

Christmas Services

Christmas Eve

4:00 p.m.
Family Eucharist

10:30 p.m.
Choral Prelude

11:00 p.m.
Festive Eucharist
with Candlelight
and Brass

Christmas Day

9:30 a.m.
Festive Eucharist

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Rector's Corner

Friends in Christ,

How does one prepare for God? Do we get the house clean, or make sure we have a fresh hair cut? Maybe we ought to shine our shoes or brush up on Scripture? The whole notion of preparing for God, waiting for God, seems a bit silly. Surely nothing can prepare us to meet our Maker and Redeemer.

And yet, that is the project of Advent. Advent means "coming," and it is the season of the year when we wait and prepare for the coming of God into our lives. At Advent, we cover the church in blue cloth to remind us that we have begun a new year. We light candles each week, bringing more and more light into the sanctuary or into our homes. We lean forward, listening and seeking a sign that God has come to be among us.

Of course, we already know the story. Many of us have lived through more Advent seasons than we can even remember. We know that there's a manger and a star and a baby at the end of all this.

But imagine for a moment that we don't know how the story goes. Imagine that we are waiting—a bit excited, a bit afraid—for God to arrive, and we don't know what that arrival might look like. How might the people around Bethlehem have felt, knowing that something momentous was about to happen?

The New Testament is cryptic. Will God be like a thief in the night as the Gospel writer suggests? Or will God come in clouds descending, as in the words of that famous

Advent hymn? I suggest we spend this Advent looking at all the cracks in the world, all the unlikely places, to see if God is making a home there. I think we might be surprised at all the places being prepared for God's arrival. Maybe God is coming to a friend, to a neighborhood, to a parish.

We know that God comes in the unexpected. We know that God comes in the vulnerable, in the meek. We know that God finds true expression in a little peasant girl named Mary, chosen to bear this cosmic responsibility for the sake of the world.

As we take time to light candles, to pray, to live into the preparation for God's birth, let us hold fast to the great truth of the faith: bidden or unbidden, God comes. Watch and pray, friends. Watch and pray.

Breathe. Prepare. Wait. Hope.

Blessed Advent,

Ian+
(Fr. Burch)



Deacon's Corner

I only have to listen to English composer John Rutter's choral setting of "For the Beauty of the Earth" to feel a tender joy spring from deep within me. This is how music affects me when it expresses all the love and wonder of God's creation.

We have entered into the season of Advent—those four weeks before Christmas whose purpose is to prepare the way for the celebration of Christ's birth. God incarnate comes into the world in lowly human form. For me, the preparation, the opening of my heart, comes most profoundly in the hymns of Advent.

These hymns carry the message of expectation, of hope, of joy of such magnitude that every year they just knock me off my feet. It reminds me how much we need to honor and celebrate the coming of Jesus into the world. He came then and he returns again through the Spirit to inform and lead our lives.

This past year has certainly seen some bumps in the road for my family. We have prayed and worried over much—events and actions, some of which may be in part conquered with better choices, and some over which we have no control. Yet I know that my family is not alone. For living in the world is, and always has been, at times a very rocky road.

How is it then that these hymns of Advent can just lift me out of my worries and bring a sense of joy and peace, love and excitement once again to my heart? I really can't tell you. But I know that it will happen this year as it has every past one. And I sorely look forward to it.



Perhaps you need a bit of returned joy to your life. Then come with me to Sunday worship during the Advent season and know again the sense of wonder and peace that worship this time of year can bring.

I leave you with the first verse of Hymn 66.

Come thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free; from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.

~Michelle Mooney

Quilting Group is Meeting Again

After a summer and fall vacation, the Quilting Group is meeting again to continue to make quilts for every child baptized at St. Mark's. The group has decided to meet on the 3rd Saturday of the month from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Anyone who is interested in joining is encouraged to do so. Junior and senior high school students are welcome as well. There are tasks for every skill level. If you can cut or iron material, you have a place with us!

Questions? Contact michellemooney5@gmail.com

~Michelle Mooney



Christmas Flowers and Brass for Holiday Services

The St. Mark's Flower Guild is planning to have a big red and green Christmas season, with poinsettia-filled urns and poinsettia trees, cut flowers all in red, and several varieties of seasonal greens. A special feature of our late service on Christmas Eve this year will be a brass player.

We will place envelopes in the service bulletins for you to be able to make a contribution towards flowers and brass for St. Mark's holiday services. There is a form included for indicating dedications (e.g., memorials, thanksgivings) to appear in holiday service bulletins. The deadline for having these included in holiday bulletins this year is Sunday, December 18.

Contributions can be made after this date, but due to the busy season, the office will not be able to include those details in holiday bulletins. You may pay by check (mark Flowers/Brass on the memo line) or electronically (click DONATE on our website, stmarksmilwaukee.org, and choose "Christmas Flowers and Brass").

As always, contributions will appear on pledge statements and are fully tax-deductible.



Thanks in advance from the Flower Guild and St. Mark's musicians for your contributions.

~Judy Young

Have a Holly (and Ivy), Jolly Time in Grant Park

Why do we sing about the holly and the ivy, or kiss under the mistletoe, or chop down an evergreen and dress it up in colors? Join us to celebrate the holiday season by learning about the plants that play such a large role in traditional holiday celebrations. We will hike around the park and talk about the biology of, and the traditions behind, such holiday plants as mistletoe, holly, ivy, poinsettias and, of course, the Christmas tree.

Date: Saturday, December 10

Time: 10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Level: Easy

Location: Grant Park. Contact Dan for exact meeting location.

Leader: Dan Buckler. Please RSVP at daniel.c.buckler@gmail.com or 330-261-2088





Celebrations

Birthdays

- 12/1 Barbara Costanzo
- 12/2 John Dudek
- 12/2 Jyoti Bratz
- 12/10 Ellie Moseley
- 12/11 Georgia Cain
- 12/13 Maja (Akerblom) Hassinger
- 12/15 Justin Mortara
- 12/18 David Huntington
- 12/19 Kris Kreuziger
- 12/20 Joan Blaicher

- 12/20 Judy Young
- 12/21 Amy Diliberti
- 12/22 Kate Johnson
- 12/29 Russell Graef

Anniversaries

- 12/3 David and Mary Huntington

Note from Your Parish Admin

Some of you may have read about my new job in the Diocesan E-News a couple weeks ago. I am happy to tell you that I have been hired as the Communications Officer for the diocese. That means that I will be working 20 hours a week updating the diocesan website and handling the digital communications for the diocese. I will absolutely be keeping my position here at St. Mark's. My hours aren't set in stone yet, but, in trying to keep things here as similar as possible, I going to try moving only one of my shifts here. For the time being, I will be at St. Mark's all day on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and then again on Friday mornings.

~Sara Bitner



Riverwest Pantry Wish List Items

- No-added-sugar canned fruit
- Low-salt canned tuna
- Brown, wild, or white rice
- Low-salt broth or stock

Reusable plastic bags are always welcome, but **egg cartons are no longer needed**. Special thanks for the extra generosity of this blessed season!

Arts and Crafts Sale for Haiti Project December 4



Tree of life motif in what's called fer forjé—metal cut and pounded from steel drums

The Episcopal church, school, and health clinic in Jeannette, Haiti, supported by the Diocese of Milwaukee Haiti Project suffered terrible damage in late September from the wind and rain of Hurricane Matthew. Crops and food storage were ruined—and there are no grocery stores. Our project sent funds immediately to help out, as well as a group to help with repairs in mid-November, including our own Alex Cain. They returned just before Thanksgiving, so we hope to have news, and Alex himself at the sale.

As part of the effort to raise funds for repairs and to support the school and the entire community, art work and craft objects from Haiti will be on sale during Coffee Hour on Dec. 4, just in time for Christmas shopping. Please plan to spend not only time looking at what's available, but also money for gifts with special meaning. All proceeds will go to the Haiti Project. We will have lots of information about the project as well as information about donating to support it, including sponsorships of individual children.

The photos here will give you a taste of the kinds of items our parishioners have purchased in support of Haitian artists over the years. For more information, and lots of photos, please visit <https://haitiproject.org/>. You can donate directly for hurricane relief there, too.

~Virginia Chappelllll



Paper mache model of a *tap-tap*—public transportation for people and market goods



Fer forjé fish swims in a shower stall



Contemporary painting of Haitian women at a market by an artist signed simply "John"

Advent and Christmas Diaper Drive

What better way to help prepare our hearts for the arrival of the baby Jesus than helping families in our community care for their own babies?

This Advent and Christmas season, St. Mark's will be collecting diapers and wipes. Donations will be given to Robyn's Nest, a part of Children's Hospital of Wisconsin Community Services. Robyn's Nest is located in the City of Milwaukee and serves approximately 2,000 foster families per year, as well as families identified by Children's Hospital as having unmet need.

Please bring unopened packages of diapers and wipes to church now through January 8, and place them in the crib located in the Parish Hall. All sizes of diapers are appreciated, but larger sizes (4-6) are particularly needed. On January 8, the first Sunday after the Epiphany, we will bless the donations.

Why diapers?

- As many as 1 in 3 families in the U.S. experience diaper need at some point.
- Diapers cost as much as \$1200 per year.
- 29 percent of residents in the City of Milwaukee live at or below the federal poverty line, and the majority of births in the city are to single mothers.
- Funds from programs such as SNAP (food stamps) and WIC cannot be used on diapers.
- Leaving children in soiled diapers can cause serious health problems.
- Inability to afford diapers prevents women from working or attending school because most childcare providers require parents to provide diapers.

Why not cloth diapers?

While cloth diapers can be a great option for many families, many childcare facilities do not accept cloth diapers. Many laundromats do not allow the use of their machines to launder cloth diapers. For the clients served by Robyn's Nest and other diaper pantries, disposable diapers are the most practical option.

Questions?

Contact Brooke Frizzell at 414-477-1270 or frizzellbrooke@gmail.com



Common Ground at St. Mark's

Last month I wrote about the annual Friends of Common Ground campaign, which raises money for the work of Common Ground. Each year these funds enable CG to remain an independent force for progressive change. We came to many of you in the parish and asked for contributions towards this work.

I am happy to announce that from our parish alone we have raised almost \$9,000 for the campaign. Some money is still coming in, and a final accounting will be available by the first of the year.

On behalf of our CG Core Team, which solicits funds for this effort, may I offer my profound thanks and admiration to all of you who were so generous in responding. We had several new contributors this year, which is just wonderful, too.

I know that many of you who are supportive of St. Mark's work in Common Ground, don't always

have the time to be active in all our issue work. But still your financial support comes forward. Bravo!

As a parish, we are far and away the most generous donors to the Friends Campaign. Even though we are not the largest church, our support each year continues to be at the top of the list for member donors.

I am so proud that you have given this ministry to the community your vote of confidence. Well done, St. Mark's.



Transforming lives.
Strengthening communities.

~Deacon Michelle

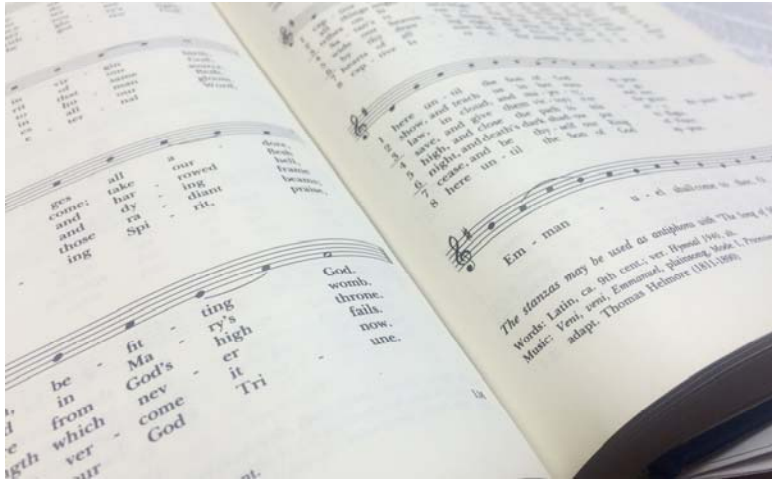
20s/30s Group Holiday Potluck

**Friday, December 9
7 p.m.**

**Join us for a meal, fellowship, and fun at
Ian and Travis's place. Bring a dish to share.
Contact Ian for the address and more details.**

ian@stmarksmilwaukee.org

The Theology of Advent Hymns Adult Education for December



O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

Lo! He comes with clouds descending, once for our salvation slain; thousand thousand saints attending swell the triumph of his train; Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Christ the Lord returns to reign.

Join us on December 4 and 11 in the Library at 11 a.m., to talk about the theology of Advent hymns. The texts and tunes of these great pieces of religious art inspire and inform our Advent observances. Come and spend time with these exquisite hymns—and maybe even sing a few! The Rev. Ian Burch will guide this discussion about the meaning of Advent, its history and practice and the hymns that inspire us to prepare for the coming of Christ on Christmas morning.

Quick Notes

- There will be a Communications Meeting on December 11.
- Save the date for the Epiphany Dinner on January 14. Details are still be worked out, but I hear that Fr. Burch will be playing the violin!
- Also, save the date for the Annual Meeting on January 29.

Upcoming Dates

Advent Lessons and Carols at St. John's on the Lake—
December 4, 4 p.m.

Christmas Pageant—December 18, 9:30 a.m.

Christmas Eve Eucharists—December 24, 4 p.m. and 11 p.m.

Christmas Day Eucharist—December 25, 9:30 a.m.

Epiphany Dinner—January 14



Outreach Beneficiaries for 2016

Your Outreach Committee raised in 2016 a total of \$10,237 from the Flower Sale, Corn Roast and Pumpkin Sale. In addition, \$1,165 was received from an endowment. At our November meeting, we agreed to support Common Ground, East Side Senior Services, The Gathering, Haiti Project scholarships, Meta House, Hunger Task Force and Sojourner Family Peace Center with gifts totaling \$9,300. Other agencies that we have supported in the past may receive gifts in 2017 from uncommitted funds.

In addition, we began considering discussions with Habitat for Humanity to undertake a project that could involve parishioners in building or restoring housing in Milwaukee. We also agreed to explore with Lutheran Social Services the possibility of helping resettle refugees. Both projects would likely require funding and would certainly need volunteers from the St. Mark's community to support them.

Finally, your Outreach Committee is interested in receiving input on agencies that parishioners are involved with or know about that might be supported (with funding or volunteer hours) in the future.

Please contact me or members of the Outreach Committee with your thoughts along with a rationale.

Committee Members: Steve Butcher, Alex Cain, Charles Camilli, Christine Kuramoto, Ellie Mixer-Keller, Andy Martin, Michelle Mooney, Jan Rhodes, Ron Zingler

~Harry Moseley, Chairperson

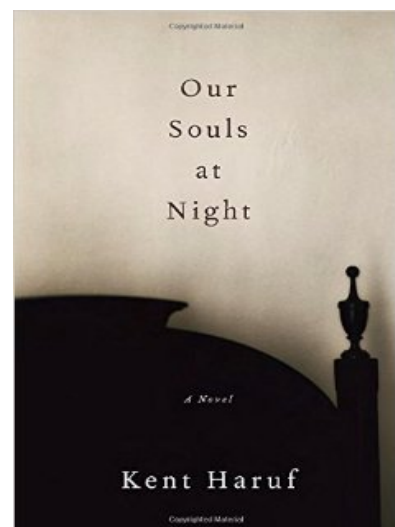


Women's Book Group

The Women's Book Group will be meeting on December 12, at 7 p.m., at the home of Leslie McCormick. Our book for this month is *Our Souls at Night* by Kent Haruf. It is a love story about deep friendship and a revival of a life near its end. It is set against the backdrop of a gossiping and at times disapproving small town. Come join us for a lively discussion.

Books can be purchased at Boswell Book Company for a ten percent discount or borrowed from the library. If you need directions to Leslie's home please call the church office. All women of the church are invited. Guests are also very welcome.

~Ellie Moseley



Pumpkin Sale Earnings

A million thanks to all who helped with the Outreach Pumpkin Sale. We netted \$7,532 for our Outreach Ministry. We had 64 volunteers serving 115 shifts, topped by several super sellers with five shifts each. Below is the list of volunteers. While the net was down from last year, your efforts were outstanding!

~Harry Moseley, Chairperson



Jackie Adams selling pumpkins with her sister, Darcy Gustavsson.

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Jackie Adams | David Kiger |
| Jyoti Bratz | Hannah Kiger |
| Ian Burch | Christine Kuramoto |
| Steve Butcher | Ashley Luthern |
| Marian Byers | Sharon Maier |
| Ono Byers | Andy Martin |
| Georgia Cain | Janet Martin |
| John Cain | Leslie McCormick |
| Alex Cain | Marilyn McKnight |
| Charles Camilli | Sandra McLellan |
| Virginia Chappell | Owen McLellan |
| David Cipriano | Sara Mellstron |
| Ericka Cipriano | Jessi Miller |
| Barbara Costanzo | Ellie Mixer-Keller |
| Carolyn Davies | Michelle Mooney |
| Tom Davies | Ellie Moseley |
| Todd Domenget | Harry Moseley |
| Nikki Domenget | Andrew Muriuki |
| Stephanie Dudek | Jennifer O'Hear |
| John Dudek | Kyle Potter |
| Meg Edwards | Monica Reida |
| Simon Eichinger | Susan Rhode |
| Brooke Frizzell | Mary Ross |
| Don Green | Jane Shero |
| Chris Hanson | Ron Tunis |
| Jayne Heffron | Sandi Tunis |
| Mark Heffron | Frank West |
| Bill Hunt | Marie Wolff |
| Cheryl Johnson | Steve Wolff |
| Bob Julian | Judy Young |
| Kathy Katter | Jamie Zingler |
| Vince Katter | Ron Zingler |

December 2016 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 7:30 AM Yoga 3:30 PM Yoga 8 PM AA	2 Rector's Day Off 8 PM AA	3 9 AM–12:15 PM Practicing Simplicity 10 AM–12 PM Thrift Shop
4 9:30 AM Holy Eucharist 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM ESS Gift-wrapping Haitian Art Sale Diaper Drive Celebration 11 AM Adult Formation 4 PM Advent Lessons and Carols	5 3:30 PM UWM: Healthy Foods 6 PM EfM 6:15 PM SWEATnDANCE 6:30 PM UWM: Healthy Foods	6 7:30 AM Yoga 8:15 AM Breakfast Fellowship @ Hollander 10 AM–12 PM Thrift Shop 3:30 PM Yoga 6:30 PM UWM: Contemporary Foods	7 4 PM Bible Study 6 PM Midweek Eucharist 6:30 PM UWM: International Foods 7 PM Choir	8 7:30 AM Yoga 3:30 PM Yoga 8 PM AA 	9 Rector's Day Off 7 PM 20/30s Holiday Potluck 8 PM AA	10 10 AM–12 PM Thrift Shop
11 9:30 AM Holy Eucharist 9:30 AM Sunday School 11 AM Adult Formation	12 3:30 PM UWM: Healthy Foods 6 PM EfM 6:15 PM SWEATnDANCE Finance Committee 6:30 PM UWM: Healthy Foods 7 PM Women's Book Group	13 7:30 AM Yoga 10 AM–12 PM Thrift Shop 3:30 PM Yoga 6:30 PM Vestry 6:30 PM Theology Pub 6:30 PM UWM: Contemporary Foods	14 4 PM Bible Study 6 PM Midweek Eucharist 6:30 PM UWM: International Foods 7 PM Choir	15 7:30 AM Yoga 3:30 PM Yoga 8 PM AA	16 Rector's Day Off 8 PM AA	17 9 AM Men's Fellowship Breakfast 9:30 AM Quilting Circle 10 AM–12 PM Thrift Shop
18 9:30 AM Holy Eucharist 9:30 AM Sunday School 11 AM Adult Formation 11 AM Greening of the Church 5:30 PM Confirmation	19 6 PM EfM 6:15 PM SWEATnDANCE 7 PM CG Healthcare Team	20 7:30 AM Yoga 8:15 AM Breakfast Fellowship @ Hollander 10 AM–12 PM Thrift Shop 3:30 PM Yoga	21 4 PM Bible Study 6 PM Midweek Eucharist 7 PM Choir	22 7:30 AM Yoga 3:30 PM Yoga 8 PM AA	23 Rector's Day Off 9:30 AM Flower Guild 8 PM AA	24 Thrift Shop Closed 4:30 PM Christmas Eve Eucharist 10:30 PM Choral Prelude 11 PM Christmas Eve Eucharist
25 Christmas Day 9:30 AM Holy Eucharist	26 Office Closed Rector Away 6 PM EfM 6:15 PM SWEATnDANCE	27 Office Closed Rector Away 7:30 AM Yoga 10 AM–12 PM Thrift Shop 3:30 PM Yoga	28 Office Closed Rector Away 	29 Office Closed Rector Away 7:30 AM Yoga 3:30 PM Yoga 8 PM AA	30 Office Closed Rector Away Rector's Day Off 8 PM AA	31 Rector Away 10 AM–12 PM Thrift Shop

Our calendar is available on our website:
www.stmarksmilwaukee.org

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
2618 N. Hackett Ave.
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414-962-0500
stmarksmilwaukee.org
sara@stmarksmilwaukee.org
ian@stmarksmilwaukee.org

Sunday Eucharist 9:30 a.m.

Childcare is provided from 9:00–11:00 a.m.

Office Hours

Tuesday and Wednesday 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Friday 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Eastside Senior Services: 414-210-5881

The Rt. Rev. Steven A. Miller, Bishop of Milwaukee
The Rev. Ian C. Burch, Rector
The Rev. Michelle P. Mooney, Deacon
The Rev. John Hickey, Priest Associate
Stephen Wolff, Director of Music
Virginia Chappell, Senior Warden
Ron Tunis, Junior Warden
Barbara Costanzo, Treasurer
Sara Bitner, Parish Administrator
Bill Davies, Bookkeeper
Jyoti Bratz, Housekeeper
Skrauss, Sexton

Vestry Members

Barbara Costanzo	Jackie Adams	Tom Lacy
David Kiger	Marian Byers	Ellie Mixter-Keller
Susan Rohde	Paula Wheeler	Andrew Muriuki

**Transforming lives through meaningful
relationships with God in Jesus Christ**