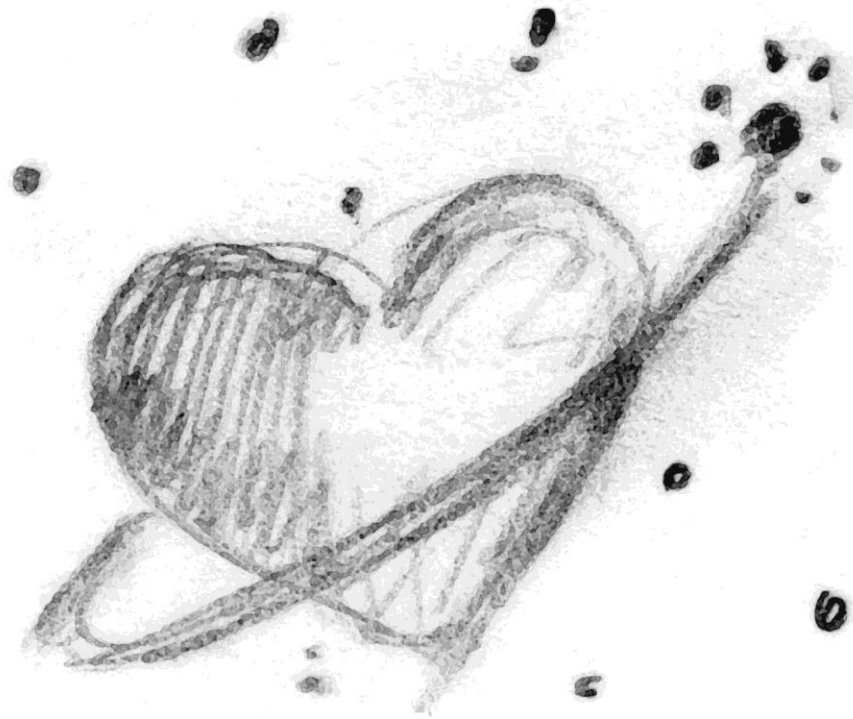


*St. Mark's Episcopal Church
75 Cold Spring Road
Westford, Massachusetts, 01886*



**“Forgive your
brother or sister
from your heart.”**

MATTHEW 18:35, NRSV

September 13, 2026

*Rev. William Bergmann, Officiant
Lee Yezek, Minister of Music*

ENTRANCE HYMN: *Now thank we all our God (Nun danket alle Gott)* (H 397)

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, because without you we are not able to please you mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

FIRST READING: : Genesis 50:15-21

The people sit.

A Reading from the book of Genesis.

¹⁵Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" ¹⁶So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves."¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. ²¹So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

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

Silence may follow.

PSALM: Psalm 103:[1-7] 8-13

Remain seated.

[¹Bless the LORD, O my soul, *
 and all that is within me, bless his holy Name.
²Bless the LORD, O my soul, *
 and forget not all his benefits.
³He forgives all your sins *
 and heals all your infirmities;
⁴He redeems your life from the grave *
 and crowns you with mercy and loving-kindness;
⁵He satisfies you with good things, *
 and your youth is renewed like an eagle's.
⁶The LORD executes righteousness *
 and judgment for all who are oppressed.
⁷He made his ways known to Moses *
 and his works to the children of Israel.]
⁸The LORD is full of compassion and mercy, *
 slow to anger and of great kindness.
⁹He will not always accuse us, *
 nor will he keep his anger for ever.
¹⁰He has not dealt with us according to our sins, *
 nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.
¹¹For as the heavens are high above the earth, *
 so is his mercy great upon those who fear him.
¹²As far as the east is from the west, *
 so far has he removed our sins from us.
¹³As a father cares for his children, *
 so does the LORD care for those who fear him.

SECOND READING: Romans 14:1-12

The people sit.

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

¹Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions.
²Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. ⁴Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all

be fully convinced in their own minds. ⁶Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

⁷We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹For it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall give praise to God.”

¹²So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Silence may follow.

SEQUENCE HYMN *When Christ was lifted from the earth (St. Botolph) (H 603)*

All stand.

GOSPEL: Matthew 18:21-35

All stand.

Celebrant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

²¹Peter came and said to [Jesus], “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²²Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

²³“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place.

³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had

mercy on you?’ ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

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.

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, 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:

William Stevenson III, Thomas Kane, Ralph Regner.

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

<i>The Celebrant says</i>	The Lord be with you.
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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: *For the bread which you have broken (Omni die)* (H 341)

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: *Praise, my soul, the King of heaven (Lauda anima)* (H 410)

DISMISSAL (BCP p. 366)

Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

People* *Thanks to be God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

September 13th to September 20th

Sunday, September 13th

10 a.m.: 16th Sunday after Pentecost, Rev. William Bergmann

10 a.m.: Sunday School begins (All Are Welcome)

Thursday, September 17th

10 a.m. to 5 p.m.: St. Mark's Office is Open

Sunday, September 20th

10 a.m.: 17th Sunday after Pentecost, Rev. Melissa Buono

5 p.m.: Dinner Church, contact Judie Hilton for information

16th Sunday After Pentecost: Forgive one another

Today's readings tell us of the God who drives back the sea and walks between two armies to protect a vulnerable people. God then turns to us and asks: Will you extend that same mercy to one another? Jesus answers Peter's question about forgiveness with a parable that cuts to the bone: The same servant who was forgiven an unpayable debt then seizes his debtor by the throat, showing that he has failed to understand what happened to him. Paul calls the Roman church to stop passing judgment on one another over matters of conscience, because we do not live to ourselves and we do not die to ourselves. We are the Lord's - every one of us. The sea fled and the mountains skipped at the presence of this God; the least we can do is forgive each other from the heart.

Carpet Replacement Project

Our Altar carpet has been replaced. Praise be to God! Much thanks to the Property team, Altar Guild, and the volunteers that made this happen. With the completion of the lighting project, refurbishment of the rail, and the new carpet, our Sanctuary looks awesome. Please email **Michael O'Hare** at oharemichael@yahoo.com if you have questions.

Sunday School Returns September 13th!

Exciting news! Sunday School is launching this fall, starting **September 13th at 10 AM** each Sunday. Children will explore Bible stories and faith lessons through interactive activities, crafts, Legos, games, and more. Sunday School meets during the first part of worship, with children joining families for communion. All children are welcome! For more information, contact Judie Hilton at familyministry@st-mark.org. Growing in faith. Growing in love.

Dinner Church Sunday, September 20, 2026 | 5 PM | Williams Hall

"Prayers for Community"

Come Join us for Dinner Church at St. Mark's. Dinner Church is an intimate setting to share prayers, conversation, and a meal around the table. Inspired by the early church, Dinner Church

is a lay-led service that blends familiar prayers with new reflections and community connection. This month, we'll draw inspiration from the "Contemplating how we see God in community". All are welcome! RSVP or send questions to Judie at or just come as you are.

Outreach Opportunities

THANK YOU!

\$291 Collected for St. Paul's Clothing Closet

We would like to thank everyone who donated money to our outreach box this summer to support the St. Paul's Clothing Closet. We collected a total of \$291! Due to your generous donations we were able to deliver a check for \$300 to the St. Paul's Soup Kitchen. The money will be used to buy much needed socks and underwear for those we serve at the soup kitchen.

September Outreach Box: Supporting Merrimack Valley Project

For the month of September our Outreach Box donations will go to the Merrimack Valley Project. MVP is a grassroots, multi-faith, multi-racial community organizing network that develops grassroots leaders, strengthens civic engagement, and builds collective power to advance systemic change for social, racial, and economic justice across the Merrimack Valley.

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

St. Paul's Soup Kitchen Fundraiser Dinner and Music: 80's Night!

Join us for a fun evening of food, music, and prizes as we support the soup kitchen's annual fundraiser dinner. It will be held at the Mount Pleasant Golf Club in Lowell on **Saturday, September 19, from 6:00 to 10:00 PM**. The 80's themed evening will feature dinner, dancing, silent auctions, raffles and plenty of fun to go around. We expect to fill at least one table as we did last year. Tickets are \$55 per person individually, \$50 per person if we fill a table. Please contact Paul Ackroyd or Joan O'Hare if you're interested.

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, October 13, 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.



St Mark's Episcopal Church
@stmark75



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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