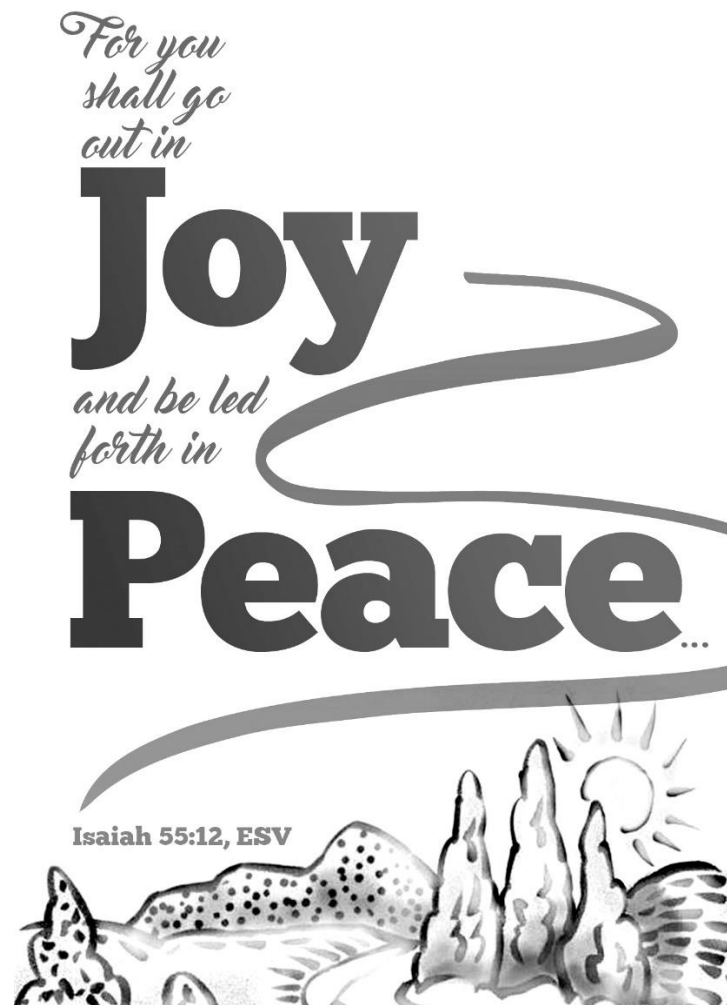


St. Mark's Episcopal Church
75 Cold Spring Road
Westford, Massachusetts, 01886



July 26, 2026

Rev. Nancy Shepherd, *Officiant*
Lee Yezek, *Minister of Music*
Usher/Reader: Brennan Burks
Chalice: Brenda Martin

ENTRANCE HYMN: *The Lord will come and not be slow (York) (H 462)*

OPENING ACCLAMATION (BCP p. 355)

The people standing, the Celebrant says

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever.
Amen.

COLLECT FOR PURITY (BCP 355)

GLORIA: S-277

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY (BCP p. 299)

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Let us pray.

O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

FIRST READING: 1 Kings 3:5-12

The people sit.

A Reading from the First book of Kings.

⁵At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." ⁶And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. ⁷And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil;

for who can govern this your great people?”

¹⁰It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹God said to him, “Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹²I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you.”

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Silence may follow.

PSALM: Psalm 119:129-136

Remain seated.

¹²⁹Your decrees are wonderful; *
therefore I obey them with all my heart.
¹³⁰When your word goes forth it gives light; *
it gives understanding to the simple.
¹³¹I open my mouth and pant; *
I long for your commandments.
¹³²Turn to me in mercy, *
as you always do to those who love your Name.
¹³³Steady my footsteps in your word; *
let no iniquity have dominion over me.
¹³⁴Rescue me from those who oppress me, *
and I will keep your commandments.
¹³⁵Let your countenance shine upon your servant *
and teach me your statutes.
¹³⁶My eyes shed streams of tears, *
because people do not keep your law.

SECOND READING: Romans 8:26-39

The people sit.

A Reading from Paul's letter to the Church in Rome.

²⁶The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. ²⁷And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁸We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

³¹What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³²He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. ³⁵Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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

Silence may follow.

SEQUENCE HYMN *The Christ who died but rose again (St. Magnus) (H 447)*
All stand.

GOSPEL: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

All stand.

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

³¹[Another parable Jesus put before the crowds:] “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;³²it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

³³He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

⁴⁴“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and

gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹“Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” ⁵²And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

Celebrant The Gospel of the Lord.
People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

THE SERMON

THE CREED (BCP p. 358)

All stand.

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.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (BCP p. 359)

All remain standing.

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;
That we all may be one.

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and
humbly serve you;
That your Name may be glorified by all people.

We pray for Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe, Bishop Julia Whitworth, Rev. Will Bergmann, Rev.
Melissa Buono, and for all bishops, priests, and deacons;
That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations
of the world;
That there may be justice and peace on the earth.

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or
trouble;
That they may be delivered from their distress.

***In Thanksgiving for the marriage of Fr. Will's son John Michael Koukias to Mary
Alice O'Loughlin yesterday, in York, Maine.***

PRAYERS FOR THOSE ON THE ST. MARK'S PRAYER LIST:

**Janet Andrews, Marnie Sheeran, Bev Olson, Bob, Tina, Anna Oliverson, Susan and
Kate, Jim Derik, Evie and family: Beth, Brendan and Corinne, Charlotte and Bob,
Doug and the Pecora family, Karen, Kathy, Marcia and Ralph, Sue Sweeney,
Michael, Carol, Kate and family, Judy, Barbara, Karen, Marlene, Andrew Ward,
John Gallacher, Lisa, Pamela, Elizabeth, Jane, Brooke, David Andrew, Marty
Cassidy, Brian.**

We pray for those who have recently died

Fran Fletcher, Jeanetta McColl and Sherrie Carroll, William Stevenson III, Thomas Kane.

CONFESSION OF SIN (BCP p. 359)

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.**

The Priest stands and says

**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 (BCP p. 360)

All stand.

<i>Celebrant</i>	The peace of the Lord be always with you.
<i>People</i>	And also with you.

Then the Ministers and the People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

The Celebrant says

Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving and make good your vows to the Most High.
Psalm 50:14

OFFERTORY ANTHEM (BCP p. 361)

THE DOXOLOGY V. 3 *From all that dwell below the skies (Old 100th) (H 380)*

The Great Thanksgiving

The Celebrant says 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 him thanks and praise.***

SANCTUS: S-129 Holy, Holy, Holy

Celebrant and People

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

The People stand or kneel

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,

Celebrant and People

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

The Celebrant continues

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 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.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy
Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and
for ever. **AMEN.**

THE LORD’S PRAYER (BCP p. 363)

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

People and Celebrant

**Our Father, who 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 trespasses,**

as we forgive those who trespass against us.
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

FRACTION ANTHEM: *Alleluia S-154*

INVITATION (BCP p. 364)

The Celebrant says

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

DISTRIBUTION (BCP p. 365)

The ministers receive the Sacrament in both kinds, and then immediately deliver it to the people.

The Bread and the Cup are given to the communicants with these words

The Body (Blood) of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life. [*Amen.*]

COMMUNION HYMN: *Father, we thank thee who hast planted (Rendez à Dieu)* (H 302)

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER (BCP p. 365)

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.

BLESSING (BCP p. 366)

The Priest blesses the people, saying

The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. *Amen.*

CLOSING HYMN: *If thou but trust in God to guide thee (Wer nur den lieben Gott)* (H 635)

DISMISSAL (BCP p. 366)

Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

People *Thanks to be God.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

July 26th to August 2nd

Sunday, July 26th

10 a.m.: 9th Sunday after Pentecost, Rev. Nancy Shepard. SERVICE @ ST. MARKS

Thursday, July 30th

10 a.m. - 5 p.m.: Church Office Open

Sunday, August 2nd

10 a.m.: 10th Sunday after Pentecost, Rev. William Bergmann. SERVICE @ TRINITY CHAPEL

9th Sunday of Pentecost - Small Mysteries.

In this week's readings, the kingdom of God works the way a mustard seed works, the way yeast works — small, hidden, unstoppable, transforming everything it touches. The psalm calls us to remember a God who has been faithful to his covenant across a thousand generations, and Paul reaches the crescendo of Romans 8: neither death nor life, neither things present nor things to come, neither height nor depth nor anything else in all creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. This is the treasure hidden in the field, the pearl of great price, and it has already been given to us.

July Worship Schedule - Worshipping Together

As we did last summer, for July and August we will be sharing services with our sister parish, Trinity Chapel in Shirley.

July 26	Holy Eucharist, Rev. Nancy Shepard, <i>service at St. Mark's</i>
August 2	Holy Eucharist, <i>service at Trinity Chapel</i>
August 9	Holy Eucharist, Rev. Will Bergmann, <i>service at St. Mark's</i>
August 16	Holy Eucharist, <i>service at Trinity Chapel</i>

Walkway Replacement Project:

We made significant progress this past week. The concrete is now poured and the admin wing steps have been reset. We are down to a short list of activities (landscaping, cleanup).

On Sundays, you're welcome to use the main doors and stairs. If the stairs present a physical challenge, please use the back door of the Admin wing, which is accessible via the right side of the building near handicapped parking. Throughout the week, please use the back door of the Admin wing for building access. A lock box with the Williams Hall combination will be at the back door for your convenience.

If you have any questions or need the lock box combination, please contact Michael O'Hare at ohare michael@yahoo.com or 617-233-3469. We appreciate your patience as we complete this important improvement to our parish!

Carpet Replacement Project

Our carpet is scheduled to be replaced on Monday, August 24th. We are looking for volunteers to remove all moveables (chairs, benches, etc.) right after the church service on August 23rd and then put everything back after the new carpet is installed. We have a piano mover who will be assisting us with the piano and the altar as these are heavy. We don't have a date for the second part as we want to be flexible based on your availability. We just need to have it done before the service on August 30th. Please email Michael O'Hare at ohare michael@yahoo.com or call at 617-233-3469 if you would like to volunteer for this support.

Outreach Opportunities

Venezuela Earthquake relief - donations welcomed.

In response to the devastating earthquake in Venezuela, St. Mark's has made a \$500 donation through the [Episcopal Relief & Development](#) appeal to provide emergency relief and support for affected communities. If you feel called to help, please consider making a gift to our Outreach Fund so we can continue responding quickly and compassionately to future needs, both locally and around the world. Thank you for helping us put our faith into action.

Summer Outreach Box: Supporting St. Paul's Clothing Closet

The St. Paul's clothing closet needs to be restocked. Among the items their clients are in need of are new packages of socks and underwear. Therefore, we will be collecting money in our outreach box through the summer to help purchase these items.

Outreach committee: Are you looking for a way to serve others?

The St. Mark's Outreach Committee is looking for new members to help coordinate, develop, and work on our outreach projects. The committee is a great way to become more involved in service to the community around our key ministries of Food Insecurity, Social Justice, and Immigrant Support. If you're interested in becoming a leader in our ministry to others, please contact Joan O'Hare or Paul Ackroyd.

Help Support Our Neighbors Facing Food Insecurity

Many in our community are struggling with food insecurity due to the high cost of groceries and recent reductions in SNAP (food assistance) benefits. St. Mark's Church invites parishioners to help support our local food pantries during this challenging time.

Please consider bringing non-perishable food items—such as canned goods, pasta, rice, or peanut butter—and placing them in the collection basket located in the narthex.

Your generosity helps ensure that no one in our community goes hungry. Thank you for your continued compassion and support.

Community Partnership

Make your voice heard. Weekly ICE Protests on Wednesdays

The grassroots organization Bearing Witness @ ICE (multiple links on Google) is continuing protests in front of the ICE detention center in Burlington (immediately behind the Mall) every Wednesday, 11 AM-1 PM. Attendance is now typically 500 and growing. Several St. Mark's parishioners attend every week. If you're interested in carpooling, please contact **Eric Kintner**. Another worthwhile resource for resisting ICE in many different ways is LUCE:

<https://www.lucemass.org>

Ongoing News

Office Hours - Irina and/or Rev. Bergmann will be in the office on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. To schedule an office appointment, please email secretary@st-mark.org or **Rev. Bergmann** at wcbgrm2n@gmail.com or call (978) 692-7849 and leave a voice message. Thank you.

The next Vestry Meeting is on Tuesday, August 11 2026, at 7:30 p.m. on Google Meet. Contact **Jean Ellis** at seniorwarden@st-mark.org if you would like to join.

Pastoral Care: Would you like to receive communion? Need prayers for healing? Need support or assistance? Would you like to speak with a priest? Please email **Rev. Will Bergmann** at wcbgrm2n@gmail.com and Herb Elliott, our Pastoral Care team leader at herb.elliott@cheza.com. Alternatively, you can call 978-501-8479. You can also use the "Request Pastoral Visit" button on St. Mark's website.



PRIEST - IN – CHARGE

The Rev. Dr. Will Bergmann, wcbgrm2n@gmail.com, 978-501-3393

SENIOR WARDEN

Jean Ellis, seniorwarden@st-mark.org, Cell #: 978-758-6299

MINISTER OF MUSIC

Lee Yezek: lyezek@gmail.com

VESTRY MEMBERS

Michael O'Hare (Jr. Warden), Scott Hilton (Treasurer), Ellen Tremblay (Clerk), Paul Ackroyd (At-Large), Jenny Meanwell, Chrissy Hemingway (Rental program), Melissa Dewing, Brennan Burks, Brenda Martin (Pre - School Representative), Mahiro Jilesen.

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