

The Marker

December 2025

From Pastor Dave

Beginnings and Farewells

*Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord...
who has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
God has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
God has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty." Luke 1:46, 51-53*

The Christmas Word began at the beginning of time. And it was good. Then time flew by. A messenger, Gabriel, in a long line of God's angels and prophets, arrived and announced God's good news of hope, of change - to one solitary small soul. *"Do not be afraid.... The LORD is with you.... For nothing will be impossible with God."* Somehow Mary heard, saw and believed how God is changing the world one small soul at a time. She said (or sang) about God's Magnification from lowly to uplifted, heart-felt to heartbreaking, threatening and theosophical, about justice and Jesus.

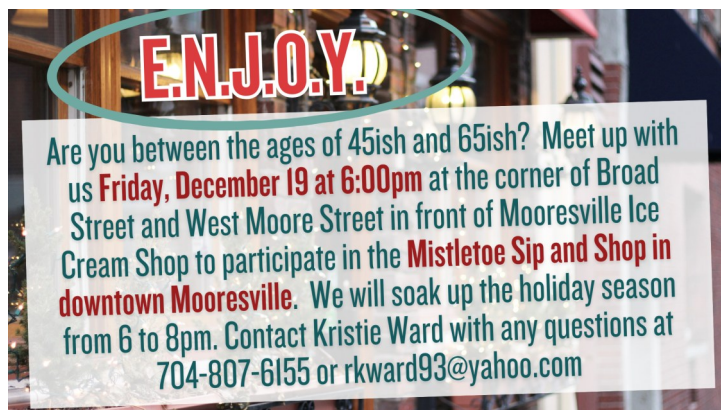
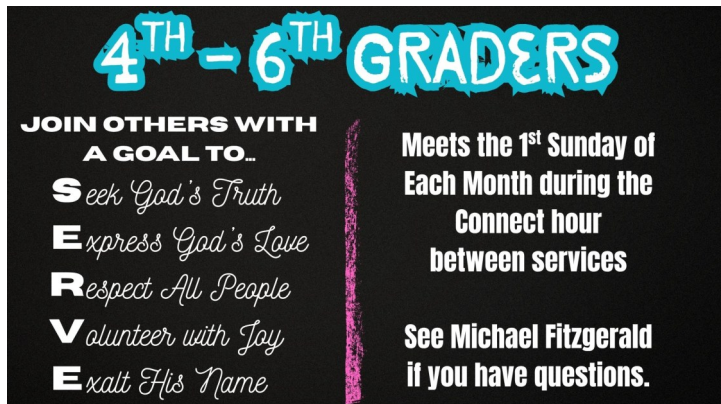
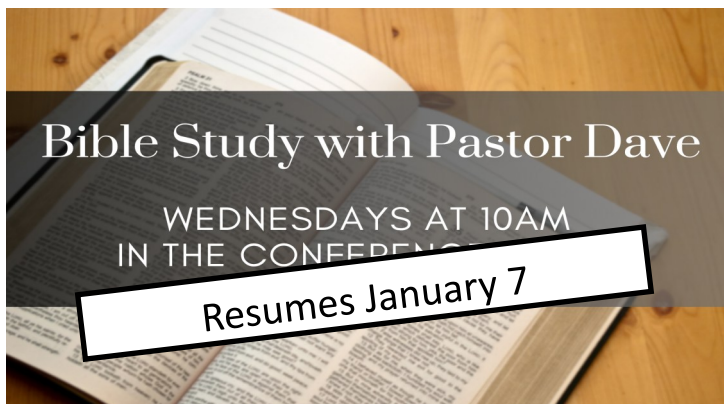
Biblical justice is not just charity for the needy; it's the practice of complete compassion among all people as sisters and brothers (see Luke 10:25-37), elimination of that which separates us from one other. It's radical. The kind of thing a young poor teenager might dream up and then become another of God's prophetic and good news birthing messengers. Her prophetic proclamation is of God's way vs "the powerful" and "the rich" and the economic and political systems that maintain them. Mary declares God doesn't just lift up the poor and lowly but also brings down the proud and powerful. Through God, faith, hope and love, Mary declares a new beginning, Christmas, the coming of Christ. A new beginning as much as the rainbow for *All Creation* in Genesis 9. A new beginning after 40 exodus years in the wilderness and centuries of slavery prior. A new beginning through lowly Mary - an act of God's anguish against our self-centered world and ways. **God's coming (Advent)** to bring about justice and peace through a baby, a manger, a cross, over and against abuses of power, evil, sin and death. To **give gifts that are expected to keep on giving in forgiveness, mercy, grace, healing, hope, love.** And we are all in this together. We all are needy and powerful, all poor and gifted, all rich and empty, all saint and sinner. Jesus Christ's beginning in Magnify-cent and manger-born ways, cross-shaped and cross-shared love, continues, continues through you and me, continues through 2025 and into the new year.

Another solitary soul with a magnifying voice and personality, **Lisa Combs Harper**, joined St. Mark's in 2021. Lisa has brilliantly helped lead and guide our music and minds to glorify God. Lisa has helped us to experience Jesus' love through her own joyful exuberance in faith and friendship, laughter and love. Lisa has helped shape our congregation's and staff's witness of the Spirit's passionate presence in music, worship, and in life! Lisa has helped us hear angels and hope. God bless Lisa and Jerry and all their family as Lisa celebrates her birthday December 12 and retires 12 days later! As Lisa sometimes says to us in choir *"Get the L out!"* With a smile Lisa reminds us to drop that L consonant at times in order for a word to be sung better. But L - isa - you have always, always made our sung song better, not to mention worship and our lives! We wish Lisa the best even as we sorely miss her "soul magnifying the Lord" in our presence.

Thank you St. Mark's Congregation and Staff for all your good news sharing throughout the year in Jesus Christ's holy name! Thank you for faithfully sharing your heart, hands, voices, time, money, myriad skills and for witnessing to those gifts that keep on giving ... through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit!

Advent Blessings and Merry Christmas to you! Gloria in excelsis Deo!





Prayer Concerns

St. Mark's Members: Lorri Monterose, Pauline Biggs, Sharon Gombotz, Bob Anderson, Mike Carter, Ruth Ann Swart, Peter Cuocolo, Pauline Biggs, all who are homebound, all who are caregivers.

St. Mark's Friends & Family: Wendy Phillips (friend of Nina Keck), Tommy Barone (brother of Charlie Barone), Sandy Monterose (Tommy's sister), Luz Ortiz (friend of Peter Cuocolo), Adam Mann (son-in-law of Saleebys), Wes and Judy Koch (friends of the Hokes), Brynda Bechtold, Dave & Annette Simpson (friends of Peter Cuocolo), Renee (friend of Cindy Wilkins), Dave (friend of the Greene Family), Colin Goracke (Jack & Melanie Altman's grandson), Cindy Munsey Hall (friend of Peter Cuocolo), Glen Bannister (Sharon Roy's brother-in-law), Betty Lowe, Sue Wilson (Michelle Corbett's mother), Bleier family, Sandra Davis, Rick Barger (friend of Kathy Jo McLean), Zebulon Hounslea (friend/student of Judy Fletcher), Maria Cuocolo, Ronnie & kids, Emma (15- Hodgkins Lymphoma), Keith LaPrelle (nephew of Karen Pettit), David Moregas (friend of the Kecks), Harriett Hepler (Barbara Overcash's sister), James Nicholson (friend of Peter Cuocolo), Steve Belton (brother of Malinda Little), Tori (friend of Liz McNabb), Anne Monterosso (fiancé of Colin Davis), Marty Rink (friend of the Van Horns), Carol Masters (friend of Liz Whitlow), Pastor David Gerber (Diana Cosme Avery's stepfather), Clark 'Tiger' LeBrun (cousin of Donna Enroth & Linda Melin), Ian Russell

St Mark's Military Members: Tommy Upshaw, Erik Crowder, and Janet Smeltz's grandson- Dalton Leik, Andrew Boman, BK & Laura Barringer's great-grandson- Christopher Barringer.

Condolence: We extend our Christian Sympathy to: the family of Barbara Barteau at the death of her mother Joan; the family of Cliff Hucks at the death of his mother, Martha Hucks; Phyllis Witherspoon and family at the death of Floyd Witherspoon; the family of Jeremy Kraft at the death of his father, Gary Kraft; the family of Robert "Bob" Klepfer at his death.



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

4PM
CHILDREN'S SERVICE

7:30PM
TRADITIONAL COMMUNION & CANDELIGHT
PRE-SERVICE MUSIC WILL BEGIN AT 7:15PM

10PM
CAROLS, COMMUNION & CANDELIGHT

One Service at 10am

Dec 14- Christmas Cantata
Dec 28 - Worship w/ Lesson & Carols

No CONNECT for kids on Dec 21 & 28

Enjoy the holidays with your families.

Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 7
at 10:30am



Christmas Cantata

December 14
One service at
10:00am



DECEMBER 14

Lake Norman Big Band Christmas Show

3:30 IN THE SANCTUARY

Christmas Dinner

IN THE FLC AFTER THE SHOW
BRING A SIDE DISH TO SHARE



A peek at the Feast of Abundance...



Welcome Amanda Howard!

Amanda Howard is married and the proud mother of two daughters. She cherishes time with her grandson and enjoys the company of her two granddogs. Amanda loves reading, spending time with family and friends, and relaxing at the beach. She is excited to begin a new job and get to know the wonderful people at St. Mark's Lutheran Church.



Staff Update

Welcome Our New Administrative Assistant – Amanda Howard

We are excited to welcome Amanda Howard to the St Mark's office staff!

Hours: Monday– Thursday, 9am-2pm

Her email address: ahoward@saintmarkslutheran.com

Communications Coordinator – Amanda Hamra

Amanda Hamra continues in her role, working remotely as the communications coordinator.

Her email address remains: amanda@saintmarkslutheran.com

And yes, you read that correctly. We now have two Amandas... both with last names that start with H. (We promise this wasn't planned.) We are both fine to be referred to as our full names or simply last names. Don't worry if it gets confusing; we'll make sure the right Amanda receives each message. When in doubt, you can always use office@saintmarkslutheran.com.

Who Handles What?

Amanda Howard – Administrative Assistant

Facility use requests and scheduling

Altar flower requests

Prayer concerns

Records requests

Supplies for worship & office

Office needs

Amanda Hamra – Communications Coordinator

Announcements

Calendars (collaborative effort)

Online Directory (elvanto) related questions

Social media needs

Additional Staff Reminders

Dawn Barone continues to handle all financial matters.

Susan Bostian manages volunteer schedules.

Jessica Fitzgerald assists with scheduling for kids services.

Margaret Van Horn schedules the altar guild.

Hands On

Hands On has been busy at work with delivers to Living Waters Lutheran Church in Cherokee and to Mooresville Middle School. Thank you to all who contributed!

On arriving to Living Waters, we unloaded a box truck, 2 cars & 2 pick up trucks. Thank you St Mark's members for making this donation possible. We delivered 110 filled Christmas stockings, 30 Thanksgiving food bags, Christmas gifts for 10 children in the local Children's Home, blankets, knitted hats, Christmas decorations, clothes, pillows, bed, bedding, toys, school supplies, first aid kits & more. This took a village.



Mitch checking out the generous donation of apples, sweet potatoes & cabbage.



Pricilla & Wayne bagging apples- 30 bags of apples!



Josh Graham owner of Josh's market donated all of our produce. Thank you Josh!



Jimmy was almost trapped between the shelves as he was putting things in place.



Lisa Russel was most appreciative of the many donations. Their outreach ministry serves many.



Muffin making time!



This batch went to students at Mooresville Middle. They will enjoy them during their Fellowship of Christian Athletes mtg.



Cindy & Susan watching the ovens!

Homemade Christmas Cards by Hands On



Send kind words to bless others.

Free in the FLC & Narthex



Free Christmas Cards

Hands On has received wonderful donations of Christmas cards that can be found in the FLC and Narthex. All cards are free to church members to bless others and brighten someone's holiday! In addition, we will continue to create hand-made cards this season.

If you have an interest in making cards or donating supplies, please reach out to Pam Core at 704 340-7883, pjcore@gmail.com or come join us on Tuesdays at 12:30pm!

Christmas Angel Tree

Select an angel from the tree (instruction sheets are on the table beside the tree, located in the Narthex). We request that all gifts be returned and placed under the tree by the end of the 10:30 service on Sunday, December 7th.



Hands On

Tuesdays at 12:30pm
in the FLC

Serving our community and beyond



SERVING OUR SENIORS

Need a hand with light household projects? Sign up in the narthex or call the office.

WORK DAY:
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6

CALLING ALL
VOLUNTEERS!
IF YOU CAN HELP,
CONTACT: COLIN
704-650-1451



Food for Days

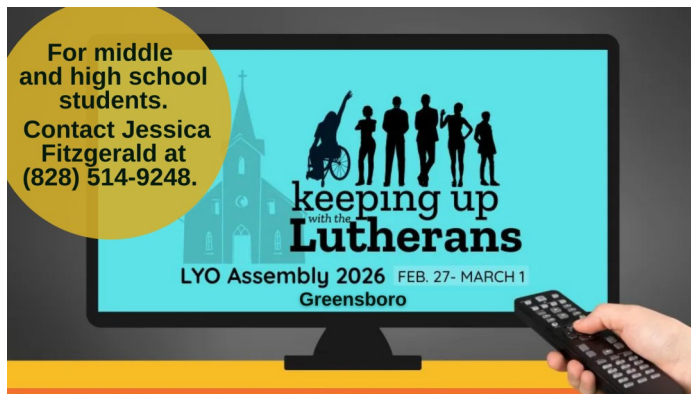
ITEM OF THE MONTH

January: Chewy Granola Bars
February: Pudding Cups
March: Juice boxes/pouches
April: Beans & Franks-8 oz
May: Ravioli (flip top cans)
June: Oatmeal, variety pack
July: Crackers (variety pack))
August: Ramen Noodles
September: Pop Tarts
October: Lg. Chef Boyardee
Nov: Fruit & Applesauce Cups
December: Vienna Sausages



Our congregation has raised enough funds to support 13 in need children at Park View School at a cost of \$3,200. As of this school season Park View has 42 in need children. Food for Days is supplying weekend bags to 387 children. The need is great and the food cost continues to rise. We are a unique congregation due to the fact in 2010 when we partnered with FFD it was with the understanding that all money we contribute goes to food only. That means that if you contribute \$25.00 every penny goes to food only nothing to the organization's expenses.

PLEASE, PLEASE continue support the FOOD FOR DAYS program so no children come to school hungry. To donate use a pew envelop indicate FFD EVERY PENNY WILL BE A BLESSING.



Thank you for your support of the Count Me IN campaign. As of Sunday, Nov. 16, we have received 69 pledges from the 185 giving families who have given a financial gift in 2025. These first 69 pledges cover \$361,720 of our 2026 budget of \$586,232. The 2026 proposed budget was approved today in our annual congregation meeting.

We also have had 64 individual members to complete the time and talent form. This is one way to commit to engaging in continued involvement in ministries similar to last year and/or to sign up for

additional activities as well.

We always welcome more engagement! Specifically, we hope more of the remaining families who have not submitted a pledge card or time and talent form will prayerfully consider submitting one in the next 2 weeks. Pledge cards and time and talent forms are available in the narthex and can be dropped in the offering plate. Your pledge makes a difference in planning.

With Gratitude,
Stewardship Committee

Birthdays



1 Truesdell, Myles	9 Swart, Bill	19 Ferden, Megan
2 Shirley, Anna	11 Altman, Jack	20 Uzarski, Susan
3 Hofer, Hikaru	12 Harper, Lisa	20 Pless, Leslie
3 Tautges, Desi	13 Locklin, Linda	21 Staley, Tracy
3 Frankos, Holly	15 Mays, Bart	22 Mize, Oliver
4 Ontiveros, Ben	15 D'Amico, Gary	23 Leone, Susan
5 Folkerts, Linda	15 Beidler, Barbara	26 Lyons III, Tommy
6 Core, Larry	16 Cheng, SueAnn	27 Brawley, Tina
7 Hucks, Cliff	16 Welch, Patrick	28 Wells, Amanda
8 Glauer, Barbara	17 Barone, Matthew	28 Hamra, Jack
9 Mueller, Edgar	17 Stenback, Wendy	29 Ensley II, Bryan
9 Wagoner, Derwin	18 Mattingly, Tim	30 Horiszny, Bill

Anniversaries

5 Jerick and Tamara Johnson	22 yrs
5 J.R. and Kristi Norris	10 yrs
10 Winn and Susan Haire	47 yrs
13 Eastin and Kimberlie DeVerna	12 yrs
16 Chick and Mary Jo Pless	53 yrs
23 Stan and Susan Suther	53 yrs
23 William and Nancy Yeates	29 yrs
25 Eric and Am Seidel	13 yrs
26 Mike and Betty Carter	46 yrs
28 Carl and Debra Yost	45 yrs