

The Fourth Sunday of Advent



December 21, 2025

9:30 a.m.

St. Mark's and St. John's Episcopal Church

Welcome to St. Mark's and St. John's!

Name tags are available. We'd love to make one for you if you do not have one already.

Help yourself to coffee in the "cafe," and feel free to bring it to your pew. We're casual.

We invite children to make themselves at home at our children's table, where there are weekly activity bulletins and crayons.

Our live YouTube broadcast begins at 9:30 am. The link to our YouTube channel is available on our website, stmarksandstjohns.org.

We do not pass an offering plate during the service. If you would like to make a financial gift, you can place it in the plate (by the sign-in binder) or contribute online.

Prelude

OPENING SENTENCE

Please stand

Celebrant: Blessed are you, holy and living One.

People: You come to your people and set them free.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

"Peace Like a River"

LEVAS, 188

1. I've got peace like a riv - er, I've got peace like a
2. I've got joy like a foun - tain, I've got joy like a
3. I've got love like an o - cean, I've got love like an

1. riv - er, I've got peace like a riv - er in my
2. foun - tain, I've got joy like a foun - tain in my
3. o - cean, I've got love like an o - cean in my

1. soul; _____ I've got riv - er in my soul. _____
2. soul; _____ I've got foun - tain in my soul. _____
3. soul; _____ I've got o - cean in my soul. _____

THE COLLECT FOR PURITY

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SALUTATION

Celebrant: God be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: Let us pray.

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

*The candle lit on the Fourth Sunday in Advent symbolizes Love
The Angel's Candle.*

CANDLE LIGHTING CHORAL MUSIC

“Freedom is Coming”

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 7:10-16

A reading from the Books of Isaiah, the seventh chapter...

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a

son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

Lector: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

People: **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 80: 1-7, 16-18

The Psalm will be read responsively by half-verse.

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; *

shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, *

stir up your strength and come to help us.

Restore us, O God of hosts; *

show the light of your countenance,

and we shall be saved.

O Lord God of hosts, *

how long will you be angered despite

the prayers of your people?

You have fed them with the bread of tears; *

you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

You have made us the derision of our neighbours, *

and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

Restore us, O God of hosts; *

**show the light of your countenance,
and we shall be saved.**

They burn it with fire like rubbish; *

at the rebuke of your countenance let them perish.

Let your hand be upon the one at your side in honour, *

the one you have made so strong for yourself.

And so will we never turn away from you; *

give us life, that we may call upon your name.

SECOND LESSON

Romans 1: 1-7

A reading from Paul's letter to the Romans, the first chapter...

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lector: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

People: **Thanks be to God.**

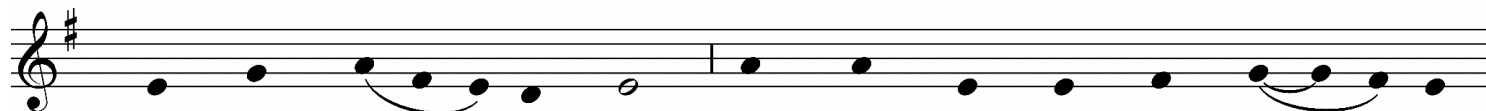
ADVENT HYMN

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

1982 Hymnal, 56



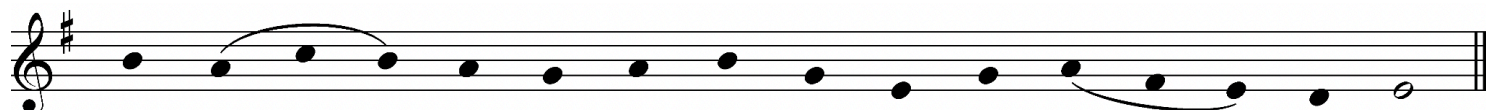
O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som
O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind in one the



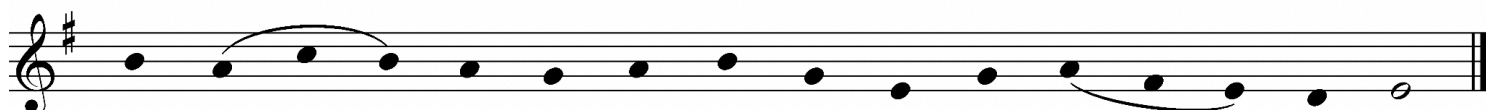
I cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile
hearts of all man - kind; bid thou our sad di - vi - sions



I here un - til the Son of God ap - pear. Re - joice! Re - joice!
' cease, and be thy - self our King of Peace.



Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!



Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

GOSPEL

Matthew 1:18-25

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

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a

dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

SERMON

Pastor Cindy

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 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 he is worshiped and glorified.
He 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.

SPECIAL MUSIC FOR PRAYER AND MEDITATION

You are warmly invited to light a candle at our prayer table and to write your prayer intentions on one of the Prayer Boards. These names and intentions will be included in the Prayers of the People.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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.

God of love

Hear our prayer

O Desire of every heart, the answer to every longing: You are the strong force that draws us into the mystery of your love. Forgive us those things that distract and delay us, and lead us ever deeper into your embrace.

God of love

Hear our prayer

God who has come, God who does come, God who is yet to come: Make us an Advent people, ready and alert to welcome and receive you in the stranger's face, the loving act, the moment of grace, the presence of healing, the birth of possibility, the gift of wonder. Let every heart prepare you a place.

God of love

Hear our prayer

Compassionate One, hold us in your mercy: heal the sick, mend the broken, protect the vulnerable, shelter the immigrant, strengthen the weary, rescue the lost, and give courage to all who struggle. We pray today for.....

God of love

Hear our prayer

Celebrant: Gracious God, You show us the face of the Divine, and reveal the fullness of our humanity. Come: renew your creation, restore us all in Christ, and enable us to continue to become more of who and whose we are. We pray in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

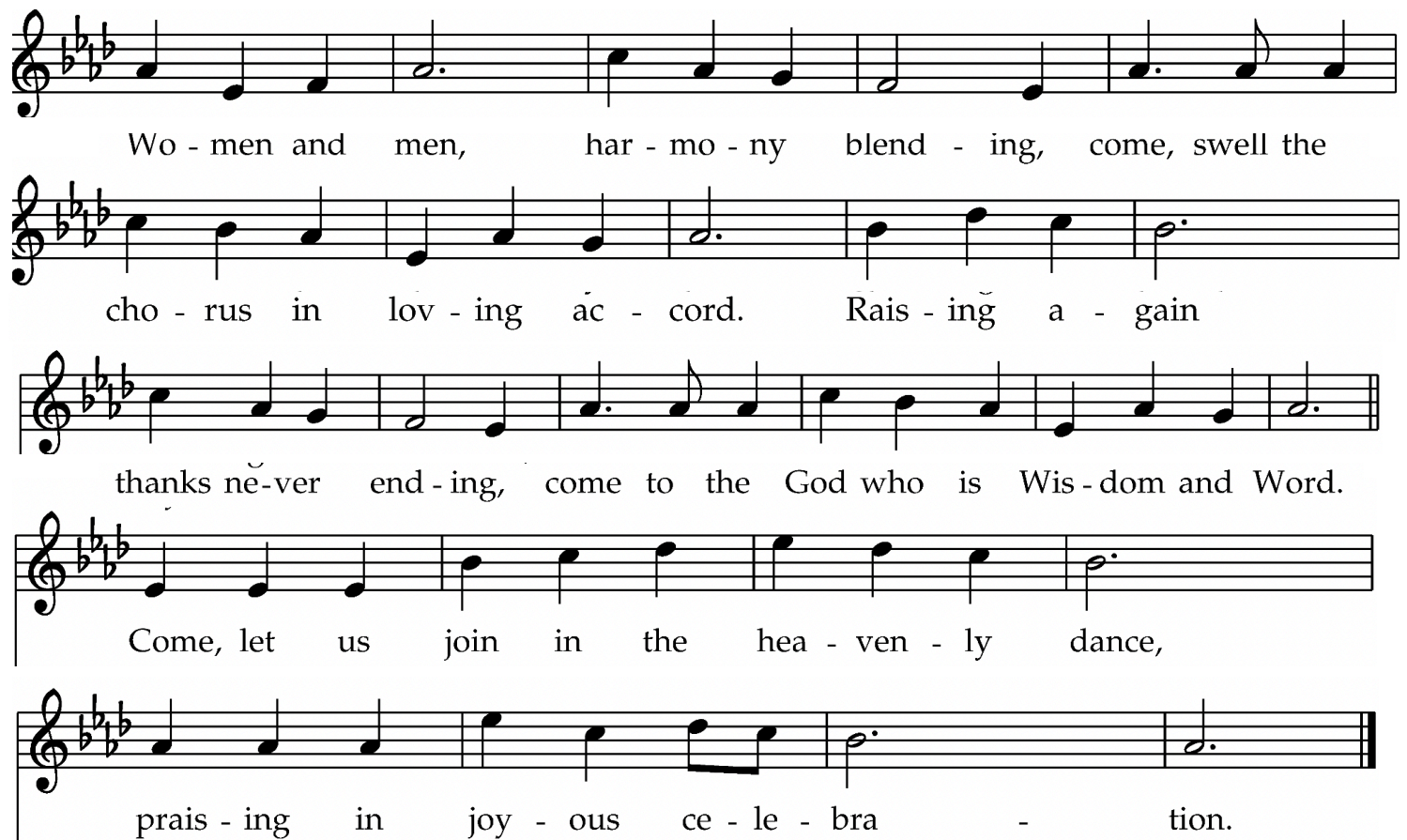
After the Passing of the Peace

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.

OFFERTORY

"People of God" (verse 4)

Eucharistic Ministers come to the Altar



Wo - men and men, har - mo - ny blend - ing, come, swell the
cho - rus in lov - ing ac - cord. Rais - ing a - gain
thanks ne-ver end - ing, come to the God who is Wis - dom and Word.
Come, let us join in the hea - ven - ly dance,
prais - ing in joy - ous ce - le - bra - tion.

ADVENT MUSIC

"People Look East" (*verse 4*)

Voices Found, 34

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more
light the bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y
weath - er, bright as sun and moon to - geth - er. Peo - ple, look
East and sing to - day: Love the guest is on the way.

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below each staff. The lyrics are: "Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more light the bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y weath - er, bright as sun and moon to - geth - er. Peo - ple, look East and sing to - day: Love the guest is on the way." The score ends with a double bar line.

HOLY EUCHARIST

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift-up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

All thanks and praise are yours at all times and in all places, our true and loving God; through Jesus Christ, your eternal Word, the Wisdom from on high by whom you created all things.

You laid the foundations of the world and enclosed the sea when it burst out from the womb; You brought forth all creatures of the earth and gave breath to humankind.

Wondrous are you, Holy One of Blessing, all you create is a sign of hope for our journey; And so as the morning stars sing your praises we join the heavenly beings and all creation as we shout with joy:

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Glory and honor are yours, Creator of all, your Word has never been silent; you called a people to yourself, as a light to the nations, you delivered them from bondage and led them to a land of promise. Of your grace, you gave Jesus to be human, to share our life, to proclaim the coming of your holy reign and give himself for us, a fragrant offering.

Through Jesus Christ our Redeemer, you have freed us from sin, brought us into your life, reconciled us to you, and restored us to the glory you intend for us.

We thank you that on the night before he died for us Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, gave it to his friends and said:

“Take, eat, this is my Body, broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.”

After supper Jesus took the cup of wine, said the blessing, gave it to his friends and said:

“Drink this, all of you: this cup is the new Covenant in my Blood, poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.”

And so, remembering all that was done for us: the cross, the tomb, the resurrection and ascension, longing for Christ’s coming in glory, and presenting to you these gifts your earth has formed and human hands have made, we acclaim you, O Christ:

**Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come in glory.**

Send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine that they may be to us the Body and Blood of your Christ. Grant that we, burning with your Spirit’s power, may be a people of hope, justice and love.

Giver of Life, draw us together in the Body of Christ, and in the fullness of time gather us with all your people into the joy of our true eternal home.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, we worship you our God and Creator in voices of unending praise.

Blessed are you now and for ever. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (adaptation)

Holy One, our only Home,
hallowed be your name.

May your day dawn,
your will be done,
here as in heaven.

Feed us today,
and forgive us as we forgive each other.

Do not forsake us at the test,
but deliver us from evil.

For the glory, the power,
and the mercy are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

We break this bread to share in the Body of Christ.

We who are many are one body, for we share in this one bread.

Eucharistic Ministers: The feast of life has been prepared for you -
partake and be filled with the goodness of God.

WELCOME TO THE TABLE

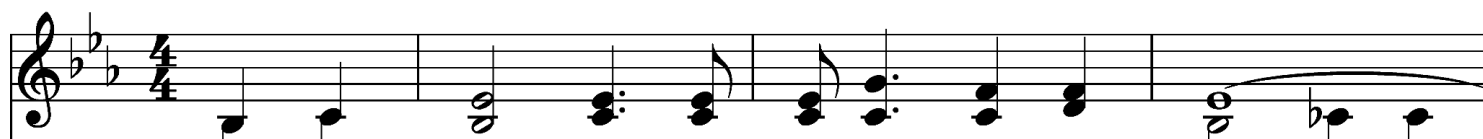
ALL are welcome to receive communion.

Gluten-free wafers and grape juice are available. If you would like to receive a blessing instead of communion, simply cross your arms in front of you.

COMMUNION MUSIC

"Let Us Break Bread Together"

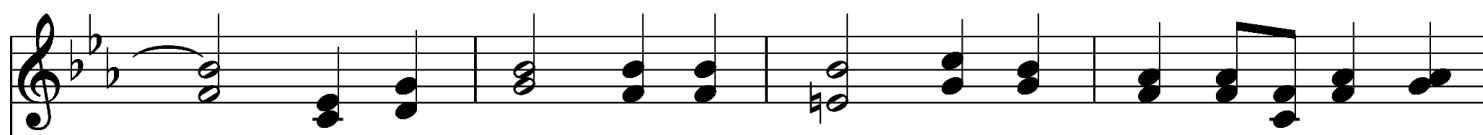
LEVAS, 152



1. Let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees (on our
2. Let us drink wine to - geth - er on our knees (on our




1. knees); Let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees (on our
2. knees); Let us drink wine to - geth - er on our knees (on our




1. knees).
2. knees). When I fall on my knees, with my face to the ris - ing



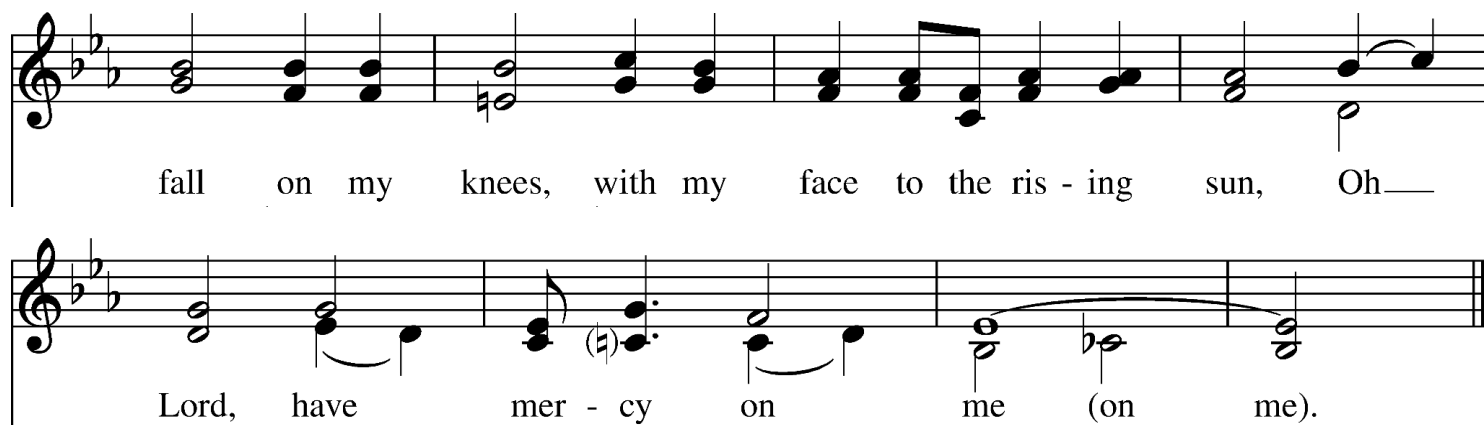
sun, Oh— Lord, have mer - cy on me (on me). me).



Let us praise God to - geth - er on our knees (yes, on our knees); Let us



praise God to - geth - er on our knees (yes, on our knees). When I



POST COMMUNION PRAYER

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" (Aotearoa) adapted for SMSJ liturgy - original music and words by
Chris Brown, Cody Carnes, Kari Jobe, Steven Furtick

The Lord bless you and keep you,
Make Her face shine upon you and be gracious to you.
The Lord turn Her face toward you and give you peace.
Amen, amen, amen; Amen, amen, amen.

May Her favor be upon you and a thousand generations
And your family and your children and their children,
and their children.
Amen, amen, amen; Amen, amen, amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May God, the God of peace, make you perfect and holy, and keep you safe and blameless, in spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And the blessing of God Almighty, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer be with you today and remain with you always. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISMISSAL

Deacon: Let us go forth into the light of Advent, preparing our hearts, homes, and world for the gifts of new birth.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

**Join us as we adorn the Church for Christmas
Vestry Meeting to follow**

December Celebrations

Birthdays	
Magnus R. - Dec. 3	Billy B. - Dec. 28
Maria - Dec. 22	Stephanie S. - Dec. 28

SMSJ Weekly Calendar

December 22-28, 2025

Monday, 12/22	<i>Church Office Closed</i>
Tuesday, 12/23	
Wednesday, 12/24	7:30 pm - Christmas Eve Service
Thursday, 12/25	<i>Church Office Closed</i> 10:00 am - Christmas Day Service
Friday, 12/26	<i>Church Office Closed</i>
Saturday, 12/27	
Sunday, 12/28	9:30 am - Lessons & Carols - Worship with Eucharist <i>The Rev'd Cindy Rasmussen, Presiding and Preaching</i>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

After service today! Decorate the Sanctuary - we need help preparing for Christmas! Pick up a slip with a job on it to adorn the space.

Vestry will meet today in the Board Room after decorating has been completed.

We are only \$5,000 short of our 2026 pledge goal. Pledge cards are available on the table at the entranceway and online.

SAVE THE DATE! Our **Annual Meeting** will be held on Sunday, January 25 following Worship. This is a time to hear and share all the good that's happened over the last year, to elect new Vestry Members, and celebrate what's to come.

Worship Leader Schedule - Lectors

Date	First Lesson & Psalm	Second Lesson	Prayers of the People & Greeter
12/21	Heather G.	Bob C.	Dave E.
12/28	Steve F.	Mary E.	Theresa H.
1/4	Tom F.	Mary Ellen F.	Nancy R.
1/11	Mary Ellen F.	Nancy R.	Bonnie H.
1/18	Nancy W.	Sharon K.	Helena W.
1/25	Michele H.	Joe C.	Deb S.

Worship Leader Schedule - Eucharistic Ministers

Date	Common Cup	Single Cup Tray	Collect Cups
12/21	Mary E.	Dave E.	Bob C.
12/28	Tom F.	Theresa H.	Mary E.
1/4	Dave E.	Bob C.	Heather G.
1/11	Terri C.	Deb S.	Joe C.
1/18	Michele H.	Sharon K.	Nancy W.
1/25	Nancy R.	Mary Ellen F.	Tom F.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

AT ST. MARK'S & ST. JOHN'S

11/30
12/7
12/14
12/21

9:30 AM

ADVENT WORSHIP
WITH EUCHARIST

DEC
24

7:30 PM

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP
WITH EUCHARIST

DEC
25

10:00 AM

CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP
WITH CAROLS

DEC
28

9:30 AM

CHRISTMAS LESSONS &
CAROLS

1245 Culver Road | Rochester, NY



St. Mark's & St. John's Leadership

Rector

The Rev'd Cindy Rasmussen, Ph.D.
crasmussen@stmarksandstjohns.org

Associate Priest

The Rev'd Maria Hartz-Clineburg
mhartz@stmarksandstjohns.org

Deacon

The Rev'd Patti Blaine, M.A., BCC
pblaine@stmarksandstjohns.org

AV Producer

Rob Thornton

Musician

Amelia Yousey

Deacon Emeritus

The Rev'd Mike Finn

St. Mark's & St. John's Vestry

Co-Wardens

Sharon Kowalski ('26)
Nancy Ramsay ('27)

Treasurer

Michele Holmes

Members

Bob Caruso (Clerk)
Dave Everson ('28)
Heather Gilfoy ('27)
Theresa Harte ('26)
Michele Holmes ('28)
Ella Webster ('26)
Nancy Willer ('27)

Diocesan Delegates

Bonnie Hallman-Dye ('28)
Nancy Ramsay ('26)
Ella Webster ('26)

Beechwood Neighborhood Coalition Representative

Terri Censak