



St. Mark's
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Longest Night: Blue Christmas

December 21, 2024



*Growing together in faith to abundantly
nourish our community*

200 Longwood Drive SE
Huntsville, AL 35801
256.539.4361 | stmarkshsv.org | [@stmarkshsv](https://www.instagram.com/stmarkshsv)

In Worship This Evening...

Welcome & Introduction

Hymn: It Came Upon the Midnight Clear ELW 282 vv1,3,4

Greeting | Evening Hymn ELW 561 | Evening Thanksgiving | Prayer of the Day

Readings

Isaiah 9:2-7 *Pew Bible p.555* | Lighting of the Advent Candle of Promise

Hymn: **Away in a Manger** ELW 277

Isaiah 40:1-11 *Pew Bible p.581* | Lighting of the Advent Candle of Comfort

Hymn: **Comfort, Comfort Now My People** ELW 256 vv1,3

Matthew 11:28-30 *Pew Bible p.824* | Lighting of the Advent Candle of Rest

Hymn: **What Child is This?** ELW 296 vv1-2

John 1:1-5,14 *Pew Bible p.862* | Lighting of the Advent Candle of Hope

Hymn: **In the Bleak Midwinter** ELW 294

Luke 2:8-14 *Pew Bible p.833* | Lighting of the Christ Candle

Hymn: **O Little Town of Bethlehem** ELW 279 vv1,3

Homily

Musical Interlude: Prince of Peace

Prayers of Intercession & Healing Meditations

At the direction of the Pastor, we invite you to pray as you see fit. While the cantors sing "All is Well," you may wish to lift your own silent prayers to God, or you may wish to let the music be your prayer. If you feel so led, you may come to the communion rail to pray with a worship leader or receive a word of blessing. You may also come forward to light a candle as an unspoken petition. There is no wrong way to bring your burdens and your blessings to God.

Benediction & Sending

Hymn: **Silent Night** ELW 281

Worship Assistants

Assisting Minister: Jennifer Mullin | Acolyte: Andrew Caple
Lectors: Julie Starkweather, Kathy Sieja, & Robert Burkhardt
Cantors: Brianna Sieja & Gwen Dornbos | Saxophonist: Oliver Sieja
Ushers: Butch Lloyd & Diana Rhodes | Tech Volunteer: Grace Billman

Tonight's Offering for Interfaith Mission Service

If you would like to leave an offering for Interfaith Mission Service, a basket is available in the back of the sanctuary, as well as an online giving option through this QR Code:



What Makes Christmas Blue?

While Advent is a season of hope and Christmas is a season of joy, not everyone feels hopeful or like celebrating. A Blue Christmas service provides a time and place of solace as we come together seeking healing and room to share grief, sadness, or loneliness when these emotions often feel out of place during the holidays. On this longest night of the year, we come with our honest yearnings seeking the return of light and hope.

We Welcome the Joy, Laughter, Sights, and Sounds of Children in Worship!

There are children's activity bulletins and worship activity bags available - just ask our ushers. If a moment out of the sanctuary is needed, a toy-filled nursery and changing table are available too, however, we ask that an adult family member stay present at all times.

Helpful Hints for Worship at St. Mark's

We're glad you're here with us! Our greeters and ushers are ready to help answer questions before and during worship in the hallway and gathering space outside the sanctuary, just look for someone wearing a name tag. Some helpful information to know if this is your first time worshipping with St. Mark's: Restrooms are available just past the gathering space out the North doors of the sanctuary; Lyrics for tonight's hymns will be projected on the screens, but if you'd like to follow along with the music, you may use the hymnal in your pews- ELW hymn numbers are in the bulletin; Kleenex boxes are available throughout the sanctuary as well as in the hallway and gathering area.

Prayer Requests & Pew Pads

If you'd like to leave a prayer request, or want to stay in contact with St. Mark's, there are pads available in the pews with space for your contact information as well as any prayer requests you may have. You may leave them in the offering plate.

Ready to Get Online?

Wi-Fi is available using the SMLC Guest network with password: GrowingTogether

You are Loved and You are Welcomed at St. Mark's

No matter who you are, where you've been, what you've done, or what has been done to you, God's grace is for you. We worship weekly on Sunday mornings at 10:30am blending traditional and contemporary musical styles. Sunday Learning opportunities are available for all ages starting at 9:15am with a quick break to grab coffee before worship.

Unique upcoming worship services include Candlelight Christmas Eve at 6:30 & 11pm as well as a Cozy Christmas Pajama (or favorite Christmas attire) & Hot Cocoa worship on Sunday, December 29 at 10:30am. Our regular Sunday Learning schedule will resume on January 12. There are many groups (quilting, reading, art, Bible study, cooking, and music ensembles to name a few!) who meet throughout the week— for more information or general inquires send an email to info@stmarkshsv.org

Local Resources...

If you need assistance during the holidays, help is available. Here are some local organizations and how they can help; you can also learn about other local resources by calling 211.

Thrive Alabama: Local healthcare provider in North Alabama, specializing in family, pediatric, women's health, and LGBTQ+ care. Accepts most insurances and offers reduced payment plans for the uninsured. thrivealabama.org

Not One More Alabama (NOMA): Local non-profit working to support members of the community struggling with addiction, to educate and lift the stigmas surrounding substance abuse and addiction, and to be a resource for individuals in recovery and their loved ones. notonemorealabama.org

Wellstone: North Alabama's largest and most comprehensive behavioral healthcare provider, treating children, teens and adults who face mental illness, substance abuse, and a broad range of obstacles to health and well-being. wellstone.com

Asha Kiran: Local non-profit that educates, empathizes, and empowers the foreign-born and persons from diverse communities by providing free, culturally and linguistically sensitive services (including a 24-hr crisis line) specific to the needs of survivors of domestic violence/intimate partner violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and trauma ashakiranonline.org

57 North Hampton: An Alabama-based organization that works to provide mental health therapy with licensed counselors to those without access as well as educate the community on mental health and coping strategies. 57nhampton.com

Foodline: A volunteer organization, through Interfaith Mission Service, that coordinates among 15-20 congregations with food pantries to provide emergency food to families in immediate need.

interfaithmissionservice.org/community-service/foodline

Free Pantry: Located on the Franklin St. side of St. Mark's, our free pantry is available without qualification or judgment for anyone in our community. Primarily used for non-perishable food, hygiene items, and devotionals. stmarkshsv.org/ministries

St. Mark's Staff

Rev. Will Starkweather, Pastor | pastorwill@stmarkshsv.org

Traci Billman, Director of Christian Education | Patrick Marchant, Minister of Music

Shelby Billman, Multimedia Coordinator | Heather White, Office Manager