

St. Mark Connection

St. Mark Presbyterian Church

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Dear St. Mark Members and Friends,

Advent is coming! Here are five reasons to embrace the season of Advent:

1) The culture we live in has virtually no interest in Advent. You won't find Advent Wreaths lining the shelves at Wal-Mart. Or music playing about the second coming of Christ on the radio. There's no war on advent talk on the news shows. And this is good news because it means that it is a much more spiritually pure season.

2) Advent offers an antidote for the instant gratification bug that our culture has caught. In the midst of what has become an incredibly self-indulgent season of more, more, more, and now, now, now, advent is about patiently waiting. It is a practice of the embrace of longing. We learn to wait with growing anticipation. We make ourselves so hungry for Christ that we began to want his presence and his ways above the things of this world.

3) Advent teaches us to be at peace when the world is not. Peace comes from knowing that everything is going to be alright in the end. Christ will come. It does not mean that we are passive in the face of evil. It means that we work toward peace with the sure knowledge of success. It's less like treading water and more like swimming knowing that the shore is near.

4) In a "need to know" world, Advent points us toward mystery. There is a reality beyond our grasp and comprehension that we brush with if we are paying attention. God is mixing and mingling with us in strange and mysterious ways. But we must be open to the possibility of things happening that we can't and won't understand.

5) In a world that values speed, Advent invites us to slow down. Yes, there is a time for fast action, but there is also a time to take it slow. Slowing down allows us to take stock of our lives and to consider things more carefully. It allows us to experience wonder. When we rush, we miss the good stuff. Sometimes I think we are in such a hurry that we don't even really know where we are really going. Going slow allows us to consider where we are, where we've come from, and where we are going.

Take a road less travelled this December and enjoy the ride!

Christ is coming!

Pastor Paul

Volume 70

Issue 12

December
2023



this issue

**BULLETIN BOARD AND
UPCOMING EVENTS** P. 2

**CALENDAR AND
POINSETTIA ORDER
FORM** INSERT

RANDALL'S PEN P. 5

reminders

December 3

1st Sunday of Advent

December 10

2nd Sunday of Advent

Christmas Cantata

December 17

3rd Sunday of Advent

Scriptures & Songs

December 24

4th Sunday of Advent

4:00 Fellowship in the

Parlor

5:00 Candlelight Worship

December 25

Nativity of the

Lord/Christmas Day



Sunday Sermons, Scriptures and Events

December 3

1st Sunday of Advent

Celebration of The Lord's Supper

Hope: "Jesus Christ Is Coming to Town"

Isaiah 64:1-9, Mark 13:24-37

December 10

2nd Sunday of Advent

Peace: "Waiting on the World to Change"

Isaiah 40:1-11, 2 Peter 3:8-15a

December 17

3rd Sunday of Advent

Joy: Lessons and Carols

December 24

4th Sunday of Advent

Love: "The Impossible Dream"

Luke 1-26-38, Luke 1:39-56

5:00 p.m. - Christmas Eve Worship

"Gabriel's Favorite Song"

Isaiah 9:2-7, Luke 2:1-20

December 25

Nativity of the Lord/Christmas Day

December 31

5th Sunday of Advent

"Worth the Wait"

Isaiah 61:10-62:3, Luke 2:22-40



God Bless You on Your Birthday

December 3

Colin Stephen

December 6

Voni Robinson

December 7

Leigh Taylor

December 10

Randall McGee

December 11

Mary Moffitt

December 12

SuzAnne Munoz

December 13

Alex Crawley

December 14

Becky Page

December 15

Ron McMahon

December 27

Clint Taylor

December 29

Sheila Wahl

December 31

Diane Llywelyn

Emily Stephen



Sock, Hat and Glove Tree Time



Once again, the Mission and Membership Committee is providing St. Mark with the opportunity to donate new socks, hats, and gloves for children, teens, and adults.

All items need to be as warm as you can find, with size tags attached. Donations should be placed in the sock tree basket in the Parlor. We will collect items through the end of December and deliver them to White Rock Center of Hope.



Poinsettias

The Worship and Music Committee is taking orders for Poinsettias to decorate our Sanctuary during the Advent/Christmas Season. Order forms are available in the church office, and on Sunday morning in the Narthex. The order form and payment can be placed in the offering plate during the worship service, or by dropping them in the church mail slot on the Parlor door. The deadline to order is *Sunday, December 3rd*.



All your prayers, cards, visits, phone calls, and words of encouragement were greatly appreciated following my recent surgery. Gary and I are blessed to be part of the St. Mark family.

Thank you!

Ann O'Neal

St. Mark Presbyterian Church exists to know Jesus and to make Him known.

GOD WITH US

The Christmas season is a time when we anticipate the coming of The Messiah, the Child that came to Earth as God wrapped in flesh to shed light in the darkness, bringing hope to the hopeless and peace to the restless. **The cantata, *God with Us***, is a collection of reflective Advent selections and worshipful Christmas anthems by various composers that **will be sung by the Sanctuary Choir during the first three Sundays of Advent**. Please join us as we celebrate the coming of Christ and meditate on the wonderful gift that God has given us.

DECEMBER ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

First Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 3 at 9:45 a.m.

Second Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 10 at 9:45

Third Sunday of Advent

Service of Scriptures & Songs
Sunday, December 17 at 9:45 a.m.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 24 at 9:45 a.m.

Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 24
Fellowship in Parlor at 4:00 p.m.
Candlelight Service at 5:00 p.m.

















St Mark Presbyterian Church, Dallas Texas

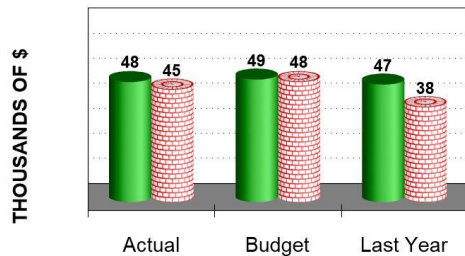
December 2023



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>9:45a Worship Service</p> <p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>9:45a Worship Service - Communion</p> <p>First Sunday of Advent</p> <p>3</p> 	<p>6:00p Worship & Music Com Mtg</p> <p>4</p>	<p>6:00p Mission & Membership Com Mtg</p> <p>5</p>	<p>6:00p Handbells Rehearsal 7:00p Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>6</p>	<p>10:30a Bible Study 6:00p Zoom Yoga</p> <p>7</p>	<p>8:00a Property Com Mtg 9:00a Mini Workday</p> <p>8</p>	<p>8:00a Property Com Mtg 9:00a Mini Workday</p> <p>USE YOUR GIFTS</p> <p>9</p> 
<p>9:45a Worship Service - Second Sunday of Advent</p> <p>10</p> 	<p>6:00p Admin & Personnel Com Mtg</p> <p>11</p>	<p>6:00p Stewardship & Finance Com Mtg 6:00p Christian Educ Com</p> <p>12</p>	<p>6:00p Handbells Rehearsal 7:00p Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>13</p>	<p>10:30a Bible Study 6:00p Zoom Yoga</p> <p>14</p> 	<p>15</p>	<p>16</p>
<p>9:45a Worship Service Third Sunday of Advent</p> <p>17</p> 	<p>18</p>	<p>6:30p Session Meeting</p> <p>19</p>	<p>6:00p Handbells Rehearsal 7:00p Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>20</p>	<p>10:30a Bible Study 6:00p Zoom Yoga</p> <p>21</p> 	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>
<p>9:45a Worship Service 4:00p Fellowship in Parlor 5:00p Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Fourth Sunday of Advent</p> <p>24</p> 	<p>Christmas Day OFFICE CLOSED</p> <p>25</p> 	<p>6:00p Mission & Membership Com Mtg</p> <p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>10:30a Bible Study 6:00p Zoom Yoga</p> <p>28</p> 	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>
<p>9:45a Worship Service New Year's Eve</p> <p>31</p> 	<p>New Year's Day OFFICE CLOSED</p> <p>1</p> 	<p>6:00p Fellowship Com Mtg</p> <p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>10:30a Bible Study 6:00p Zoom Yoga</p> <p>4</p> 	<p>5</p>	<p>8:00a Dallas Cluster Officer Training (Classroom)</p> <p>6</p>

Treasurer's Report

4 MONTHS THROUGH 10-31-2023



OPERATING FUND

■ +INCOME ■ -EXPENSE

Operating Fund – YTD unrestricted contributions are \$700 below budget, and \$7,700 below last year. YTD expenses are \$2,300 below budget, and \$7,300 above last year. Bottom line, we are approximately \$2,800 positive YTD, which is \$1,500 better than budgeted but \$6,000 behind last year.

Special Christmas Offering

St. Mark members are asked to open their hearts for our **Special Christmas Offering**. Half of the funds received will go to the Joy Offering and half will go to the Ministry of Hope in Malawi, Africa.

The Joy Offering

provides support for retired and active pastors and church workers and their families, as well as support for the racial-ethnic schools and colleges of the PC(USA).



The **Ministry of Hope** serves orphans, infants and widows in rural Malawi, Africa. Our offering this year will be used to provide scholarship support for children from the villages served by the Ministry of Hope who are attending high school, college, and vocational trade schools.

The Session has set a goal of \$4,000 for this year's offering. Please prayerfully consider your gift to the offering as a reflection of your gratitude for the multitude of blessings that you have received.



What a blessing and a joy it is to be a part of the ministry at St. Mark Presbyterian Church. The staff wishes you good health, peace, love and joy this Christmas and throughout the coming year.

*Rev. Dr. Paul M. Burns
Rev. Dr. Randall McGee
Gary O'Neal
Bob King
Darlene Wright*

St. Mark Presbyterian Church exists to know Jesus and to make Him known.



So, it is Advent and Christmas season again. Just like every year. Ready or not here it comes. I am not going to run down a litany of reason why we may or may not be excited about the season this year. Each of us probably has our own.

I am going to suggest a practice to you for the season this year. I just read an article by one of my favorite bloggers, Jan Edmiston. She suggests that every day we look and watch for something hopeful happening around us. I think that would make an excellent activity for Advent. Every night reflect on the day and note anything that was hopeful. Or every morning think about the previous day. Perhaps keep a list and review it from time to time. If you miss a day or several don't worry since no one is grading you.

That's pretty simple and yet more than enough for most of us. But it did occur to me that hope is one of the four words traditionally tied to Advent. The other three are peace, love, and joy. So, if you wanted to keep your eyes open for peaceful, loving, and joyful things as well that would be great. Just remember it's not a competition.

I'll be interested to hear if any of you try this. Let me know how it goes.



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POINSETTIAS



The Worship/Music Committee is taking orders for Poinsettias to decorate our Sanctuary during the Advent/Christmas Season. If you would like to place an order, please complete this form and place it in the offering plate or return it to the church office. Poinsettias are \$10.00 each!

Make your check payable to: St. Mark Presbyterian Church and mark for poinsettias.

**THE DEADLINE TO ORDER AND PAY
IS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3rd!**

Name: _____

I wish to order _____ poinsettias at \$10.00 each.

In honor of _____

In memory of _____

In celebration of _____

Other _____



St. Mark Presbyterian Church
9999 Ferguson Road
Dallas, TX 75228
Non-Profit Organization

CHRISTMAS
Joy
★

December