December 2nd, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Attend Onsite or Online. Hope is a compass pointing to true north as we navigate these times of change. And a new hope is the gift that Jesus brings as we prepare to celebrate his birth and the advent of his Kingdom. Join us for this annual ecumenical gathering of neighbors for dialogue, prayer, and community. Co-sponsored by St. Mark's, Bethlehem Lutheran, Cathedral of Saint Andrew, First United Methodist, Westminster Presbyterian.

Building Planning Update: Large size renderings and comment cards are available in the Social Hall.

'Love God, Love God's World': Join this exploration of creation care, every other Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.: December 4, 18; January 8, 22; and February 5, 19. Contact Rich, hiskesr@gvsu.edu for materials.

Cats at Civic Theater, December 8th, 2:00 p.m. Enjoy the refreshments at Social Hour then walk over.

Sandy Hook Memorial, December 8th, 4:30 p.m.: The work of Moms Demand Action began after the 2012 school shooting in Sandy Hook, Connecticut, when 26 children and educators died. Each year we remember those and all lost to gun violence with a December vigil. Please join us in the St. Mark's Sanctuary as we remember our "why" and work toward a future free from gun violence. The event lasts just under an hour, including a 15-20 minute silent candlelit walk to Rosa Parks Circle and back.

Compassionate Friends, December 8th, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. Anyone grieving the loss of a child may find comfort in this annual gathering of the Compassionate Friends support group held in the Social Hall.

Blue Christmas, December 11th, 6:00 p.m. in St. Mary's Chapel followed by a simple soup supper. This season is not a time for joy for everyone. "Blue" Christmas is a time when we can, with others, reflect on the pain, the loneliness, and the sadness you may feel and offer it to God for healing and transformation. We pray you will find hope and comfort knowing that you are loved and not alone.

Cookie Walk, December 15th, after the 10:30 a.m. Service: St. Mark's annual Cookie Walk is back as part of our December festivities! Please sign up on the sheet at the Welcome Desk indicating how many dozen cookies you will bring. Bakers are invited to bring their cookies to the kitchen before the Service. Following the Service, all may purchase an assortment of cookies for \$5 per quart-size bag. Funds will go towards summer camp scholarships. Cash, check and Cash App accepted. Reach out to Jeff, jeffatgrey@gmail.com, Anne, aarmour5@gmail.com, or Michelle, michellesorrelle@gmail.com.

Vestry Person of the Day: Bring your questions or ideas to the Welcome Desk after Services!