

# MARK TIMES

NEWS and NOTES for December 22, 2024

## ***This Week at St. Mark:***

**Monday, Dec. 23:** 9:00AM Christmas decorating – Church & chapel  
**Tuesday, Dec. 24:** 7:00PM Festival liturgy for Christmas Eve  
**Wednesday, Dec. 25:** 10:00AM Liturgy for Christmas Day (with St. George's)  
*December 25 & 26: Offices closed*



## **Decorating Day Upcoming!**

We will **finish decorating for Christmas** at **9:00AM** on **Monday, December 23**. This is a joint effort by the altar guilds of St Mark and St George, but **ALL** are encouraged to come and help! Many hands make work light!

## **Today's Adult Forum – St. Nicholas, Part 2**

Today's Adult Forum will feature the second half of the video documentary, *St. Nicholas – The Real Story*, led by Dr. Mark Wilson, one of the lecturers at the Bible and Archaeology Fest that Pastor Brian attended.



## Christmas Schedule

### **FESTIVAL CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP**

Tuesday, December 24, 7:00PM

### **CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP**

Wednesday, December 25, 10:00AM

*Joint service with St. George's Episcopal Church*

### **THE FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS**

Sunday, December 29, 10:00AM

*Joint service of Lessons & Carols with St. George's Episcopal Church*

Special Time!

### **THE SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS**

Sunday, January 5, 2025, 9:00AM

### **THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD**

Monday, January 6, 6:00PM

*Joint service with St. George's Episcopal Church*

## **Presiding Bishop Eaton's Christmas Message**



In her Christmas message, ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton calls our attention to the word "joy" in the angel's proclamation to the shepherds. "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of a great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11). Eaton reminds us that the message of Christmas is **joy**, not happiness. Happiness is transient and humanmade. But joy given by God is deep and strong and unshakable. "Joy is a sign of the reign of God...Perhaps that is why in the middle of the night, to terrified shepherds, outside of a small town, God chose to send the angels to announce the birth of Jesus. No distraction. No interference. Just the simple, deep, profound gift of true and lasting joy." Watch the video message here: <https://bit.ly/3D9ULKc>

## Making a Joyful Noise unto the Lord!

On Sunday, December 8, a wonderful group shared the joy of Christmas with residents of local care facilities, including some of our own church members. We visited Colonnade Senior Living in O'Fallon, Charter Senior Living and Mercy Rehab and Care in Swansea, and Freeburg Care Facility. The residents made our visit even better by singing along to their favorite Christmas songs.



## Interested in Yoga at St. Mark?

Formal classes will be held for 45 minutes on Thursday evenings at 6:15PM beginning on January 2, 2025 in the Parish Hall. A donation of \$5.00 is asked for each session. Please bring your own mat and water bottle for classes.

Practicing yoga can help with body flexibility, strength, mobility, and balance. It also requires you to shift into a more relaxed state, which can help decrease stress, increase focus, and promote a stronger connection with yourself. You can't ask for a more pose-ative experience!

## Angel Tree Project and more!

**THANK YOU** to everyone who participated in St. George's and St. Mark joint Angel Tree Project Christmas Drive through Lutheran Child & Family Services this year. Our faith communities generously provided gifts for **over 70 children!**

In addition to all the gifts donated by members, three (3) Thrivent Action Team grants provided a total of \$750 for gifts. A small portion of St. Mark's monetary donations were used to purchase gently worn coats and sweatshirts for Franklin School students in need. A special monetary donation was designated for new socks and leggings for the Franklin School students. Pictures are worth a thousand words so here's a few to show the amazing project results! Additional pictures are on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall.



**St. Mark Offerings for 12/15: General Fund: \$7,253.65; Food Pantry: \$2,331.77**