

*St. Mark's Episcopal Church  
75 Cold Spring Road  
Westford, Massachusetts, 01886*



And he went and  
lived in a **city called**  
**Nazareth,**  
so that what was  
**spoken** by the  
**prophets**  
might be **fulfilled.**

—Matthew 2:23, ESV

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**January 4, 2026**  
**Second Sunday after Christmas**

*Rev. Melissa Buono* *Officiant*  
*Lee Yezek, Minister of Music*  
*Usher/ Reader: Joan and Michael O'Hare*  
*Chalice Bearer: Brenda/Elaina*

**ENTRANCE HYMN: *What star is this, with beams so bright (Puer nobis)* (H 124)**

**COLLECT FOR PURITY (BCP 355)**

**GLORIA: S-277**

**THE COLLECT OF THE DAY (BCP p. 357)**

*Celebrant*           The Lord be with you.

*People*             **And also with you.**

*Celebrant*           Let us pray.

**O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.***

**The Lessons**

**FIRST READING: : Jeremiah 31:7-14**

*The people sit.*

A Reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

<sup>7</sup>Thus says the LORD:

“Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,  
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;  
proclaim, give praise, and say,  
‘Save, O LORD, your people,  
the remnant of Israel.’

<sup>8</sup>See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,  
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,  
among them the blind and the lame,  
those with child and those in labor, together;  
a great company, they shall return here.

<sup>9</sup>With weeping they shall come,  
and with consolations I will lead them back,  
I will let them walk by brooks of water,  
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;  
for I have become a father to Israel,  
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

<sup>10</sup>Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,  
and declare it in the coastlands far away;  
say, ‘He who scattered Israel will gather him,  
and will keep him as a shepherd a flock.’

<sup>11</sup>For the LORD has ransomed Jacob,

and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.  
<sup>12</sup>They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,  
 and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD,  
 over the grain, the wine, and the oil,  
 and over the young of the flock and the herd;  
 their life shall become like a watered garden,  
 and they shall never languish again.  
<sup>13</sup>Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,  
 and the young men and the old shall be merry.  
 I will turn their mourning into joy,  
 I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.  
<sup>14</sup>I will give the priests their fill of fatness,  
 and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,"  
 says the LORD.

*Reader*            The Word of the Lord.  
*People*            Thanks be to God.

*Silence may follow.*

## **PSALM: Psalm 84**

*Remain seated.*

<sup>1</sup>How dear to me is your dwelling, O LORD of hosts! \*  
 My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the LORD;  
 my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.  
<sup>2</sup>The sparrow has found her a house  
 and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young; \*  
 by the side of your altars, O LORD of hosts,  
 my King and my God.  
<sup>3</sup>Happy are they who dwell in your house! \*  
 they will always be praising you.  
<sup>4</sup>Happy are the people whose strength is in you! \*  
 whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way.  
<sup>5</sup>Those who go through the desolate valley will find it a place of springs, \*  
 for the early rains have covered it with pools of water.  
<sup>6</sup>They will climb from height to height, \*  
 and the God of gods will reveal himself in Zion.  
<sup>7</sup>LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; \*  
 hearken, O God of Jacob.  
<sup>8</sup>Behold our defender, O God; \*  
 and look upon the face of your Anointed.  
<sup>9</sup>For one day in your courts is better than a thousand in my own room, \*  
 and to stand at the threshold of the house of my God  
 than to dwell in the tents of the wicked.  
<sup>10</sup>For the LORD God is both sun and shield; \*

he will give grace and glory;

<sup>11</sup>No good thing will the LORD withhold \*  
from those who walk with integrity.

<sup>12</sup>O LORD of hosts, \*  
happy are they who put their trust in you!

## **SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-19a**

*The people sit.*

A Reading from Paul's letter to the Church in Ephesus.

<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup>just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. <sup>5</sup>He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, <sup>6</sup>to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

<sup>15</sup>I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason <sup>16</sup>I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. <sup>17</sup>I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, <sup>18</sup>so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, <sup>19a</sup>and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe.

*Reader*            The Word of the Lord.

*People*            Thanks be to God.

*Silence may follow.*

## **SEQUENCE HYMN *In the bleak midwinter (Cranham)* (H 112)**

*All stand.*

## **GOSPEL: Matthew 2:1-12**

*All stand.*

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

*People*            **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the

chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel.”

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

<i>Celebrant</i>	The Gospel of the Lord.
<i>People</i>	<b>Praise to you, Lord Christ.</b>

## THE SERMON

### THE CREED (BCP p. 358)

*All stand.*

**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.

#### THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (BCP p. 359)

*All remain standing.*

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;  
*That we all may be one.*

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and  
humbly serve you;  
*That your Name may be glorified by all people.*

We pray for Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe, Bishop Julia Whitworth, Rev. Will Bergmann, Rev.  
Melissa Buono, and for all bishops, priests, and deacons;  
*That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.*

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations  
of the world;  
*That there may be justice and peace on the earth.*

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;  
*That our works may find favor in your sight.*

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or  
trouble;  
*That they may be delivered from their distress.*

We pray in a special way for those on the St. Mark's Prayer List, namely:

**Anna Oliverson, Susan and Kate, Kate and family, Ben, Bob, Orvil, Margaret  
Bateman, Sara and family, Jim Derek, Evie and family Beth, Brendan and Corine,  
and Kate, Elizabeth, Jane, Lisa, Pamela, Brooke, David Andrew, Sandra, Charlotte**

**and Bob, Ross, Lorenz, Lindy, Ted and Kathy, Doug and the Pecora family, Andrew Ward, Christine, John Gallacher, Janet Andrews, Marmi Sheehan, Marcia and Ralph, Shelly Wadsworth, Sabrina and family, Marion Perault, Sue Sweeney, Ben Meaden, Albert Caproni and his family, Sherrie Carroll, Bob Berg, Beth and Carl, Judy and Barbara and Marlene, Karen, Dorothy, Maddie, David Edwards, Anika and those we name aloud or in the silence of our hearts....(pause)**

We pray for those who have died, especially:

**Doug, Patrica Hughes, Andres Martinez, John Megson.**

Give to the departed eternal rest.

***Let light perpetual shine upon them.***

We give thanks for those who we have been praying for who have healed or greatly improved:

**Michele Eberle, Dan.**

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;  
***May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom***

Let us pray together the Prayer of the Parish:

**Almighty & Everliving God, Ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this Parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

*Silence*

**CONFESSION OF SIN (BCP p. 359)**

***The Celebrant says***

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

***Silence may be kept.***

***Minister and People***

**Most merciful God,  
we confess that we have sinned against you**

in thought, word, and deed,  
by what we have done,  
and by what we have left undone.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart;  
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.  
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
have mercy on us and forgive us;  
that we may delight in your will,  
and walk in your ways,  
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

*The Priest stands and says*

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.  
*Amen.*

**THE PEACE (BCP p. 360)**

*All stand.*

<i>Celebrant</i>	The peace of the Lord be always with you.
<i>People</i>	And also with you.

*Then the Ministers and the People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**The Holy Communion**

**OFFERTORY SENTENCE**

*The Celebrant says*

Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and make good your vows to the Most High.  
*Psalm 50:14*

**OFFERTORY ANTHEM (BCP p. 361)**

**THE DOXOLOGY V. 3** *From all that dwell below the skies (Old 100th) (H 380)*

**The Great Thanksgiving**

*The People remain standing.*



<i>Celebrant</i>	The Lord be with you.
<b><i>People</i></b>	<b>And also with you.</b>
<i>Celebrant</i>	Lift up your hearts.
<b><i>People</i></b>	<b>We lift them to the Lord.</b>
<i>Celebrant</i>	Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
<b><i>People</i></b>	<b>It is right to give him thanks and praise.</b>

*Facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds*

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you,  
Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him  
of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world,  
we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing.

**SANCTUS: S-129 Holy, Holy, Holy**

*Celebrant and People*

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

Hosanna in the highest.

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

Hosanna in the highest.

*The People stand or kneel*

*The Celebrant continues*

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in  
creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets;  
and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be  
incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have  
delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out  
of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given  
thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body,  
which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he 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. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me.”  
Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

*Celebrant and People*

**We remember his death,  
We proclaim his resurrection,  
We await his coming in glory;**

*The Celebrant continues*

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you,  
O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this  
bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon  
these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of  
Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your  
Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him,  
being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time,  
put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to  
that heavenly country where, with [\_\_\_\_\_ and] all your  
saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and  
daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all  
creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our  
salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy  
Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and  
for ever. *AMEN.*

### **THE LORD’S PRAYER (BCP p. 363)**

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

*People and Celebrant*

**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.**

***The Breaking of the Bread***

**FRACTION ANTHEM: *S – 154 Alleluia***

**INVITATION (BCP p. 364)**

*The Celebrant says*

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

**DISTRIBUTION (BCP p. 365)**

*The ministers receive the Sacrament in both kinds, and then immediately deliver it to the people.*

*The Bread and the Cup are given to the communicants with these words*

The Body (Blood) of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life. [*Amen.*]

**COMMUNION HYMN: *Love came down at Christmas (Gartan)* (H 84)**

**POST-COMMUNION PRAYER (BCP p. 365)**

*After Communion, the Celebrant says*

Let us pray.

*Celebrant and People*

**Eternal God, heavenly Father,  
you have graciously accepted us as living members  
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,  
and you have fed us with spiritual food  
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.  
Send us now into the world in peace,  
and grant us strength and courage  
to love and serve you  
with gladness and singleness of heart;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**BLESSING (BCP p. 366)**

*The Priest blesses the people, saying*

The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. *Amen.*

**POST-COMMUNION HYMN: *How bright appears the Morning Star (Wie schön leuchtet)* (H 497)**

## **DISMISSAL (BCP p. 366)**

Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

*People*      **Thanks be to God.**

## **Announcement**

### **January 4th to January 11th**

*Sunday, January 4th*

10 a.m.: 2nd Sunday after Christmas, Holy Eucharist, Rev. Melissa Buono

*Wednesday, January 7th*

4 p.m.: St. Paul's Soup kitchen. Contact Paul Ackroyd for information.

*Thursday, January 8th*

10 a.m. - 5 p.m.: Church Office open

7:30 p.m.: Choir practice

*Sunday, January 11th*

10 a.m.: 3rd Sunday after Christmas, Holy Eucharist, Rev. William Bergmann

### **2nd 1st Sunday after Christmas - Restore the Dignity of human nature Pour Light Upon Us**

On this day we praise the God who wonderfully created and yet more wonderfully restored the dignity of human nature. In Christ, God shares our humanity so that we may share the divine life. Redeemed and renewed, we walk as children of grace, bearing the image of the One who makes all things new. On this first Sunday after Christmas, we give thanks to the God who has poured upon us the new light of the incarnate Word. The Word made flesh continues to dwell among us, shining in the darkness with grace and truth. May this light, enkindled in our hearts, shine forth in our lives to the glory of God.

### **St. Paul's Soup Kitchen Volunteer Opportunities**

The next soup kitchen is on **Wednesday, January 7, 2025**. We will be serving our popular meal of meatloaf, mashed potatoes, salad, dessert, bread, and milk. If you would like to be added to the sign-up for donations, email Paul Ackroyd at [phackroyd@verizon.net](mailto:phackroyd@verizon.net). Drop-off is at St. Mark's (outside the admin wing - right-hand side of the building).

### **Save the Date: St. Mark's Annual Meeting**

**Sunday, January 18, 2026**

Please mark your calendars for St. Mark's Annual Meeting, which will take place immediately after services on Sunday, January 18. During the meeting, we will vote on new Vestry members, hear updates from our committees, review the budget, and celebrate our past year and the year

ahead. A link to the meeting agenda and the Annual Report will be provided in the coming weeks.

We will also share a meal together. The Hospitality Committee will provide the entrée, and we are asking parishioners to bring potluck items for salads and desserts. If you would like to help, please contact Judie Hilton at [familyministry@st-mark.org](mailto:familyministry@st-mark.org).

### **Outreach Box: Heating support for those in need this winter**

The Sunday School has asked that we support a program that gives heating assistance to those in need. The Outreach committee will donate collected funds for the [Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund](#). This organization works with several local communities and utilities to help cover heating expenses for those who need help.

### **Make your voice heard. Weekly ICE Protests on Wednesdays**

The grassroots organization Bearing Witness @ ICE (multiple links on Google) is continuing protests in front of the ICE detention center in Burlington (immediately behind the Mall) every Wednesday, 11 AM-1 PM. Attendance is now typically 500 and growing. Several St. Mark's parishioners attend every week. If you're interested in carpooling, please contact **Eric Kintner**. Another worthwhile resource for resisting ICE in many different ways is LUCE: <https://www.lucemass.org>

### **Help Support Our Neighbors Facing Food Insecurity**

Many in our community are struggling with food insecurity due to the high cost of groceries and recent reductions in SNAP (food assistance) benefits. St. Mark's Church invites parishioners to help support our local food pantries during this challenging time.

Please consider bringing non-perishable food items—such as canned goods, pasta, rice, or peanut butter—and placing them in the collection basket located in the narthex.

Your generosity helps ensure that no one in our community goes hungry. Thank you for your continued compassion and support.

### **Vestry Nominations for 2026 are Open**

The St. Mark's constitution requires that Vestry members rotate off the Vestry after six years. This year, Scott Hilton (Senior Warden), Joan O'Hare (Treasurer), and Chrissy Hemingway (At Large) have reached their term limit. Paul Ackroyd's first term is up, and he has agreed to be nominated for a second term.

Please prayerfully consider running or recommending a person for one of the open positions. The time commitment for Vestry is a once-a-month one- to two-hour Zoom meeting, followed by periodic tasks that come up during the year and are shared by Vestry members.

St. Mark's, as are many small churches, faces challenges ahead but is in a good position with a balanced budget in the last couple of years and strong leadership from Rev. Will, and those on the Vestry. You would be joining a strong team that will guide St. Mark's in its mission and

ministry. Please reach out to Scott Hilton, if you are interested in a vestry position - [seniorwarden@st-mark.org](mailto:seniorwarden@st-mark.org).

**Ongoing News    Office Hours** - Irina and/or Rev. Bergmann will be in the office on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. To schedule an office appointment, please email [secretary@st-mark.org](mailto:secretary@st-mark.org) or **Rev. Bergmann** at [wcbrgm2n@gmail.com](mailto:wcbrgm2n@gmail.com) or call (978) 692-7849 and leave a voice message. Thank you.

The next Vestry Meeting is on Monday, January 12, 2026, at 7 p.m. on Zoom. Contact **Scott Hilton** if you would like to join.

**St. Mark's Bible Study** meets every other week on Wednesdays at a local restaurant to discuss the lectionary readings for the week. New members are welcome! If you'd like to join, e-mail Herb Elliott at [herb.elliott@cheza.com](mailto:herb.elliott@cheza.com), and he will add you to the email distribution and send you the readings.

**Pastoral Care:** Would you like to receive communion? Need prayers for healing? Need support or assistance? Would you like to speak with a priest? Please email **Rev. Will Bergmann** at [wcbrgm2n@gmail.com](mailto:wcbrgm2n@gmail.com) and Herb Elliott, our Pastoral Care team leader at [herb.elliott@cheza.com](mailto:herb.elliott@cheza.com). Alternatively, you can call 978-501-8479. You can also use the "Request Pastoral Visit" button on St. Mark's website.



#### **PRIEST - IN – CHARGE**

**The Rev. Dr. Will Bergmann, [wcbrgm2n@gmail.com](mailto:wcbrgm2n@gmail.com), 978-501-3393**

#### **SENIOR WARDEN**

Scott Hilton, [wscotthilton@gmail.com](mailto:wscotthilton@gmail.com), Cell #: (978) 302-1088

#### **MINISTER OF MUSIC**

Lee Yezek: [lyezek@gmail.com](mailto:lyezek@gmail.com)

#### **VESTRY MEMBERS**

Michael O'Hare (Jr. Warden), Joan O'Hare (Treasurer), Ellen Tremblay (Clerk), Paul Ackroyd (At-Large), Chrissy Hemingway (Rental program and Pre-School Representative), Melissa Dewing, Brenda Martin, Mahiro Jilesen.

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