Welcome to St. Mark’s Episcopal Church

All are welcome, all are honored, all are embraced, all are loved.

The First Sunday of Advent
December 3, 2023
10:00 a.m.

St. Mark’s Episcopal Church
A house of prayer for all people in the historic Radcliffeborough neighborhood of Charleston, South Carolina

The Rt. Rev. Ruth Woodliff-Stanley, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina
The Very Reverend Dr. Michael Shaffer, Interim Rector
Loretta Haskell, Organist & Choirmaster
The 1982 Hymnal, referred to as Hymnal and Lift Every Voice and Sing II, referred to a LEVAS are found in your pew. If BCP appears, that is a reference to the red Book of Common Prayer, also found in your pew.

Opening Proclamation

Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ saith: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

CHORAL INTROIT      My Lord What a Morning      Negro Spiritual

OPENING HYMN         Rejoice, Rejoice Believers  Hymnal 68

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Celebrant: On the first Sunday of Advent, we light the first candle of the Advent wreath. This is the candle of Hope. With Christians around the world, we use this light to help us prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of God’s Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. May we receive God’s light as we hear the words of the prophet Isaiah:

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined.”—Isaiah 9:2

Let us pray:

All: Lord as we look to the birth of Jesus, grant that the light of your love for us will help us to become lights in the lives of those around us. Prepare our hearts for the joy and gladness of your coming, for Jesus is our hope. Amen.

Celebrant: Blessed are you, holy and living One.
People: You come to your people and set them free.

Celebrant:
Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.
Celebrant: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.
Celebrant: Let us pray.

Celebrant:

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

THE LESSONS

Please be seated.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 64:1-9

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence--as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil--to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence!

When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.

From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.

You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned; 
because you hid yourself we transgressed.
We have all become like one who is unclean, 
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf, 
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
There is no one who calls on your name, 
or attempts to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us, 
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.
Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; 
we are the clay, and you are our potter; 
we are all the work of your hand.
Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, 
and do not remember iniquity forever.
Now consider, we are all your people.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 80: 1-7, 16-18 (Sung by Choir)

1 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; * 
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.
2 In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, * 
stir up your strength and come to help us.
3 Restore us, O God of hosts; * 
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.
4 O LORD God of hosts, * 
how long will you be angered 
despite the prayers of your people?
5 You have fed them with the bread of tears; * 
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.
6 You have made us the derision of our neighbors, * 
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.
7 Restore us, O God of hosts; * 
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.
8 Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, * 
the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.
9 And so will we never turn away from you; * 
give us life, that we may call upon your Name.
10 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; * 
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.
SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

SEQUENCE HYMN
On Jordan’s Stormy banks I stand

GOSPEL: Mark 13:24-37

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.
People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said, “In those days, after that suffering,

the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light,
and the stars will be falling from heaven,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.
TRANSITION SONG
In the Lord I’ll be ever thankful
Song by Taizé

In the Lord I'll be ever thankful,
In the Lord I'll rejoice.
Look to God, do not be afraid,
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near;
Lift up your voices the Lord is near.

THE SERMON
The Very Rev. Dr. Michael Shaffer

THE NICENE CREED

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.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE – Bid by Intercessor

With all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord, saying "Lord, have mercy."

For the peace from above, for the loving-kindness of God, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the world, for the welfare of the Holy Church of God, and for the unity of all peoples, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

For our Presiding Bishop Michael, for our Diocesan Bishop Ruth, and for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.
For our President, for the leaders of the nations, and for all in authority, let us pray to the Lord.

*People: Lord, have mercy.*

For this city of Charleston, for every city and community, and for those who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.

*People: Lord, have mercy.*

For the aged and infirm, for the widowed and orphans, and for the sick and the suffering, let us pray to the Lord.

*People: Lord, have mercy.*

For the poor and the oppressed, for the unemployed and the destitute, for prisoners and captives, and for all who remember and care for them, let us pray to the Lord.

*People: Lord, have mercy.*

For all who have died in the hope of the resurrection, and for all the departed, let us pray to the Lord.

*People: Lord, have mercy.*

For deliverance from all danger, violence, oppression, and degradation, let us pray to the Lord.

*People: Lord, have mercy.*

Intercessor prays for individuals on St. Mark’s Prayer List and Diocesan Cycle of Prayer

We invite your personal prayers and thanksgivings, aloud our in your heart. (*moment of silence is kept*)

In the communion of all the saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life, to Christ our God.

*People: To thee, O Lord our God.*

*All join in a Stewardship Prayer by Thomas Merton*

Almighty God, we thank you for all the gifts You have given us: our lives, our loved ones, all that we have and all that we are. Most of all, we thank You for Jesus, your Son and our Redeemer, who came among us to show us the way to eternal life. Jesus was the perfect steward of your gifts, showing that complete trust in You is necessary, and that giving of self is a most important part of following Him.

May the offerings of our time, our talents, and our material resources be made in the same spirit of sacrifice that Jesus taught us by His life and death for us. Amen.
CONFESSION

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.

ABSOLUTION

Celebrant: 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

Celebrant: The peace of Christ be always with you.

People: And also with you.

SONG

Surely the Presence of the Lord is In This Place

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.
I can feel God's mighty power and God's grace.
I can hear the brush of angel's wings,
I see glory on each face.
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Stewardship Testimony – Ellen Hardin

The Priest offers an Offertory Sentence.

OFFERTORY

Waiting for the Light

HYMN AT THE PRESENTATION

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host:
Holy Communion

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.
People: We lift them to the Lord.

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Celebrant:

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.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

\[
\text{Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,}
\text{heaven and earth are full of your glory.}
\text{Hosanna in the highest.}
\text{Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.}
\text{Hosanna in the highest.}
\]
Celebrant:

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, (All)

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

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 John the Baptist, the Blessed Virgin Mary, our patron St. Mark, 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. AMEN

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say, 

People and Celebrant sing

Our Father, which 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 debt, as we forgive our debtors. 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

Celebrant: Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; People: Therefore let us keep the feast.
INVITATION

Celebrant The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

At St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, all desiring a deepening and reaffirming relationship with Christ are invited to come forward for Holy Communion or for a blessing. This is the table not of the Church, but of Jesus Christ. It is made ready for those who love God. Come, not because the Church invites you; it is Christ who invites you to be fed and blessed here. For He knows you by name and calls you by name.

Communion will be offered in two kinds. The wine may be received by either sipping the chalice or dipping your wafer in the wine. If you do not wish to receive the wine, please indicate that by crossing your arms over your chest when the chalice reaches you at the altar rail. Communion in one kind (in bread only) is a perfectly valid way to receive the sacrament. Gluten free hosts are available upon request at the communion rail. For a blessing, cross your hands over your chest. If you would like to have communion brought to your seat, please let an usher know.

MUSIC AT COMMUNION

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
Deep River

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.
THE BLESSING

PROCESSIONAL HYMN  Lo!  He Comes with Clouds Descending  Hymnal 57

THE DISMISSAL
Celebrant: Go forth in peace to prepare the way of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God

CLOSING HYMN

Thank You, Lord  Sung by all.

Thank You, Lord (x’s 3) I just want to thank you Lord.
You’ve Been So Good (x’s 3) I just want to thank you Lord.
You’ve Been My Friend (x’s 3) I just want to thank you Lord.

The worship is over. Now the service begins.

All are welcome, all are honored, all are embraced, all are loved.

SERVICE PARTICIPANTS:

The Very Reverend Dr. Michael Shaffer, Celebrant & Preacher
Grayson Sanyal, Crucifer
Alphonso Grayson, Eucharistic Minister
Sarah Grayson, Acolyte
Marj Kenney-Williams & Walter Boags, Lectors
Angela Hare, Altar Guild
Ginny Grayson, Usher

The flowers are given by Monica L. Hammonds in Memory of
Dr. Charles W. Simmons
Announcements

St. Mark’s Advent Food Drive

Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. - 2 Corinthians 9:7

Hunger knows no season, and many in Charleston need food, especially around the holiday season. We are asking members of St. Mark’s to join in an Advent Food Drive to help those in need. During the Advent season, we’re asking each member of St. Mark’s to daily place in a box at home, the following items on the appointed date, and then bring the full box with you to church on Sunday, December 17. We’ll then deliver all these boxes to a Food Bank before Christmas Week.

November 22-box of cereal
November 23- peanut butter
November 24-stuffing mix
November 25-boxes potatoes
November 26- macaroni and cheese
November 27-canned fruit
November 28-canned tomatoes
November 29-canned tuna
November 30-dessert mix
December 1-jar of applesauce
December 2-canned sweet potatoes
December 3-cranberry sauce
December 4-canned beans
December 5- box of crackers
December 6-package of rice
December 7-container of oatmeal
December 8-package of pasta
December 9-spaghetti sauce
December 10- chicken noodle soup
December 11- tomato soup
December 12-can of corn
December 13- can of mixed vegetables
December 14- can of carrots
December 15- can of green beans
In early 2024 we hope to publish a new Membership Directory, with photos and current contact information included for every member of St. Mark’s Episcopal Church. As it is important that we have current photos of everyone, our Jr. Warden Bob Waters, who is an excellent photographer, has agreed to take photos of individuals or families for the directory following worship services on the following Sundays. Please have your photo taken following our worship service on one of the following Sundays so we can include you in the 2024 Membership Directory.

Sunday, December 10, 2023
Sunday, December 17, 2023

Want to serve on a committee, guild or ministry team in 2024?

Ubuntu: I am because we are.

All committees, guilds and ministry teams at St. Mark’s will be revamped and revitalized in 2024. Participation in all of these groups is open to everyone and no prior experience is needed. Every committee, guild and ministry team are vital to the success of St. Mark’s and your participation is needed.

To be a Christian is to be in community. To accept the invitation to follow Christ necessitates acceptance of the responsibilities that come with the invitation. Just showing up to worship, doesn’t get the job done. To fully embrace the invitation, we must also embrace the responsibilities and live into what we are invited to be. We might do well to remember that it is not just our showing up, but what we do when we show up, that matters most to God.

So please, if you have any interest or are willing to serve St. Mark’s at the altar or elsewhere in 2024, please contact Fr. Michael and let him know, before December 10, 2023.
A Lessons and Carols service is a beautiful way for our community to focus our hearts and minds on the proper subject of the Advent season—our Lord Jesus Christ. The service we will share on December 17, will be an abbreviated version of a tradition extending back to the original version performed on Christmas Eve in Cornwall, England in 1880. At that time, the Right Rev. Edward White Benson, concerned with peoples’ worldly attentions and activities during the holidays, looked for a way to get revelers out of the pubs and into church. The Rev. George Walpole had the idea for a celebration consisting of Christmas music interspersed with Bible readings. The first service of “Nine Lessons and Carols”, ours will feature “Five Lessons and Carols” as we will also be including a celebration of Holy Communion in our service.

We hope that you will join us for this beautiful Advent tradition at 10:00 AM on Sunday, December 17 and stay following service for our Annual Parish Christmas Brunch in the Parish Hall. To put this all another way, we St. Mark’s Episcopalians are going to Partay on December 17, so don’t miss out!

Advent IV and Christmas Eve Services

Sunday, December 24th will be a busy day at St. Mark’s. As Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year, on Sunday, December 24th we will be holding two worship services at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church. At 10:00 AM we will hold our traditional Sunday worship service, celebrating the Fourth Sunday of Advent. That night, beginning at 5:00 PM, we will celebrate Christmas Eve with music and carols, followed by a Christmas liturgy and Holy Communion. Please plan on joining us for both services and bring a friend or neighbor along with you to our Christmas Eve service. It promises to be a wonderful evening!

Because we are holding two services on December 24th, there will be no Christmas Day service at St. Mark’s this year.
Altar Flower Donations – Altar Flowers may be donated by signing up for any given Sunday in the Altar Flower Notebook in the church Narthex. Suggested donation is a minimum of $40.00.

Free parking is available during Sunday Worship Services at Ashley Hall School parking lot, located at the corner of Warren and Smith Streets, only one block from St. Mark’s Church.

Parish Office Hours are every Friday, 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Other times, contact Fr. Michael at 843-830-1220.

Pick up a pledge card in the Narthex, fill it out and commit financially to support St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in 2024

NAME__________________________________________
ADDRESS__________________________________________

PHONE_____ EMAIL _____

PLEASE CONTACT ME ABOUT:
☐ setting up payments from my checking account/credit card.
☐ including the church in my estate plans.
☐ making my gift through stocks or securities.

My 2024 Promise: Acknowledging that we are Rooted in Abundance, I/we promise $______ for
I/we plan to fulfill this pledge ☐ ☐ monthly ☐ ☐ semi-annually ☐ annually