



*Our Mission
To Proclaim the Gospel
To Make Disciples
To Embody Christ's Love*

ST. MARKS NEWSLETTER
FEBRUARY 2026

From The Pastors Desk

Grace and Peace friends of St. Mark's,

I hope the start of the New Year brought you moments of rest and joy as we prepare for what is ahead. As we move into 2026, I continue to see many places where God is already at work among us and through the ministry we share. I want to take a few moments to name where I saw God at work in January and to share what I am looking forward to as we enter the month of February.

Compared to December, January was a slower month at St. Mark's, and I think many of us were grateful for the chance to catch our breath. Even in that slower pace, God was still at work behind the scenes. One groovy place I saw this was at the Council's annual retreat at the beginning of the month. Our elected leaders gathered for prayer, conversation, and planning as they looked honestly at the challenges we faced in 2025 and named goals for the year ahead. I am grateful for their faithfulness and hopeful about the leadership guiding St. Mark's in 2026.

Another place I saw God at work was during New Member Sunday on January 18. It was a groovy day as we welcomed and recognized 11 new members who have joined St. Mark's in the past eight months. I am thankful to Cathy Sigmon and the Outreach and Fellowship Teams for organizing the celebration and reception. I pray that our new members feel welcomed and encouraged as they grow in faith and find their place in the life of our congregation. I invite you to take time on Sundays and at other events to introduce yourself and help them feel at home.

Looking ahead to February, it will be a busy and meaningful month at St. Mark's. We will begin our Wednesday evening Lenten worship services with Ash Wednesday on February 18. These services are a gift—a time to pause in the middle of our busy weeks and turn our hearts back to God during this season of reflection and prayer. I hope you will join us.

February also marks the start of our Faith Challenge, which kicked off at the end of January. Through this challenge, every dollar marked "faith challenge" given will be matched, up to \$35,000, during the months of February, March, and April. This is an exciting opportunity to support the ministry we share and to step forward together with generosity and hope for what God is doing among us.

As we enter February, I invite each of us to take time to pray and to wonder: *Where is God inviting us to come and see?* How might God be calling us to live out our mission—to proclaim the Gospel, make disciples, and embody God's love?

I am deeply grateful for our staff, volunteers, and lay leaders who work faithfully to make St. Mark's a welcoming place for worship, learning, and service. And thank you, friends of St. Mark's, for the many ways you serve, care for one another, and share God's love in our community.

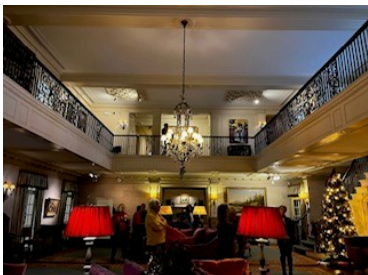
Peace and Blessings, Fraternally Quentin Surace"



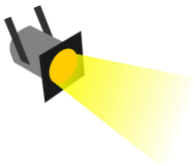
2026 Altar Guild and Council Installed



REYNOLDA HOUSE



Preschool Spotlight



Gifts from the Heart – Easter Event
Saturday, March 21st TBA

We are planning for our annual Easter Egg hunt for the special needs community and are expecting at least 100 participants, families and staff. We are in need of the following:

- Easter Eggs filled with candy or prize items
- Plastic eggs or candy (we can fill them)
- Cookies, individual chip bags
- **VOLUNTEERS!!!!**



If you can help, please see Nobia Summer or Wendy Hefner - or sign up at the table in the church.



Claremont Easter Egg Hunt
Saturday, March 28

St Mark's will be hosting the craft table again this year at the Claremont Easter Egg hunt. If you would like to volunteer to assist between 10:30 am and 2:00 pm, please let Wendy Hefner know. No craft experience necessary!

PRAYER LIST—MEMBERS and EXTENDED FAMILY & FRIENDS			
Members: Mike Baker Libby Brown Gail Carpenter Gary & Susan Carpenter Jan Carpenter Alanna Dotson Bill Dotson Kathy Gibson Rachel Hall Jo Marilyn Hewitt Linda & Willie Hewitt Tammie Hoyle Ken Isenhour Pat Kale Miriam Keisler Rudy Little Gaye Morrison	Kelly Morrison Norman Morrow Betty Powell Kathy Ray Evelyn Setzer George Setzer Carolyn Sherrill Sandy Sherrill Carolyn Sigmon Johnny Sigmon Elaine Simmons Larry & Judy Smyre Tony Williams Family & Friends: Zane Albert Carolyn Anderson Brittany Bailey Caleb Beatty	Mike Benfield Jerry & Wanda Bolick Barry & Sheila Brake Jo Ann Fox Tom Graybeal Carson Hollar William Hampton Forrest Huret Julie Jones Loretta Kiesler Mike & Alice Lawson Tonya Lawson Rita Ledbetter Bill & Laura McBrayer Betsy Roberts Dana Roberts Mark Sepulvador Jason Sharpe	Kathleen Sigmon Loretta Stephenson Rich Surace Michael & Rachel Swink Jo Carol Thomason Phil Williams Emory Addison Woods Baby Adaline Yang Danny Young Dylan & McKenzie Child with brain tumor Active Military: Davis Tucker

Saint Mark’s Lutheran Church
Ministry Financial Analysis December 31, 2025

12/31/2025	Month	Year
General Fund Offerings	53,217.80	293,096.48
Expenses	32,499.79	324,851.75
Balance	20,718.01	(31,755.27)

December’s Noisy Offering was designated for feeding needy families during the holidays. A total of \$185.50 was received.

MEMORIALS:


***To the Quilting Mission:**

In memory of Marlene Epps by Chris Cloninger
In memory of Marlene Epps by Rob & Regina Darcy
In memory of Marlene Epps by Jan Carpenter
In memory of Hazel Setzer by Tracy Martin & family
In memory of Marlene Epps by Melva Cooper

***To St. Mark’s Memorial Fund**

In memory of Pastor Hollar by Susan Harris
In memory of Kay Deal by Chris Cloninger
In memory of Kay Deal by Hilka Cox
In memory of Kay Deal by Bob & Camile Patrick
In memory of Marlene Epps by Donna Buchanan
In memory of Marlene Epps by Cathy Sigmon
In memory of Marlene Epps by Linda Hewitt
In memory of Marlene Epps by Janice Sigmon
In memory of Marlene Epps by Hilka Cox
In memory of Marlene Epps by Geraldine Helton
In memory of Marlene Epps by Bob & Camile Patrick
In memory of Kay Deal by Jan Carpenter

December-January 2025 Worship Attendance		
	Present	YouTube
December 21	62	12
December 28	63	10
January 4	62	9
January 11	75	8
Total	262	39
Weekly Average	66	10
Christmas Eve 4pm	84	4
Christmas Eve 8pm	46	7




St. Mark’s sends our deepest sympathies to the family of Betty Williams. Betty joined the church triumphant on December 31st. Betty was a long time devoted member and supporter of St. Mark’s.




Lenten and Easter Schedule		
Feb. 18	Ash Wednesday	7pm
Feb. 25	1st Lent meal	5:45pm
	Service w/communion	6:30pm
Mar. 4	2nd Lent meal	5:45pm
	Service w/communion	6:30pm
Mar. 11	3rd Lent meal	5:45pm
	Service w/communion	6:30pm
Mar. 18	4th Lent meal	5:45pm
	Service w/communion	6:30pm
Mar. 25	5th Lent meal	5:45pm
	Service w/communion	6:30pm
Mar. 29	Palm Sunday Service	10am
Apr. 2	Maundy Thursday Service	7pm
Apr. 3	Good Friday Service	7pm
Apr. 5	Sunrise Service	8am
	Breakfast to follow	
	Easter Sunday Service	10am

**Loving Yourself
Women’s Bible
Study**

10 AM - Thursdays in February
*Using Scripture and other media,
we will study God’s Word focusing on
Loving God - Loving Ourselves
Please register on the sign up sheet
in the church before January 25th.*



The NC Synod invites our youngest creatives to help shape the look of the 2026 Synod Gathering! Inspired by the theme “Come and See, Go and Tell,” we’re inviting children to share how they witness and wonder at God’s good news. Open to artists **12 and under** from NC Synod congregations. As part of our Children in Ministry “And God Says It Is Good” initiative, supported by a grant from the Lilly Foundation Inc., we are highlighting the gifts and perspectives of children across our synod. Their creativity reminds us of God’s delight in play, imagination, and curiosity—and we want those gifts front and center at Synod Gathering. For more details, go to <https://nclutheran.org/art-opportunity-for-children/>

Church Staff	Congregation Council		
Pastor Quentin Surace pastor@smarklc.org (704) 280-9921	<u>2026</u> Carol Schaefer Matthew Watkins Nobia Summers Cathy Sigmon	<u>2027</u> Tim Carpenter Judy Craig Jerry Herman Susan Williams	<u>2028</u> Jennifer Carpenter Terry Hefner Trey Hendren Tim Sherrill
Wendy Hefner: Family Ministries Director wendy@smarklc.org (828) 270-6008	<i>*The year denotes rotation off Council at year's end.</i>		
Emily Schuttenberg: Minister of Music emily205@icloud.org (706) 248-3323	Congregation Council meets on February 16th at 6:30pm. The next newsletter mailing will be February 18th.		
Maria Wright: Preschool Director mw9268@gmail.com (828) 234-5943	Church Office Hours Monday - Thursday, 9:00am—2:30pm		
Randyl Abernathy: Preschool Director mimab@charter.net (828) 781-1702	Follow Us Online		
Deanna Butcher: Finance Secretary deanna@smarklc.org (828) 459-2161	<div><div> St. Mark's Lutheran Church....Claremont, NC</div><div> www.smarklc.org</div></div> <div><div> YouTube</div><div>St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Claremont NC http://www.youtube.com/@st.markslutheranchurchclar6483</div></div>		
Patricia Hoke: Administrative Assistant secretary@smarklc.org (828) 459-2161			
Larry Smyre: Church Sexton (828) 459-2161			

