



# The Lion's Tale

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2026

## 2025 Candy Cane Lane Walk



During the Christmas eve service, the Godly Play class enjoyed singing and playing the part of "The Friendly Beasts" -- a donkey, cow, sheep, camel and dove.





## Godly Play

The Godly Play class finished their garden activities with the end of the growing season, and the first hard frost. In addition to a full year of harvesting, enjoying, and sharing their vegetables, their last harvest was in November, with a crop of 59 pounds. of sweet potatoes.



The Christmas eve bulletin included drawings of the nativity that were created by the Godly Play class. The drawings were also displayed on the bulletin board in church.



The residents of Casey Paige Assisted Living Facility look forward to the Christmas cards that the Godly Play class creates for each resident. The class also makes cards during the year for special occasions for some of their friends at St. Mark's.





## From your Rector...

### Rector Reflection

These first months of 2026, like the first months of many years, are marked with resolutions for lots of folks. Vows to quit smoking, to workout more often, to connect with friends on a regular basis, to eat extra veggies, abound. As we head into a new year, there are many hopes and intentions being set. And while there's certainly nothing wrong with a resolution, I find myself wondering if there might be a different way to consider the gift of a new year. The late theologian, Trappist Monk, Thomas Merton is quoted as having said, "The beginning of love is the will to let those we love be perfectly themselves, the resolution not to twist them to fit our own image." These words strike me as having something important to say to us, especially as we are caught in cycles of self-improvement and self-criticism. I wonder if these words might coalesce with God's own voice at Jesus' baptism, "You are my beloved, with whom I am well-pleased."

What would it mean to consider yourself from the lens of belovedness in which we live, move, and have our being? How might your intentions and resolutions for this new year be changed if we embraced Merton's call to love others and ourselves by simply letting yourself and others *be* rather than seeking to improve, change, and twist what has been made in God's image into something that reflects our own self-image more than God's?

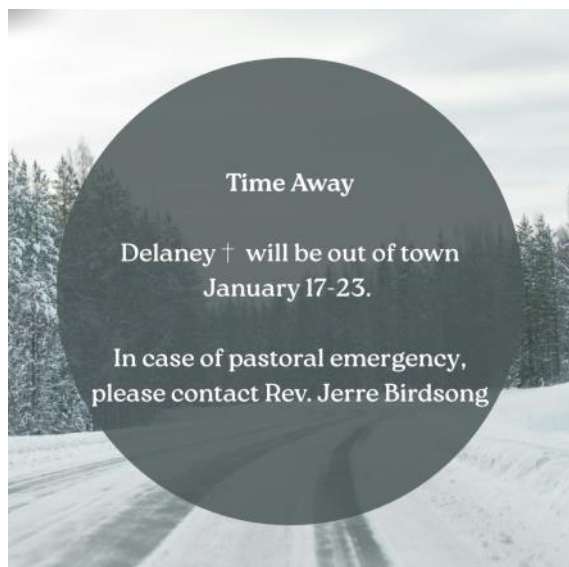
It is a radical thing to live from the disposition of love and acceptance. My friends, as we move into a new year, I hope you might find the grace of God in this radical invitation to love and honor who you are now, who they are now, and live in the present, noticing and loving what is.

Delaney+

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## Vestry Positions Open

Is the Holy Spirit nudging you to consider joining the vestry here at St. Marks? Vestry (our parish leadership team) meets on Zoom each month to address the business and ministry of the church. Vestry is a great way to serve the parish and get to know folks you may not already know. If you are interested, please speak with a current vestry member or Rev. Delaney, and put your name forward! Three positions will be open at our January 25 annual congregational meeting.





## Christmas Party 2025







## FROM YOUR DEACON ...

Our Jubilee Ministry partner, Isaiah 58 Ministries, reports that they have recently seen a dramatic increase in visits to their food pantry, and many are from those who have never been to a food pantry before. More people are struggling to keep food on the table as the cost of basic groceries continues to climb and our social safety nets are shrinking. Cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits have made this struggle even harder for many. Legislative decisions that reduce the funding for social services and which increase barriers to accessing aid have had the harshest impact on the most vulnerable among us – seniors on fixed income, families with young children, and individuals with disabilities.

Staff and volunteers at Isaiah 58 Ministries and other food pantries see these new realities every day. People are having to make difficult choices between rent, prescriptions, and food. Unfortunately, this has become a new normal for an unprecedented number of our neighbors. Food insecurity is about more than hunger – it involves life stability and dignity. When families have safe affordable housing and access to healthy, nourishing food, they can focus on building stronger lives. Christ calls us to serve so that that every neighbor has what they need, not just to survive, but to thrive in the fullness of life. We are called to ensure that compassion, not scarcity, defines our community.

At the bottom of our “Markings” e-newsletter each week, there are listed links to five local food ministries – Isaiah 58 Ministries, Trinity Episcopal Church in the Central West End, Feed My People, Food Outreach, and the St. Louis Area Foodbank. I encourage you to regularly support one of these food ministries in this time of unprecedented need. And if you have the time, I encourage you to volunteer at Isaiah 58 Ministries in the Flora Park neighborhood. St. Mark’s has a strong presence there, but they can always use more help with their food pantry, clothing room, and shower ministry.

In case you were wondering about the meaning behind Isaiah 58 Ministries’ name, here’s the scripture – *If you remove the yoke from among you, the finger-pointing, the wicked speech; if you open your heart to the hungry, and provide abundantly for those who are afflicted, your light will shine in the darkness and your gloom will be like the noon. The Lord will guide you continually and provide for you, even in parched places. He will rescue your bones. You will be like a watered garden, like a spring of water that won’t run dry. They will rebuild ancient ruins on your account; the foundations of generations past you will restore. You will be called Mender of Broken Walls, Restorer of Livable Streets.*

In Christ, Deacon Jerre



**Peace  
Meal**



## Godly Play

This fall, the Godly Play class heard stories from Genesis. They enjoyed challenging each other to build the tallest tower of Babel.



## St. Mark's Events

### Annual Meeting

This year's Annual Meeting will be on January 25<sup>th</sup>. We welcome all to attend. Those who submit reports for the Annual meeting the cut-off date for submissions is January 20<sup>th</sup>. I will be sending a reminder email to all of you. Childcare will be available.

### 2026 ST.MARK'S PHOTO DIRECTORY

This year we will be working on a photo directory. Ed Rich will be snapping photos for us for the new directory to come out in 2026. If you would like to be included in the photo directory, there are two more dates that Ed will be available for picture taking. The remaining days for photos are: January 11 and February 8. If there are any changes to your address, or if you would like to include birthday/anniversary information, please contact Melissa in the office at [parishoffice@saintmarks-stl.org](mailto:parishoffice@saintmarks-stl.org) or call 314-832-3588

### Ash Wednesday

It's almost that time of year again! As we prepare for our Lenten journey, mark your calendars and join us in worship on Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday falls on February 18 this year, and we will gather for worship at 12pm and 7:30pm that day.



## Music Notes

On Sunday, February 22, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. St. Mark's choir will join the choir of Christ Church Cathedral in a service of Evensong at the Cathedral. In celebration of Black History month, the service will feature works of African American composers William Grant Still, David Hurd, Fela Sowande, and others. We are very honored to have been invited to participate, and we hope that many St. Mark's folks will attend. All are welcome!

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## Camp Firebird at Camp MoVal in Union, MO July 26 - 31, 2026

As Camp Firebird grows, we are anticipating larger numbers of campers than we have had before! To ensure *your* families can secure their places at Camp Firebird, please make sure they register early. [Registration opens on January 7th.](#)



## Christmas Party 2025 cont.





# Upcoming Events

**Wednesdays 7:00pm**

**Thursdays 7:30pm**

**Fridays 7:00pm**

**January 1st**

**January 11th**

**January 11th**

**January 12th**

**January 14th**

**January 17th-23rd**

**January 25th**

**February 8th**

**February 18th**

**February 19th**

**February 22nd**

AA Meeting in Parish Hall

Choir Practice

SMART Recovery Group in Parish Hall

New Year's Day (office closed)

Worship Committee Meeting 11:30am

Photo Directory Photo taking (see page 6)

Vestry Meeting (Zoom)

Coffee Hour with Delaney+ (see page 2)

Delaney+ out of town

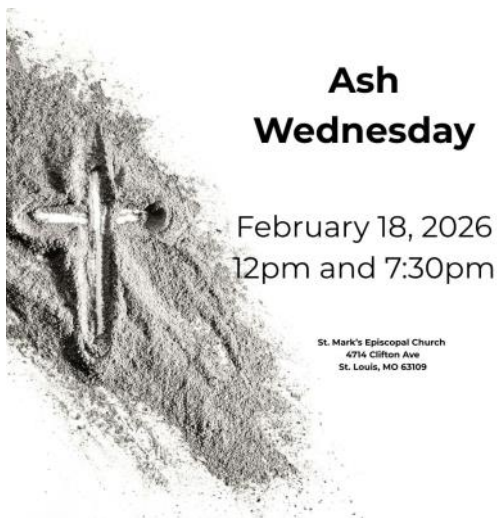
Annual Meeting (see page 6)

Photo Directory Photo taking (see page 6)

Ash Wednesday Services 12pm and 7:30pm

Coffee Hour with Delaney+ (see page 2)

5pm St. Mark's Choir at Christ Church Cathedral Evensong (see page 6)



At the 186th convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri two of our very own St. Markans were honored to receive the bishop's medal from the Rt. Rev. Deon Johnson, Bishop Diocesan, for their work and contributions to the ministry of Christ in our diocese!



**The Lion's Tale is published bi-Monthly by St. Mark's Episcopal Church. Melissa Engle-Editor**

To submit an article email it to [parishoffice@saintmarks-stl.org](mailto:parishoffice@saintmarks-stl.org).  
Deadline for article submissions are listed below.

**February 23rd**      Deadline for March/April Lion's Tale

**April 24th**      Deadline for May/June Lion's Tale

**St. Mark's Episcopal Church**

**4714 Clifton Ave St. Louis, MO 63116**

**[www.saintmarks-stl.org](http://www.saintmarks-stl.org)**