ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

THE EVANGELIST

VOLUME 66, ISSUE 12 ✠ DECEMBER 2025 ✠ WWW.STMARKSCATHEDRAL.NET

Advent and the Mystery of Anticipation

"We cannot take a step toward the heavens. God crosses the universe and comes to us."
— Simone Weil, *Waiting for God*

Dear Friends and Families of St. Mark's,

Years ago I used to sit at the zoo with two elephants – Rosie and Juno. I was usually there with a book, a phone, and an eye on our first-born, Benjamin, who would stand at the fence calling to Rosie and Juno, or push his stroller to a better spot. Sometimes Benjamin would point and call to Rosie and Juno, sometimes he would hold the fence and mumble toddler sounding conversation, and sometimes he would laugh and smile until his eyes were closed and light shone from his face.

Rev. Alston B. Johnson
alston@stmarkscathedral.net

We knew our son had developmental troubles; we knew that things would have to be done. However, we did not know the journey that we would be taking with him. Special needs children are often alone, and not because they want to be. Their unique configuration of gifts and challenges sometimes leaves their peers and siblings baffled. My sense is that their "alone" time is not the same as a child lying in the backyard grass reading and rereading their favorite book again and again. We wanted Benjamin to have friends, and so we would go to the place where I knew my young special needs son had friends – the zoo – so that he could visit with Rosie and Juno.

Another friend at the zoo was Mr. Percy. Mr. Percy took care of Rosie, Juno, and a few of the other animals. One day Mr. Percy opened my eyes to the mystery of anticipation, friendship, and communication.

Mr. Percy and I were standing together watching Benjamin, Rosie, and Juno. The elephants had come down to the fence to be near us, and I thought it was simply so that we might

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To love and serve Christ. To love and serve one another in Christ. To love and serve the world for Christ.

SUNDAY WORSHIP
8:00 am, 10:30 am, & 6:00 pm
Sunday Holy Eucharist

DECEMBER 7, 2025
The Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 11 :1-10 | Romans 15 :4-13
Psalm 72 :1-7, 18-19 | Matthew 3 :1-12

DECEMBER 14, 2025
The Third Sunday of Advent

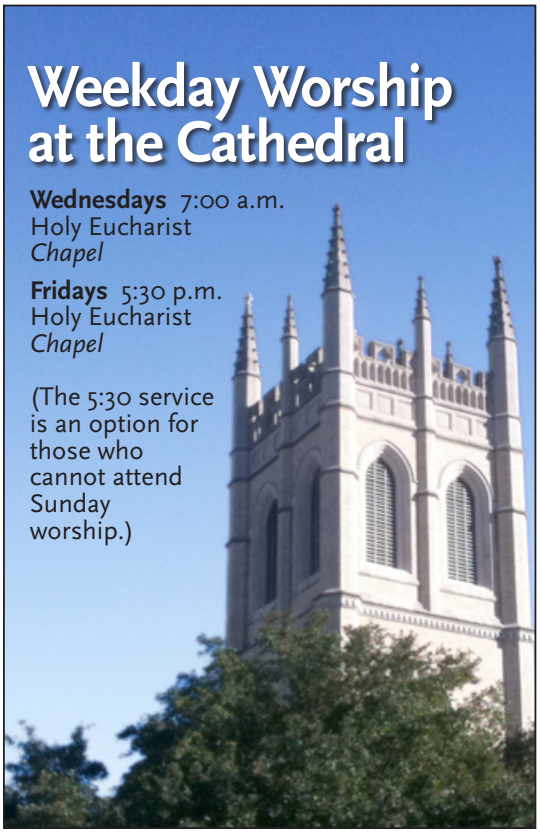
Isaiah 35 :1-10 | James 5 :7-10
Psalm 17 :1-9 | Matthew 11 :2-11

DECEMBER 21, 2025
The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 7 :10-16 | Romans 1 :1-7
Psalm 80 :1-7, 16-18 | Matthew 1 :18-25

DECEMBER 28, 2025
The First Sunday after Christmas Day

Isaiah 61:10-62:3 | Galatians 3:23-25;4:4-7
Psalm 147:13-21 | John 1:1-18



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toss some snacks in their direction.

Then Mr. Percy said, "You know they know you, don't you?"

I said, "What do you mean they know us?"

"They know you. They know Ben. Ol' Rosie and Juno are smart; probably smarter than us. And they know the minute you open the door in that parking lot. Heck, if your window is down, they may know you by the music you're playing as you make the turn into the zoo. They know how you talk to Ben. They know his sounds. They know when Ben gets here, when he comes in; they know his voice and yours."

"Really," I said. "I had never really thought about it that much."

"Oh yes. See those ears. See that head. That's a lot of listening and a lot of brain power. They measure distance differently than we do. What for us is a quarter mile, for them is a few feet. Shoot man, I sometimes know y'all is here because I watch them start moving down to the fence. They know he's coming," he said pointing at Benjamin.

Benjamin was standing, holding the fence, and sticking his tongue in and out between the holes in the fence; Rosie and Juno were reaching over their wire to grab a trunk-full of grass and bring it to their mouths. All three were within a few feet of one another, the three bound together by some invisible thread.

"Look at 'em," Percy said. "They all happy to see each other. They just visiting."

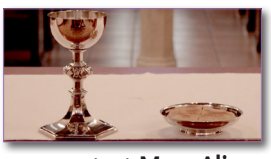
Through the years I have wondered if they were having a conversation, just one that does not require words, or the kinds of words that we use. Each of them living within their own sort of captivity; yet also each of them finding a friend despite their cages. What I want to believe is that our little boy and his elephant friends were finding one another on the edges of what I perceive as consciousness – "out there," where there is light beyond the darkness.

Looking back, I am grateful for the joy and anticipation that our little boy experienced with his friends Rosie and Juno and Mr. Percy. I am grateful that God creates paths of friendship and sanctuary that move beyond and outside the circles in which we live. Their unlikely friendship gives me hope.

Advent is the season of waiting, of discovering or rediscovering, our anticipation for holy and beautiful things; anticipating that our lives do hunger for God's touch. That most of us deep down hope to be found. During the weeks of Advent we are invited, we are given encouragement and permission, to unhook from the machinery that distracts us, awakening to the reality that One who knows us is both coming to us and waiting for us. It is a season to listen for voices that sometimes only speak on the edge of this present darkness. It is a time for us to recall, in the words of Mr. Percy, "You know God knows you, don't you?" And because anyone living in captivity is happy to find a friend along the way, we say, "Come Lord Jesus, come."

Blessings and Godspeed,
Alston Johnson, Dean – St. Mark's

Oblationers Needed



Our Hospitality Committee invites parishioners (families, adult singles, siblings, friends) to serve as oblationers (gift bearers) at the 10:30 a.m. Sunday service. This is a meaningful way to serve the faith community. For more information please contact **Mary Alice Rountree** at **464-8004**.

A full-color version of *The Evangelist* is on our website! Go to **https://stmarkscathedral.net/the-evangelist/**

St. Mark's Cathedral Choir
presents

A Festival of Lessons and Carols

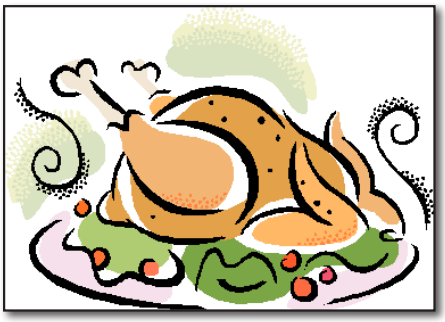
Sunday, December 21, 2025

4:00 p.m.
908 Rutherford Street, Shreveport

The Cooking Crew Needs Your Help

The Cooking Crew will again be preparing turkey dinners for the less fortunate in our communities. ***They are asking this year for financial donations in lieu of donating frozen turkeys.*** The cooks will then buy the turkeys themselves so that they can get birds of a uniform size, which makes them easier to cook. You can bring or mail you donations to the church.

Our crew prepared 703 dinners for Thanksgiving, and will prepare an equal number for Christmas!



MEMORIAL FLOWERS

December 7
The flowers on the High Altar are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Jack & Virginia Annan and Rev. Robert K. & Martha Cooper.

The flowers on the Chapel Altar are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Vernon Hastings, Jr., Sarah and Stewart Wilson, Jewell and Vernon Hastings, Sr.

December 14
The flowers on the High Altar are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Ben Whittington, Mr. & Mrs. Jacques N. Lasseigne, Sr., Orvis Sigler, Steve Sigler, Sheila Prioux and Lise Romero.

The flowers on the Chapel Altar are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mary Walmsley, Patricia Alderson Louise Flournoy Clay, Fred Hunter Clay, Hugh Brian Walmsley, Sr., and Betty Cavender Walmsley.

December 21
The flowers on the High Altar are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Thomas Kalford Ratcliff.

The flowers on the Chapel Altar are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Guy Brevard Sample.

December 28
The flowers on the High Altar are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Dorothy & Bill Wene Smith and Kendall Ann Smith.

The flowers on the Chapel Altar are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Robert E. Turner, and Nick & Barbara Skrivanos.

WEDDINGS

Those whom God has joined together, let no one put asunder.

Carolyn Ann Harrison & **David Dominick**, on November 22, 2025.

BAPTISMS

Miles Wright Grigsby, son of **Michelle** & **Lee Grigsby,** on November 16, 2020.

John Michael Mazur, III, son of **Nicole** & **Michael Mazur,** on November 28, 2025.

Campbell Chumley

You are sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ's own forever. Amen.

Vestry Nominations

The Nominating Committee will meet to formulate a Vestry slate to present to the parish at the Annual Meeting in January. If you wish to nominate someone for their consideration, nominations have to be to the Senior Warden by ***December 7***.

To be eligible for the Vestry, a person must be a confirmed communicant in good standing. This means confirmed, regularly attending worship and pledging. Nominations can be e-mailed to **Senior Warden Lisa Love** at **lisallove6203@gmail.com**

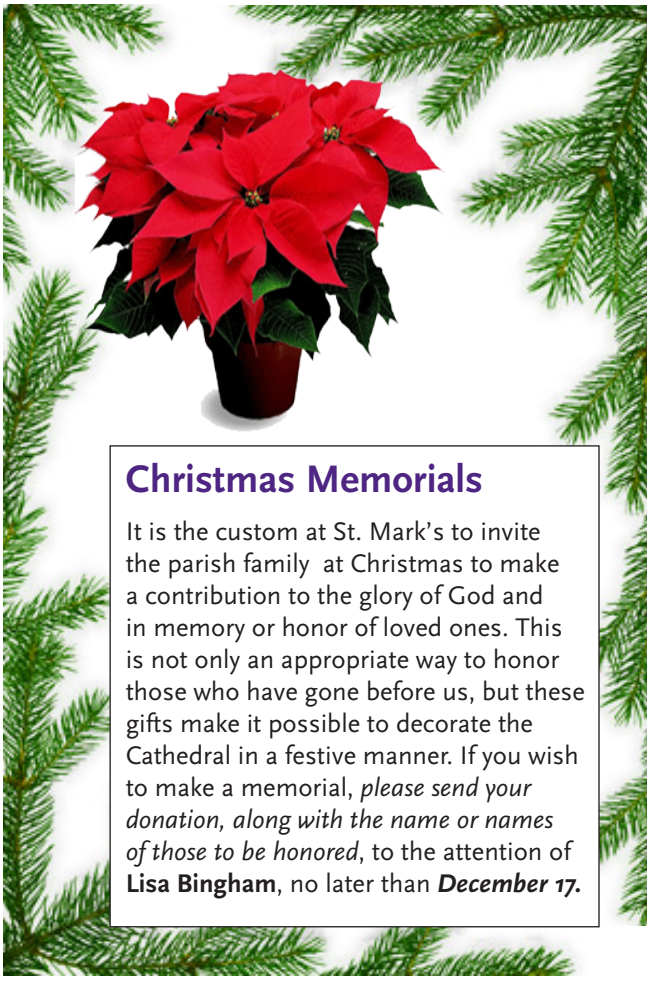
ST. MARK'S WORK OUT

Come join a group that rises early to exercise in the mornings with short runs, barbell workouts, and calisthenics.

5:30 - 6:15 am Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday
Above 45 degrees - Workout outside.
Below 45 degrees - Workout in the gym.

Necessary equipment onsite.

Call Dean Johnson in the office for more information.



Christmas Memorials

It is the custom at St. Mark's to invite the parish family at Christmas to make a contribution to the glory of God and in memory or honor of loved ones. This is not only an appropriate way to honor those who have gone before us, but these gifts make it possible to decorate the Cathedral in a festive manner. If you wish to make a memorial, *please send your donation, along with the name or names of those to be honored*, to the attention of **Lisa Bingham**, no later than ***December 17.***

Adult Christian Formation

9:30 a.m.

9:30 a.m. **The New Testament – N.T. Wright**
Dean Alston Johnson
Ministry Center Garden Room

9:30 a.m. **Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life – Henri Nouwen**
Fr. Thomas Nsubuga
Library

End of Year Contributions

If you want to mail your 2023 pledges or any other contributions by the end of the year, they must be postmarked by December 31. If you wish to hand deliver them to the church office, they must be in by **December 31** when the office closes for the holiday.

Children's Christian Formation

Nursery (newborn to K3 - 3 years old by September 30th)
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 pm
First floor of Parish building next to Catechesis Atriums

9:30 am Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
First floor of Parish Building – Rooms 105 & 106

Level I Atrium (K-3 – Kindergarten)

Level II Atrium (1st – 3rd grade)

9:30 – 10:30 am Sunday school (4th – 5th grade) Second floor of Parish building in the old nursery location

9:30 – 10:30 am Sunday school (6th-8th grade) Ministry Center Youth Lounge

9:30 – 10:30 am Sunday school (9th-12th grade) Ministry Center Youth Room

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

DECEMBER 1
James Jackson
Andrew Porter
Steve Allen

2
R. Dean Elston
Caroline Brainard
Robert Quinn
Lou Palmer
Aimee Aaron
Melissa Flores
Lauren Thibodeaux
Abigail Jackson
John Pou

3
Betsy Roberts
Scott Deupree
Virginia Q=Petersen
Lee Collier
William McMurry

4
Bambi Trickett
Marie Kalmbach
Emma Nuckolls
William Childs
Morris O'Brien
Mosty O'Brien
Ean Burch

5
Marian Dehan
Bruce Lowe
Polly James
Carol Reyenga
Riggs Arnold

6
Charlotte Gaffney
Janet Harrell
Kathryn Beaird
Campbell Siskron
Christian Rabalais
Edward Coady

7
Melody Duncan
Allen Marsalis
Sarah Margaret Shemwell
Lila Demech
John Mazur, Jr.

8
Nancy Montgomery
Amy Hodges
Jan Briscoe
Sullivan Frey

9
Jim Vozzella
Elizabeth Davis
Bill McIntyre
Susan Campbell
Wiley Crockford
Edward Stroud
Chad Hill

10
Carroll Joffrion
Katie Gordon White

11
Al Childs
Gertrude Lynes
Patty Stott
Ben Gates
George Ewing
Toni Winham
Sean Henagan

12
Ellen Davis
Tara Jones

13
Buz Wheless
Marybeth McVie
John Bowen

14
John Madison
Charlotte Hargrove

15
Melinda Hernandez
Susan Sherman
Stafford Comegys
William Herzog
Roger Coley
Parson Cotter
Jeffrey Douthitt
Rhett Arnold

16
Le Roy Kirby
Tricia Grayson
Austin Horne
Seth Thibodeaux

17
Scott Reeks
Stuart Reeks
Tatum Peters
Tessa Culver
Elizabeth Gatschenberger
Spencer Pringle

18
Pam Peak
Mary McCullough Humphrey
Christine Brooks
Alix Powell
Colin Irion
Jacob Jones

19
Emily Clarke
Creighton Hodges
Jack Perkins
Taylor Williams
Lisa Bingham

20
John Turnage
Louis Rabalais, Jr.
Ava Katherine Alley

21
Mary Stephens Allen
Morgan Kilpatrick
Elizabeth Dulaney

22
Cynthia Peatross
Darcy Henagan
Quintin Hardtner
Quintin Hardtner, IV

23
Marletta Eddy
John Meldrum

24
Robert Laborde
Emily Lofton
Hanna Woodard

25
Lindsay Atkins
Joseph Breithaupt
Linc Coleman

26
Rosemary Lafargue
Margaret Elrod
Lea Green
Amelie Dicharry

27
Woodus Humphrey
Tyler Nichols
Keaton Russo
Spencer Craft

28
Jim Liner
Sue Scheel
Bonné Summers
Stephen White
Jane Davenport
Samuel Brainard
Henry Perkins

29
Kathryn Hayes
Ethan Varnadore
Lindsey Aaron
Barbara Messier-Villafuerte
Anna-Page Radford

30
Jeff Webb
Miriam Martin
McKenzie Boucher
Camille McCall

31
Robert Pou

Members of the Vestry of St. Mark's Cathedral

Lisa Love, Senior Warden – Dan Koruna, Junior Warden – Patrick Caraway, Treasurer – John Reeks, Chancellor

2025	2026	2027	2028
Karen Hardtner	David Drummond	Michael Ameen	Lloyd Brown
Chad Hill	Paul Guidry	Erin Dicharry	Matt Coady
Claire Rebouche	Val Irion	Catherine Evans	Jonathan Davis
Jason Waltman	Reid Jones	Kathryn Gaiennie	Laura Ashley Overdyke
Warren West	John Turnage	Stephen Kneip	Adam West

The Rt. Rev. Jacob W. Owensby
(Bishop of Western Louisiana)
bishopjake@epiwla.org

The Very Rev. Alston Johnson
(Dean)
abjohnson@stmarkscathedral.net

The Rev. Thomas Nsubuga
(Sub-Dean)
thomas@stmarkscathedral.net

The Rev. Paul Martin (Priest Associate)
paul@stmarkscathedral.net

Jesus Bulnes
(Hispanic Ministry Coordinator)
hispanicministrysmc@gmail.com

Ely Bulnes (School Chaplain)
ebulnes@smc.school

Derrick Meador
(Organist and Choirmaster)
derrick@stmarkscathedral.net

Amy Garsee
(Christian Education and EYC Director)
amy@stmarkscathedral.net

Lisa Bingham (Financial Office Manager)
lisa@stmarkscathedral.net

Bess Maxwell (Administrative Assistant)
bess@stmarkscathedral.net

Priscilla McLean (Calendaring)
priscilla@stmarkscathedral.net

Beth Reeks
(Minister for Pre-K Children's Programs)
preschool.beth@gmail.com

Mark Deverts (Sexton)
mark@stmarkscathedral.net

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