

# St. Mark's Episcopal Church

*All are welcome. All are embraced. All are loved.*



## **The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost**

June 16, 2024

10:00 a.m.

*Welcome to 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

Alphonso Grayson, Senior Warden – Bob Waters, Junior Warden



# SAINT MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



*A Community dedicated to loving,  
not judging and respecting the dignity  
of every human being.*

**EST. 1865**

**16 THOMAS ST CHARLESTON, SC 29403**

**There is nothing *ordinary* about Ordinary Time!**

***“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”***

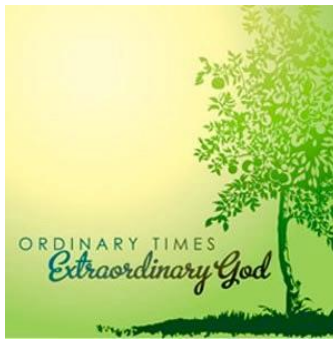
**Frederick Buechner**

The Season after Pentecost, the longest season of the Church, is often referred to as Ordinary time. This season lasts roughly six months, during which there are no big feasts days and no Church holidays. Because of this, there’s an old joke about Episcopalians being the only Christian tradition that allows for summers off. I disagree. This season, also known by some as the “long green season”, is meant to be a time for growing and transformation, just as we experience in nature throughout the summer and fall seasons.

Our Anglican tradition is steeped Benedictine spirituality. One of my favorite summations of Benedictine life is, “*do ordinary things extraordinarily well*”. Whatever your daily routine, whether it be caring for children, completing your tasks as work, taking care of yourself or doing for others, during this season *mindfully* enter into those activities as holy and spiritual acts, dedicated to God and the building of his Kingdom. Do them in a holy way; enter into them as prayer, a spiritual act.

Another Benedictine adage is “*always we begin again.*” Green time is growing time. In that regard, I’m excited that during this time, we at St. Mark’s will be concluding much of the work undertaken during the first half of 2024, updating our Constitution and Bylaws as well as updating our Mission and Vision Statements. This will foster a common sense of core values and mission, which leads to a unified and energized transformation in order to accomplish shared mission as a parish church in the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina post schism. As Paul wrote in his Epistle to the Romans, “*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God...*” (Romans 12:2)

During this season I pray the Lord who have given us the will to do great things in His name, will give us the grace and power to accomplish them. May you be blessed as you strive to do ordinary things extraordinarily well.



*The 1982 Hymnal, referred to as **Hymnal** and *Lift Every Voice and Sing II*, referred to as **LEVAS** are found in your pew. **WLP** designates the music comes from the publication *Wonder, Love and Praise*. 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.*

**INTROIT**

Humbly in Your Sight

Tiza Pantazi Pinu

**OPENING HYMN**

Father, we thank thee who has planted

**Hymnal 302**

## A LITURGY OF THE WORD

*The Celebrant says.*

Blessed be the one, holy, and living God.

*People: Glory to God for ever and ever.*

*The Celebrant says.*

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.*

*The following is sung, all standing.*

**Canticle 13, A Song of Praise: Benedictus es, Domine**

**Hymnal S-236**

Glory to you, Lord God of our fathers;

you are worthy of praise; glory to you.

Glory to you for the radiance of your holy Name;

we will praise you and highly exalt you for ever.

Glory to you in the splendor of your temple;  
on the throne of your majesty, glory to you.  
Glory to you, seated between the Cherubim;  
we will praise you and highly exalt you for ever.

Glory to you, beholding the depths;  
in the high vault of heaven, glory to you.  
Glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;  
we will praise you and highly exalt you for ever.

## **THE COLLECT OF THE DAY**

Celebrant: God be with you.

***People: And also with you.***

Celebrant: Let us pray.

Keep, O Lord, your household the Church in your steadfast faith and love, that through your grace we may proclaim your truth with boldness, and minister your justice with compassion; for the sake of our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. ***Amen.***

*Please be seated.*

## **THE LESSONS**

### **FIRST READING: Ezekiel 17:22-24**

Thus says the Lord God:

I myself will take a sprig  
from the lofty top of a cedar;  
I will set it out.  
I will break off a tender one  
from the topmost of its young twigs;  
I myself will plant it  
on a high and lofty mountain.  
On the mountain height of Israel  
I will plant it,  
in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit,  
and become a noble cedar.  
Under it every kind of bird will live;  
in the shade of its branches will nest  
winged creatures of every kind.  
All the trees of the field shall know  
that I am the Lord.  
I bring low the high tree,  
I make high the low tree;

I dry up the green tree  
and make the dry tree flourish.

I the Lord have spoken;  
I will accomplish it.

Reader           The Word of the Lord.

*People           Thanks be to God.*

**Psalm 92:1-4,11-14**

- 1 It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord, \*  
and to sing praises to your Name, O Most High;  
**2 To tell of your loving-kindness early in the morning \*  
and of your faithfulness in the night season;**  
3 On the psaltery, and on the lyre, \*  
and to the melody of the harp.  
**4 For you have made me glad by your acts, O Lord; \*  
and I shout for joy because of the works of your hands.**  
11 The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, \*  
and shall spread abroad like a cedar of Lebanon.  
**12 Those who are planted in the house of the Lord \*  
shall flourish in the courts of our God;**  
13 They shall still bear fruit in old age; \*  
they shall be green and succulent;  
**14 That they may show how upright the Lord is, \*  
my Rock, in whom there is no fault.**

**SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:6-10, [11-13], 14-17**

We are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord-- for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

[Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.] For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

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

*Please stand.*

**SEQUENCE HYMN**

I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord

**Hymnal 524**

**GOSPEL: Mark 4:26-34**

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

Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.”

He also said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

Priest        The Gospel of the Lord.  
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 Reverend Canon Ryan Currie**

**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.*

**INTERCESSION AND THANKSGIVING** (adopted from the New Zealand Book of Common Prayer p.413)

Intercessor: Heavenly Father, you have promised to hear when we pray in the name of your Son. Therefore, in confidence and trust we pray for the Church: Father, enliven the Church for its mission.

***People: that we may be the salt of the earth and light to the world.***

Intercessor: Breathe fresh life into your people.

***People: Give us the power to reveal Christ in word and action.***

Intercessor: We pray for the world: Creator of all, lead us and every people into ways of justice and peace.

***People: That we may respect one another in freedom and truth.***

Intercessor: Awaken in us a sense of wonder for the earth and all that is in it.

***People: Teach us to care creatively for its resources.***

Intercessor: We pray for the community: God of truth, inspire with your wisdom those whose decisions affect the lives of others.

***People: That all act with integrity and courage.***

Intercessor: Give grace to all whose lives are linked with ours. We invite your personal intercessions at this time, either aloud or in your heart. (Pause, followed by Intercessor Prayers) Lord, hear our prayer.

***People: May we serve Christ in another, and love as he loves us.***

Intercessor: Almighty God, whose blessed Son came not to be served but to serve, bless all who following in his steps live a life of service to others. Those who dedicate themselves in every season of life, in youth and advancing age, to service of nation and every human being, striving for justice, peace and equality for all people in their daily lives. By the power of your Holy Spirit, grant all who serve, wisdom, patience and courage, that they may minister in the name of Christ to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy; for the love of him who laid down his life for us.

***People: For it is in giving that we receive.***

Intercessor: We pray for those in need: God of hope, comfort and restore of all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit.

***People: May they know the power of your healing love.***

Intercessor: Make us willing agents of your compassion.

***People: Strengthen us as we share in making people whole.***

Intercessor: We remember those who have died and those who mourn: We remember with thanksgiving those who have died in the faith of Christ, and those whose faith is known to you alone. Give comfort to those who mourn.

***People: Father, into your hands we commend them.***





## HYMN AT THE PRESENTATION

*Sung to the tune of Hymnal #400*

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise him, all creatures here below;  
Praise him above, ye heavenly host:  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING: Enriching Our Worship Eucharist Prayer 2

*The People remain standing.*

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.**

*Facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds*

Celebrant: We praise you and we bless you, holy and gracious God, source of life abundant. From before time you made ready the creation. Your Spirit moved over the deep and brought all things into being: sun, moon, and stars; earth, winds, and waters; and every living thing.

You made us in your image and taught us to walk in your ways. But we rebelled against you, and wandered far away; and yet, as a mother cares for her children, you would not forget us. Time and again you called us to live in the fullness of your love.

And so this day we join with Saints and Angels in the chorus of praise that rings through eternity, lifting our voices to magnify you as we sing:

### Sanctus

Hymnal S -12

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -  
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -  
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

*The Celebrant continues.*

Glory and honor and praise to you, holy and living God. To deliver us from the power of sin and death and to reveal the riches of your grace, you looked with favor upon Mary, your willing servant, that she might conceive and bear a son, Jesus the holy child of God. Living among us, Jesus loved us. He broke bread with outcasts and sinners, healed the sick, and proclaimed good news to the poor. He yearned to draw all the world to himself yet we were heedless of his call to walk in love. Then, the time came for him to complete upon the cross the sacrifice of his life, and to be glorified by you.

*At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it, or lay a hand upon it; and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing the wine to be consecrated.*

On the night before he died for us, Jesus was at table with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to them, and said: "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine. Again, he gave thanks to you, gave it to them, and said: "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Now gathered at your table, O God of all creation, and remembering Christ, crucified and risen, who was and is and is to come, we offer to you our gifts of bread and wine, and ourselves, a living sacrifice.

Pour out your Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Body and Blood of Christ. Breathe your Spirit over the whole earth and make us your new creation, the Body of Christ given for the world you have made.

In the fullness of time bring us, with our patron St. Mark and all your saints, from every tribe and language and people and nation, to feast at the banquet prepared from the foundation of the world.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever. *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.*

## Fraction Anthem: *Taste and see*

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WLAP # 764

Taste and see. Taste and see the good - ness  
of the Lord. O taste and see. Taste and  
see the good - ness of the Lord, of the Lord. Fine

## 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, allowing the Eucharistic Minister to dip your wafer in the wine, or dipping your wafer in the intinction chalice. If you do not wish to receive the wine, please indicate that by crossing your arms over your chest when the chalice reaches you. Communion in one kind (in bread only) is a perfectly valid way to receive the sacrament. Gluten free hosts are available upon request. 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

I Trust in God Wherever I May Be  
We Walk By Faith

LEVAS 59  
LEVAS 206

*After Communion, the Celebrant says.*

Let us pray. *(All pray)*

*God of abundance, you have fed us with the bread of life and cup of salvation; you have united us with Christ and one another; and you have made us one with all your people in heaven and on earth. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue for ever in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.*

## THE BLESSING

### PROCESSIONAL

The Church's One Foundation

Hymnal 525

### DISMISSAL

Celebrant      Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

*People      Thanks be to God.*

### CLOSING HYMN

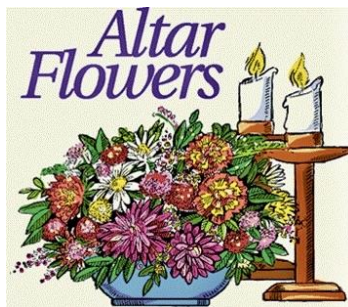
Thank You, Lord

*Sung by all.*

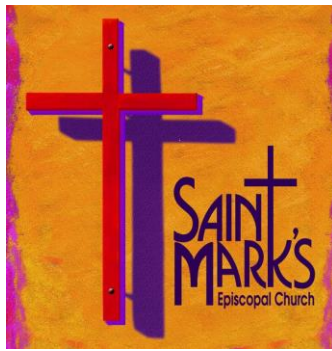
*Thank You, Lord (x's 3) I just want to thank you Lord.  
You've Been So Good (x's 3) I just want to thank you Lord.  
You've Been My Friend (x's 3) I just want to thank you Lord.*

### POSTLUDE

*The worship is over. Now the service begins.*



*The Flowers are given by Gail DeCosta and Kanyisile Barrett  
In Memory of The Rev. Sipo Mzimela.*



**SERVICE PARTICIPANTS:**

The Reverend Canon Ryan Currie, *Celebrant & Preacher*  
Rob Turner, *Eucharistic Minister*  
Lisa Van Bergen, *Lector*  
Loretta Haskell, *Organist & Choirmaster*  
Ruth Breland, Suzanne Hieserman, Alphonso Grayson *Altar Guild*  
Suzanne Hieserman, *Flowers*  
Angela Hare & Ginny Grayson, *Ushers*

**Announcements**



***The Rev. Canon Ryan Currie  
Canon for Common Mission***

We are grateful to The Rev. Canon Ryan Currie for presiding and celebrating at our worship service this morning. As Canon for Common Mission, Ryan is responsible for stewarding the relationships and gatherings of our diocese, including Diocesan Convention, Clergy Conference, and various cohort groups and committees. Canon Currie assists the bishop in discerning the vision and developing the mission of our diocese, with an eye to keeping everyone mutually informed and supported. As our diocese enters a new phase of reintegration following schism, the Canon for Common Mission is an important “hub of the wheel” for leaders—lay and ordained—as congregations undergo the tasks of reentry into the Diocese of South Carolina.

A two-time graduate of Sewanee: The University of the South (B.A., 2013; M.Div. 2018), Ryan served before becoming a priest as an administrative assistant in Sewanee’s President and Vice-Chancellor’s office and in other support roles at the university. Ordained in the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast, Ryan previously served as the Associate Rector of Holy Cross-Faith Memorial Episcopal Church in Pawleys Island. In 2022 he married Lowcountry native Richard Culbertson. In his spare time, Ryan enjoys singing and playing piano, cooking and entertaining, and traveling. *Thank you Fr. Ryan...we are grateful for everything you do throughout the diocese!*



***Sunday, June 30 – Joint Worship with Calvary Episcopal Church***

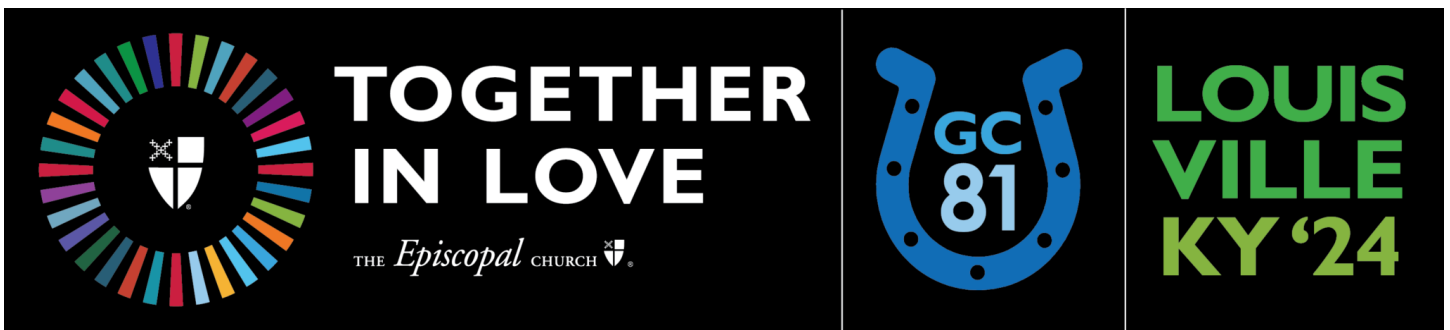
**The Most Reverend Dr. Cyril Kobina Ben-Smith, Archbishop of West Africa and The Rt. Rev. Bishop Ruth Woodliff-Stanley to hold joint worship service with congregations of St. Mark’s and Calvary at Calvary Episcopal Church on Sunday, June 30, 2024, at 10:30 AM**

There will not be a worship service held at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church on Sunday, June 30, as parishioners of St. Mark’s will join in worship with parishioners at Calvary Episcopal Church at Calvary, in a service led by The Most Reverend Dr Cyril Kobina Ben-Smith, Archbishop of West African and Bishop Ruth Woodliff-Stanley, 15<sup>th</sup> Bishop of the Diocese of South Carolina.

Archbishop Ben-Smith is the son of an archdeacon, and has served as a bishop since 2011, first as a suffragan in the Diocese of Kumasi, and since 2014, as bishop of the newly created Diocese of Asante Mampong in central Ghana. He was elected as Archbishop of Ghana in 2021.

The archbishop was in Charleston in November 2022 to bless the IAAM before its opening, as it is in Bishop Ben-Smith’s Provenge in Ghana where the slave castles exist from which many enslaved people were loaded in boats and forced to travel across the Atlantic Ocean for arrival at Gadsden’s Wharf, the location of the IAAM. Therefore, there exists an ongoing and growing relationship between the ministries of these two bishops and our respective dioceses.

Please make every effort to attend this important and meaningful worship service at Calvary Episcopal Church beginning at 10:30 AM on Sunday, June 30. You should arrive early, as parking behind the church is limited.



**81<sup>st</sup> General Convention of the Episcopal Church- We’re electing a new Presiding Bishop!**

Episcopalians from around the world will gather June 23-28, 2024, in Louisville, KY, for the 81st General Convention of The Episcopal Church. The Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina has an elected deputation - four clergy and four lay members - who will represent us, but everyone who wishes to attend may do so. If you are just curious or want to be a part of this historic event, you can access more information before and throughout the Convention at <https://generalconvention.org/>.



## ***St. Mark's Nourishing Love, Justice and Mercy in Beloved Community!***

The Episcopal Church is open and welcoming of the LGBTQIA+ community. In 1976, both the House of Deputies and House of Bishops voted for a fully inclusive Episcopal Church, stating, “*homosexual persons are children of God who have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the church.*” Canon law includes “gender identity or expression” in its list of persons who are assured full access to the ministry of the church.

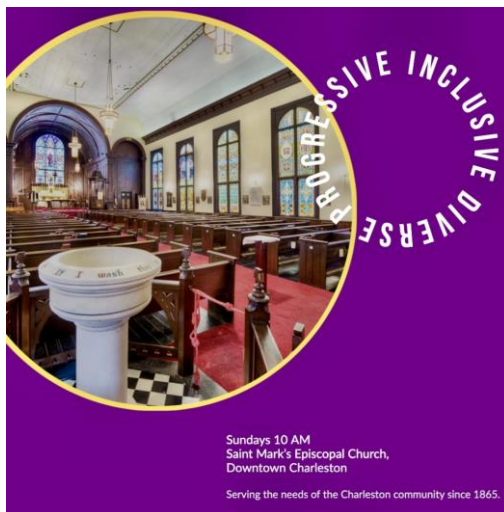
We thank all the members of St. Mark's Episcopal Church who supported and participated in this year's Charleston Pride Parade on June 1<sup>st</sup>. *Thank you!*

**Fr. Michael is away June 10 to July 1, 2024.** In his absence, The Rev. Dr. Jennie C. Olbrych will be presiding and celebrating June 23. Rev. Jennie is also be available in case of any pastoral need or emergency. She may be reached on her cell phone at (843) 324-5587 or by email at [jcolbrych@gmail.com](mailto:jcolbrych@gmail.com). We are greatly appreciative Rev. Jennie's ministry at St. Mark's.

**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.



## *Welcome to St. Mark's*



*We're so glad you are here.*

Whether you are visiting Charleston for the first time, have recently moved here, have visited our church before or are doing so for the first time, we hope you will consider making St. Mark's Episcopal Church your spiritual home. Whoever you are and wherever you are in your life journey, we invite you to join our community effort in making the world a better place to live. There are no litmus tests. We don't want to change you. We want to support you as you grow into the person you were born to be.

In the Episcopal Church, we dream and work to foster God's vision of *Beloved Community* where all people may experience dignity and abundant life and see themselves and others as beloved children of God. *Beloved Community* stands on the foundation of recognizing that any person's fundamental identity is God's beloved child. Such innate belovedness compels us to treat every single person on this planet with respect and dignity and to work for justice and peace and end our participation, knowingly or unknowingly, in assumptions or systems which trample on the beloved identity of our neighbors.

We humans cannot exist in isolation. We depend on connection, community, and caring. Simply put, we cannot be without each other. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu explained, "*My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together.*" Tutu understood that the potential of human beings working collectively to achieve goals is infinitely greater than the potential of any individual.

We are a community of believers who come to worship, to pray, to love and to be loved, as we work to ease the burdens we share, living in the twenty-first century. We not only welcome but *embrace* a diverse community of people with different ethnic, racial, sexual orientation and social backgrounds, who may have different ways of being their authentic selves in the world. Our focus is to live into right relationship with each other and all creation as followers of Jesus. We are strengthened by our diversity, as we strive for unity, not uniformity.

So, I invite you to join us. Bring your gifts and passions, along with your doubts and your curiosity, but most of all, your hearts and minds. There is a place for everyone in God's church, and we may be the place where you can flourish, just as you are, *God's beloved child*.

Gratefully,  
Michael Shaffer +  
Interim Rector – St. Mark's Episcopal  
[frmichael@saintmarkschurch.com](mailto:frmichael@saintmarkschurch.com)  
Cell: 843-830-1220  
St. Mark's Parish Office: 843-722-0267