



The Lion's Tale

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2024

The Blessing of the Animals

The Blessing of the Animals was well represented this year. On October 10th, the Godly Play class participated in the blessing of the animals, with their stuffed animal friends. We also had several dogs that were blessed including our "Interim Dog In Charge", Dorothy. Thank you to all who helped make this event successful for all of God's Creatures.



Hearts, Hands & Voices

On Saturday, October 18th, the Hearts, Hands & Voices Festival returned to St. Mark's. As part of the festivities, the Bop Society came in to teach some dance moves, and Sarah Jane and the Blue Notes wrapped up the night with a concert. More pictures of the Hearts, Hands & Voices festival can be found on page 6.



Daylight Savings Time

November 3rd at 2:00am is time to set your clocks back one hour for Daylight Savings time. Don't forget before you go to bed Saturday night to set your clocks back one hour!

St. Mark's Events

Consecration Sunday Ingathering



Our Consecration Sunday Ingathering will be on Sunday, November 24th. Our theme this year is "The Future of St. Mark's." Given the compensation commitment St. Mark's will need to make to secure our new Rector, it is a good time for us to reflect on the financial support St. Mark's will need from all of us as we move forward with new leadership. That stewardship can also take the form of your time and talent. Indeed there are many ways each of us can show our gratitude for God's abundant love. Look in the mail for a letter concerning Consecration Sunday and the luncheon reception following the 10 AM service, as well as an Estimate of Giving Card. Additionally, we will have parishioners address the congregation on the Sundays leading up to the 24th, conveying their thoughts about what stewardship and our future means to them. In the coming weeks, please prayerfully consider the importance of your stewardship to St. Mark's ministry, from both a financial and a time/talents perspective. Your contributions are critically important to the continued vitality of St. Mark's Church and to the direction the Holy Spirit is leading our community.

Advent at St. Mark's



The Season of Advent begins on Sunday, December 1st. Join us as we light the first Advent Candle in our Advent Wreath as we pray in anticipation of the coming of Emmanuel, God-with-Us. Advent supplies including Advent Wreath Prayers and "Slow down, Quiet. It's Advent" calendars will be available as of November 17th on the credenza in the back of the church.

St Mark's Christmas Light Walk down Candy Cane Lane



This year's festive walk will be held on Saturday, December 7th. We will meet at 5:00pm at the Parish Hall for some pizza, then dress up warmly and walk together down Angel Alley and Candy Cane Lane. We will meet back afterwards for hot chocolate and cookies. There will be a signup in the Parish Hall. Please plan on bringing a small donation to cover the cost of the pizza, and make sure to put which pizza you prefer on the signup sheet; Cheese, Veggie, Gluten-free, or Pepperoni along with the number of people in your group. This is a fun family event, so you are welcome to invite friends to join us. For more information, please contact Margaret Hvatum. The sign-up in the Parish Hall.

St. Mark's Annual Christmas Party



The Annual St. Mark's Christmas Party will take place on December 22nd at 5PM. Carols, a buffet dinner, and load of good cheer will be on hand as we wait for a "special guest" to complete the festivities. \$15 Adults, \$8 Children over 5 years, \$50 family max. Once again, we'll be asking folks to help with the dessert and snacks table. Please see the signup sheets in the parish hall to RSVP and to bring a dessert. You may also call/email to: 314-832-3588 / parishoffice@saintmarks-stl.org .

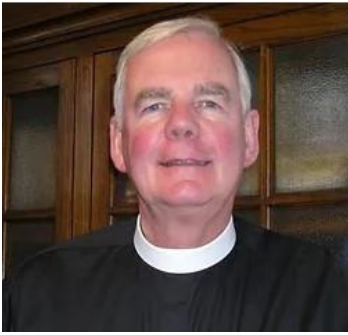
Community Thanksgiving Service

You are invited!!!

Emmanuel, Webster Groves confirms that The Rev. Canon Lauren Stanley will fly here from South Dakota to preach at our **Community Thanksgiving service on Tuesday, Nov 26 at 6 pm!** Lauren+ is a dynamic preacher and passionate advocate for Native/Indigenous ministry and care in SD and beyond. The Rosebud Reservation, with whom Emmanuel has maintained a relationship for 30+ years, has been particularly hard hit these last few years. Our support continues to be life-giving to them. We always take up a collection to send to them.

We're also gathering a community choir - always fun and inspiring. Our Jae Park is organizing that. Here is the [Community Thanksgiving Service booklet](#). It's highlighted where we need persons to serve in it. Please feel free to serve or just show up. If anyone at St. Mark's want to serve, please contact Melissa in the office and she'll send them to Emmanuel. Emmanuel will update the bulletin as I hear back. Each time you click the document link, you will see the updated version so, as time goes on we'll know what parts still need to be filled. Please let me know if you have any trouble viewing this document.

Emmanuel will provide refreshments and beverages afterwards at a reception in our parish hall dining room.



Dear Parishioners:

First of all, I'm surprised (pleasantly so) that All Saints' Sunday (November 3) marks my one-year anniversary of ministry at St. Mark's. Time really does fly, especially when good and pleasant things have been occurring. St. Mark's is a very special place, and I envy the clergyperson who will receive the call to be your next rector.

I also want to take this time to echo the *Lion's Tale* message from Deacon Jerre. These are difficult times in our country, and I pray that this coming election will not push the United States into violence. I hope that we can

somehow find a way to return political discourse to a courteous way to cooperate with one another for the good of our country, even while we may disagree on how to accomplish our goals.

These difficult times have prompted our Bishop to publish a document on "Safety Recommendations for Communities of Faith." The possibility of a politically-inspired armed intruder is just one of several potential hazards confronting churches today. We will soon be recruiting a parishioner to form and chair an "Emergency Preparedness Team." If you are interested in a ministry of this kind, please contact Scott Thompson or myself.

The work of our Rector Search Committee continues, and we will actually be interviewing candidates during November. Your prayers are requested as the Committee does its work and, we hope, identifies a candidate to be St. Mark's next rector.

Consecration Sunday this year will be on November 24, and in the meantime, please prayerfully consider how you might help build up our parish ministries through your time, talents, and treasure.

Indeed, exciting times are continuing in the life of St. Mark's!

Now, as we move together into another Advent and Christmas season, may Almighty God, who has redeemed us, and made us God's children through the resurrection of his Son our Lord, bestow upon you the riches of God's blessing today, tomorrow, and always.

Michael+

Search Committee Update



Rector Search

Canon Westfall met with the St Mark's Rector Search Committee after church on Sunday, October 20. The Rector Search Committee carefully read all the applications. We have scheduled candidate interviews for the week of October 29-November 2. The Search Committee will meet after church on All Saints Day on November 3 to pray and to discuss the candidates whom we have interviewed and identify any people whom we wish to invite for a second interview. After those interviews we will again meet and pray to listen to the Holy Spirit for help to identify one or more finalists to be our next rector. We will invite those finalist(s) for a private visit to St Mark's and a tour of our

church, parish hall, and rector's house. All of this will take time!

We appreciate your prayers and patience in this discernment process.

Margaret Hvatum,
Rector Search Committee Chair

I want to say a special thank you to all of you who have submitted photos over this past year, especially Celeste Kocot, who always gives me plenty of material to help fill up the *Lion's Tale* with beautiful photos.

Godly Play

The Godly Play class concluded their series of stories where they each read a verse from the Bible, put together the story pieces, and retold the story to the class. We ended with a trio of storytellers, Teddy, Matthew and James.



On opening day, September 8th, the class enjoyed outdoor games and delicious bagels. They received awards from the community garden, Seed St. Louis, for growing peas (earliest harvest and tallest vine) and for the heaviest sweet potato (10 lbs.). They have won an award, for both contests, in at least one of five categories every year.

The class contributed their artistic talents to the Hearts, Hands & Voices festival by creating designs on nine posters that decorated the parish hall.



From your Deacon...



At this time of national election leading up to transfer of temporal power, Bishop Deon has written the following to us: "In this moment, our nation feels divided, disconnected, and disjointed. We find ourselves at a crossroads of conscience with the voices of vitriol and extremism resounding ever more loudly around us. As people of faith, we know that God is in the business of redemption and resurrection. It is often the courageous peacemakers and the resilient wisdom seekers who lead the people of God to a new day. That was true in the past and it is true for us now. ... I encourage you to be immersed in the holy action of prayer. Pray for our nation. Pray that we may not see each other as enemies to be vanquished but as siblings, neighbors, and friends whom we love even in our disagreement."

As we do not know what will transpire between now and January 20, I also invite you to be courageous peacemakers and resilient wisdom seekers. And this indeed starts with prayer. If you cannot find the words you seek, remember our Book of Common Prayer – it will definitely be helpful. (You say you don't have a prayer book? St. Mark's will provide one.) Go to page 810 to see a list of all the prayers included. It starts with Prayers for the World, which includes a prayer for peace and a prayer for our enemies. There is a section on Prayers for National Life and another on Prayers for the Social Order. Scope them out. I'll leave you with just one of these prayers – on page 821, For Sound Government.

O Lord our Governor, bless the leaders of our land, that we may be a people at peace among ourselves and a blessing to other nations of the earth. Lord, keep this nation under your care.

To the President and members of the Cabinet, to Governors of States, Mayors of Cities, and to all in administrative authority, grant wisdom and grace in the exercise of their duties. Give grace to your servants, O Lord.

To Senators and Representatives, and those who make our laws in States, Cities, and Towns, give courage, wisdom and foresight to provide for the needs of all our people, and to fulfill our obligations in the community of nations. Give grace to your servants, O Lord.

To the Judges and officers of our Courts give understanding and integrity, that human rights may be safeguarded and justice served. Give grace to your servants, O Lord.

Teach our people to rely on your strength and to accept their responsibilities to their fellow citizens, that they may elect trustworthy leaders and make wise decisions for the well-being of our society; that we may serve you faithfully in our generation and honor your holy Name. For yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. Amen.

In Christ,
Deacon Jerre

Music Notes



November is upon us, and that means December, with its wealth of beautiful music for the Advent and Christmas seasons, isn't far away. I'd like to invite anyone who enjoys singing but isn't able to sing with the choir on a regular basis to join us for the Advent and Christmas seasons. We rehearse on Thursday evenings from 7:30-9:00 p.m. and will sing for all the Sundays in Advent as well as the 10:30 p.m. service on Christmas Eve. If you'd like to sing with us during Advent and/or for Christmas Eve, please be in touch with me (braedeke@aol.com). We would be delighted to have you join us!-Barbara

Hearts, Hands & Voices

“St. Louis Hills” author Nini Harris conducted tours of the church at our Hearts, Hands, and Voices Festival. She also had a booth in our Artist Market where she was able to share her knowledge with many of the customers and parishioners.

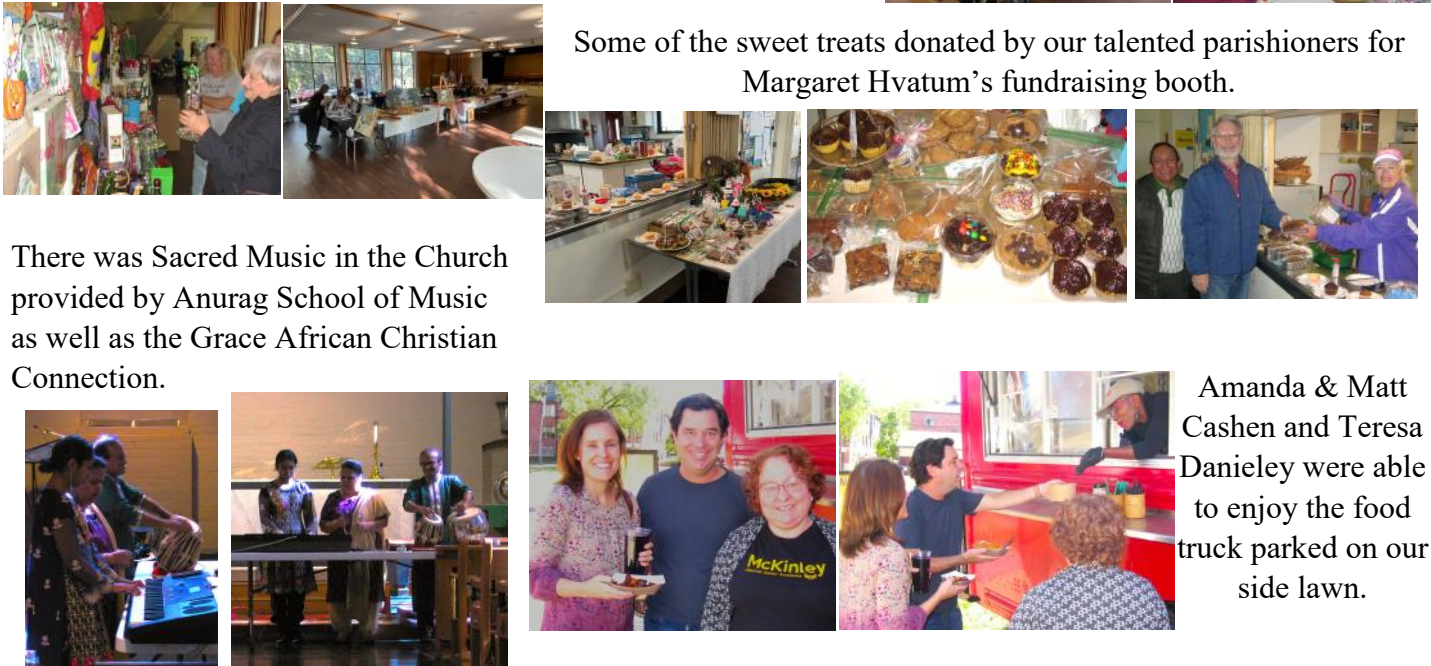


Pictures of some of the booths around our Artist's Market.



Some of the sweet treats donated by our talented parishioners for Margaret Hvatum's fundraising booth.

There was Sacred Music in the Church provided by Anurag School of Music as well as the Grace African Christian Connection.



Amanda & Matt Cashen and Teresa Danieley were able to enjoy the food truck parked on our side lawn.

Outside there were plenty of games to play as well as a Face Painter in the morning.





From your Transitional Deacon...

Greetings,

Thank you for your warm welcome to Saint Mark's! It has been a joy to worship with you all — especially celebrating the recent baptisms.

The members I met at the recent women's luncheon encouraged me to include some words in this issue of *The Lion's Tale*... on any theme at all. Given the opportunity, I felt pulled to share the music that has been feeding my spirit lately. My hope is that it might speak to your spirit as well.

Especially in my work as a chaplain, I seek out songs that have a pastoral purpose. These songs connect me to God's loving presence, and also reckon with how far we are from the world God envisions for us. In that spirit, here are five songs that use scripture to offer solace and sustenance:

"The 23rd Psalm" by Bobby McFerrin

There's a reason that this song is on an album called *Medicine Music*. It takes one of the most beloved and well-known psalms and creates a haunting, hallowed experience. It also offers a feminine naming of God. A great choice when you or a loved one need to feel close to God's care.

"Citizens" by Jon Guerra

Guerra sways between stories of sorrow and a chorus of yearning for what God yearns for. Guerra sings of justice rolling in abundance (Amos 5:24), and draws on Paul's affirmation in Ephesians 2:19, "you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household." I find it helps me to hold the space between *what is* and *what could be*.

"Where Were You" by Ghost Ship

In the Daily Office lectionary cycle we recently spent several weeks reading from the book of Job, with all his sorrows and his friends' inept attempts at comfort. This song taps right into the same themes. It begins with the singer's lament to God about the world's suffering: how could God allow this? The majority of the song is an adaptation of Job 38, God's response to Job. The song offers a cosmic vision that doesn't eliminate pain, but does recontextualize it as part of a much larger world of God's creation and care.

"Psalm 139:15-16" by Verses and Rivers & Robots

This psalm proclaims God's loving intention in creating each of us. I find this track hypnotic as an entry-point to contemplation. A little background – the Verses project collaborates with dozens of Christian musicians to create songs using direct quotes from scripture, usually just a verse or two at a time. Among all of their work, I love this track the best (so far) but there are dozens of songs to explore.

"Canticle of the Turning" by Emmaus Way

As we head into Advent, this version of Mary's Magnificat is one I'll be listening to on repeat. The magnificat offers a powerful combination: praise of God and naming of God's redemptive power (Luke 1:46–55). Mary also gives voice to God's ability to use even the small and weak to accomplish sacred things. This would be good to listen to while considering the stained glass at St. Mark's! I find that singing scripture is one of the best ways to get it into my heart, so that it's there for me when I need it. I wish that for you, too.

Blessings,
Rev. Mandi

P.S. Focusing on scripture left out some of my favorite songs by women. If you're looking for Christian music with a female singer, I wholeheartedly share these as well:

[In the Arms of God We Sleep](#) by Sarah Sparks.

[The Goodness of God](#) by CeCe Winans

[He Will](#) by Ellie Holcomb

I would love to hear what songs are especially close to your heart!

Upcoming Events

Wednesdays 7:00pm

AA Meeting in Parish Hall

Thursdays 7:30pm

Choir Practice in Choir Room

Fridays 7:00pm

SMART Recovery Group in Parish Hall

November 3rd

Daylight Savings Time Ends

November 3rd

All Saint's Day Service 10a.m.

November 10th

Kairos Sunday 9:40a.m.

November 17th

Healing Service after 10a.m. Service

November 18th

Vestry Meeting 7p.m.

November 24th

Consecration Sunday Ingathering after 10a.m. Service

November 26th

Community Thanksgiving Service at Emmanuel 6p.m.

November 29th

Office Closed for Thanksgiving Break

December 1st

First Sunday of Advent Season

December 7th

Candy Cane Lane Walk

December 8th

Kairos Sunday 9:40a.m.

December 16th

Vestry Meeting 7p.m.

December 22nd

"Greening" of the Church after 10a.m. Service

December 22nd

St. Mark's Annual Christmas Party 5p.m.

December 23rd-30th

Office Closed for Christmas Break

December 24th

Two Christmas Eve Services 5p.m. & 10:30p.m.

December 25th

Christmas Day Service 10a.m.

December 29th

Healing Service after 10a.m. Service

December 31st

All 2024 pledges due by 12p.m.



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.
Deadline for article submissions are listed below.

December 20th January/February Lion's Tale

February 26th March/April Lion's Tale

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