

# MARK TIMES

## NEWS and NOTES for December 14, 2025

<b>Sunday, Dec. 14:</b>	5:00PM	Advent Lessons & Carols - church
<b>Monday, Dec. 15:</b>	2:30PM	Fiber Arts at Westfield Manor
<b>Wednesday, Dec. 17:</b>	6:00PM	Soup supper – <i>Parish Hall</i>
	7:00PM	Holden Evening Prayer - <i>church</i>
<b>Thursday, Dec. 18:</b>	4:30PM	Chancel choir
	6:00PM	Bell Choir
	6:00PM	Yoga – Parish Hall
<b>Saturday, Dec. 20:</b>	9:00AM	Hanging of the Greenery - church

### Adult Forum: *What's New with Our Brothers' Keepers*

We are pleased to welcome back Kirsten Peterson, Executive Director of the reentry services organization, Our Brothers' Keepers. Kirsten's last presentation to us and subsequent visits to OBK's facility have been eye-opening and inspirational, and we look forward to hearing the latest about this much-needed ministry!

### Advent Lessons & Carols THIS Afternoon

Please join us this afternoon, **Sunday, December 14** at **5:00PM** for our annual service of Advent Lessons & Carols with St. George's. This traditional service is a wonderful way to celebrate the season, with beautiful hymns and scripture passages to guide and focus us in our time of preparation for Christmas and the Lord's return. The service is especially appropriate for inviting friends and family, particularly those who might be searching for "something more" this holiday. A wine and cheese reception will follow.



**Advent Evening Prayer Service & Soup Suppers** conclude this **Wednesday, December 17**. Plan to come enjoy a hot meal of soup and salad at 6:00PM in the Parish Hall before joining us in the church for Holden Evening Prayer. **Get a group together and host one of the soup suppers!** A sign-up sheet is in the Parish Hall near the coffee stand.

### Cleaning & Decorating Days

Next Saturday, December 20, at 9:00AM will be the hanging of the greens and putting up of the trees, and we will finish decorating for Christmas at 10:00AM on Tuesday, December 23. This is a joint effort by the altar guilds of St Mark and St George's, but ALL are encouraged to come and help!



**Offerings (12/7): General Fund:** \$4,623; **Coffee Fund:** \$30; **Staff Gift:** \$380; **Christmas Flowers:** \$125;

## Proclaim Christ's birth with flowers – Due **THIS Thursday!**



Anyone wishing to donate should watch for a special envelope in the pews, fill out the front portion, add your check/cash, and return it to the offering plate or the office **by December 18** with “Christmas Flowers” in the memo line. \*Online donations may be made through VANCO at <https://shorturl.at/ar1Ss>. All dedications will be published in the Christmas bulletin.

## New Date for Important Safety Class

On **Saturday, February 7** from 9am-1pm in the parish hall, Chestnut Health Systems will present information on **Mental Health, Substance Abuse/Narcan and Suicide awareness/prevention**. Our target audience is the safety committee members, food pantry workers and ushers. Anyone else interested in this important information is also very welcome to attend. Please sign up in the Canterbury Room, on the available sheets, to assist in our planning.

For questions, please call Sue Vaughn at 618-593-7213.

### **PLEASE use your code for the chapel door; do NOT unlock it with a key or using the bar!**

The Wednesday before Thanksgiving, St. George's choir members departing after rehearsal found the chapel door to have been unlocked at some point during the evening. Since both choirs were rehearsing that night, we want to strongly emphasize to our folks that the doors should NEVER be unlocked with a key or by securing the crash bar *unless* a worship service is being held in the chapel. Doing so at any other time creates a safety risk to anyone using the building while expecting the door to be secure.

## A Word to Advent from Bishop Greg Busboom

*“And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Isaiah 35:10).*

The word that the prophet Isaiah speaks right into the midst of the harsh reality for God's people is the promise that a savior is coming. “Here is your God,” the prophet announces. “He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you” (35:4). Yes, the wilderness and desert are dry and lifeless, but they will bloom and blossom abundantly! Yes, you may be dwelling in the valley of the shadow of death, but streams of healing water will break forth overcoming death with life! Yes, you may feel far from home, utterly abandoned and alone, but a highway is being built and you will travel home again singing and rejoicing all the way!

Is not this promise the Word that the world needs to hear as we enter into this Advent season? Have we not been called to “strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees, and say to those who are of a fearful heart, ‘Be strong, do not fear!’”? Have we not been sent into the world to announce through our words and our deeds the joy-filled coming of Christ, the One who was, who is, and who is to come? Dear disciples of Jesus, during these days of Advent, preach this Word! Sing this Word! Announce this Word! Live and breathe and celebrate this Word! Life will not always be the way it is now. Jesus comes to make a home for us – ALL of us. That promise is cause for JOY – unbounded, overflowing, knock-your-socks-off JOY – even, or perhaps especially, when life is not ok.

Even in the midst of all that is going on in our world and in our lives, there is joy to be found this Advent. Jesus is our home. Sorrow and sighing is fleeing away. Even in the wildernesses and dark places of our lives, there is singing!

The entirety of Bishop Greg's Advent message can be found at <https://www.csis-elca.org/news/a-word-to-advent-25/>