

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

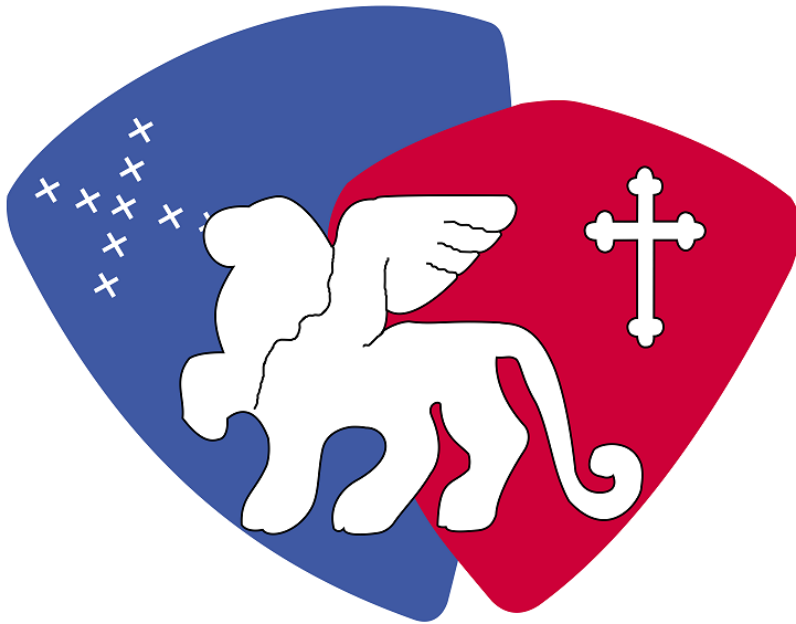
Our Vision:

To grow in Christ through worship and service

Our Mission:

Called to be Christ Centered

Touching Lives + Transforming Hearts + Teaching God's Word



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www.stmarksgastonia.org

Welcome Home to Saint Mark's!

It is our privilege to worship with you this morning! Please know that all baptized Christians regardless of Church denomination, and all who seek a deeper knowledge and love of God in Christ are most welcome to receive the bread and wine of the Holy Eucharist. Gluten-free wafers are available for those with allergies. Children are also welcome and encouraged to participate in all services at St. Mark's.

If this is your first time at St. Mark's, please complete a *Visitor Card* and let us know about your visit, especially if you have a specific need or prayer request. Visitor Cards are found in the pew racks. If you would like additional information about our many ministries and activities, speak to one of our Ushers or Greeters, or stop by the Parish Hall during the fellowship hour that follows each service. We would be honored to speak with you in person.

If you would like to make a financial offering or contribution you can do so by scanning this QR Code or via our website at www.stmarksgastonia.org



***Again, Welcome Home to St. Mark's!
May God's peace and love enfold you.***

Note: It is the custom in The Episcopal Church to prepare for worship by gathering in reverent silence and prayer, and during the worship service, stand for praise, sit for instruction, and, as you are able, kneel for prayer. Please respect the devotional needs of others by turning off cellular telephones and electronic devices, and by speaking with hushed voices.

All scripture passages are taken from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, © 1989, Division of Christian Education in the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Holy Eucharist, Rite II
Sunday, September 13, 2026 – 10:30 AM

The Word of God

Prelude: “Fugue in C Major” **Handel**

The Processional Hymn: “Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken” Hymnal pg. 522

Opening Acclamation: BCP pg. 355

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

People: And blessed be God’s kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

The Collect for Purity:

The Gloria: #S-277

The Collect of the Day:

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: *And also with you.*

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.

People: *Amen.*

(All are seated for the Lessons from scripture)

The Lessons

The Old Testament: **Exodus 14:19-31**

The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh’s horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. At the morning watch

the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, “Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt.”

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.” So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

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

The Psalm

Psalm 114

- 1 Hallelujah! When Israel came out of Egypt, *
the house of Jacob from a people of strange speech,
- 2 Judah became God's sanctuary *
and Israel his dominion.
- 3 The sea beheld it and fled; *
Jordan turned and went back.
- 4 The mountains skipped like rams, *
and the little hills like young sheep.
- 5 What ailed you, O sea, that you fled? *
O Jordan, that you turned back?
- 6 You mountains, that you skipped like rams? *
you little hills like young sheep?
- 7 Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, *
at the presence of the God of Jacob,
- 8 Who turned the hard rock into a pool of water *
and flint-stone into a flowing spring.

Romans 14:1-12

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those 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. Who 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.

Some 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. Those 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.

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If 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. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Why 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. For it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.” So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Sequence Hymn: “Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive” Hymnal pg. 674

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35

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

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

Peter 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?” Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, 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. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But 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.’ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay

you.’ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Sermon:

The Rev. R. Allan McCaslin

A time for silent reflection follows the sermon.

The Nicene Creed:

BCP pg. 358

The Prayers of the People: Form VI

BCP pg. 392

Leader: In peace, we pray to you, Lord God.

Silence is kept.

Leader: For all people in their daily life and work;

People: For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who are alone.

Leader: For Donald, our President; for Josh, our Governor; for all elected officials; for this community, the nation, and the world;

People: For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.

Leader: For the just and proper use of your creation;

People: For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.

Leader: We pray for those who have asked for prayers, for those in harm’s way, for the unemployed, the lonely, for those who are sick, or in need, and for all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;

People: For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.

Leader: In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, we pray for the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

In the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer, we pray for Holy Cross, Tryon and Holy Cross, Valle Crucis.

Leader: For the peace and unity of the Church of God;

People: For all who proclaim the Gospel, and all who seek the Truth.

Leader: For Sarah, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Sean, our Presiding Bishop: and for all bishops and other ministers;

People: For all who serve God in his Church.

Leader: For the special needs and concerns of this congregation.

We pray for those who travel this week.

I invite your prayers of intercession either silently or aloud.

The People add their own petitions.

Leader: Hear us, Lord;

People: For your mercy is great.

Leader: We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life.

Leader: We give thanks for those celebrating birthdays this week; and for those celebrating wedding anniversaries.

We give thanks for those who help with the Backpack Weekend Food Program, and for all the ministries and activities of this parish, and pray God's continued blessing on all who partake of, or serve in them.

Leader: I invite your prayers of thanksgiving either silently or aloud.

The People add their thanksgivings.

Leader: We will exalt you, O God our King;

People: And praise your Name for ever and ever.

Leader: We pray for _____, (and) all who have died, that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom.

Leader: Lord, let your loving-kindness be upon them;

People: Who put their trust in you.

Leader: We pray to you also for the forgiveness of our sins.

The Confession of Sin: *(Prayed by all present)*

BCP 393

**Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father;
in your compassion forgive us our sins,
known and unknown, things done and left undone;
and so uphold us by your Spirit that we may live and serve you
in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your Name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Priest pronounces Absolution.

The congregation is invited to be seated.

The Commissioning of Acolytes

Celebrant: Beloved in Christ, the ministry of the acolyte is a vital role in which volunteers assist clergy to ensure worship services run with grace and dignity. The word "acolyte" comes from the ancient Greek word *akolouthos*, meaning companion, helper, or follower. Its historical roots trace back to Old Testament figures like Samuel and Elisha who assisted priests and prophets.

Today's acolytes assist the clergy not only at the Table of the Lord, but also, as Crucifers, Torch Bearers, Gospellers, and Chalice Bearers. It is both a privilege and an honor to serve as an Acolyte and for your clergy to serve with them. This morning, we give thanks to God for those to be commissioned to this ministry.

The Acolytes come forward and stand before the Altar.

Presenter: I present to you these persons to be admitted to the ministry of Acolyte in this parish.

Celebrant: My sisters and brothers in Christ, you have been chosen to serve God in God's holy house. Do you promise to perform your duties as acolytes with reverence, care, and faithfulness, for the glory of God and the edification of this congregation?

Candidates: **I do, with the help of God.**

Celebrant: Will you be diligent in your preparation, regular in your attendance, and respectful of the sacred space and duties entrusted to you?

Candidates: **I will, with the help of God.**

The Celebrant addresses the congregation, saying:

Celebrant: Will you support these acolytes in their ministry, honoring their service and surrounding them with your prayers?

Congregation: **We will.**

The Commissioning and Blessing:

Celebrant: Let us pray.

The candidates kneel.

O God, our Father, whose Son Jesus Christ came among us as one who serves: Bless these your servants who are now set apart for the ministry of acolyte in your Church. Grant them the spirit of faithfulness and devotion, that they may minister at your altar with reverence and joy. Clothe them with righteousness, and bring us all at last to that heavenly feast where you live and reign with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **People: Amen**

The Celebrant lays hands on the head of each candidate and offers the following:

Celebrant: (N.) In the Name of God and of this congregation, I commission you as an Acolyte in the Church of God, and present you with this pin as a token of your ministry.

The Rite concludes with the following blessing:

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, guide and protect you. And may the Lord bless your coming in and your going out, from this time forth for evermore.

People: Amen.

All present stand.

The Peace:

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People And also with you.

(Please greet each other in the name of Christ)

Announcements with:

Birthday Prayer:

BCP pg. 830

Anniversary Prayer:

BCP pg. 431

Offertory

“Adagio”

Stanley

The Presentation Hymn:

**“The Doxology”
(vs. 3)**

Hymnal pg. 380

Liturgy of the Table

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer B

BCP pg. 367

Sanctus:

Hymnal S 129

The Lord’s Prayer:

BCP pg. 364

The Breaking of the Bread: (*The Fraction*)

Celebrant Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

People Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

The Fraction Anthem:

Hymnal S 154

The Ministration of the Communion:

*Join Steve Thomas in the chapel during communion or after services
on Sunday for intercessory prayer.*

Communion Hymns:

“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”	Hymnal pg. 324
“O God, Unseen yet Ever Near”	Hymnal pg. 332
“Draw Nigh and Take the Body of the Lord”	Hymnal pg. 328
Post Communion Prayer:	BCP pg. 365
The Blessing	
Recessional Hymn	“Christ , Whose Glory Fills the Skies”
	Hymnal pg. 7
Dismissal	
Postlude	“Tocca in G Minor”
	Pachelbel

The flowers on the altar are given to the glory of God and to honor the devotion and love Jane Cauthen shows to all of us, by her family.

Announcements

TODAY IS “HOMECOMING SUNDAY”

8:00 am & 10:30 am Worship Services Return!

Rite I at 8:00 am & Rite II at 10:30 am.

As we gather for **“Homecoming Sunday”**, we will offer special prayers and commission of our Acolytes, Crucifers, and Gospellers during the 10:30 am service.

A Barbeque Luncheon in the Parish Hall follows the 10:30 service.

(Note: Christian Education Classes follow the 8 am service starting September 20th.)

Community Garden

Thanks to Travis and a dedicated Saturday crew, the All Saints garden is as fruitful as ever. To harvest “our crops” and keep the beds healthy and growing, we could use a few extra hands. Picking, watering and light weeding are the main needs at the moment.

If you’re free for a few minutes during the week or between 8:00 and 10:00 am on a Saturday, contact the office or Travis Johnson to join in.

Healing Service Ministry

Our **Healing Service Ministry** continues **Thursday mornings from 11:00 am - 12 Noon** in the sanctuary. This ministry is led by laypersons from the parish. For additional information, please contact Eileen Klimkowski.

The 26 Miracles of Jesus

Thursdays, 12 noon – 1 pm

Learn about the healing power of Jesus as we explore His miracles and learn how to pray for anyone, anywhere, in the name of Jesus. This DVD teaching series, hosted by Eileen Klimkowski, is led by two retired Episcopal priests.

Clothing Closet Needs

Our Clothing Closet needs continue. If you're out shopping and can add an item or two to your cart, it makes a real difference to those we serve at our doors during the week.

Men's Medium	Men's Large	Men's XL (1X)	Men's XXL (2X)	Men's Sneakers
-Drawstring Shorts -Lightweight Sweatpants -T-shirts* -Hoodies-lightweight	-Drawstring Shorts -Lightweight Sweatpants -T-shirts* -Hoodies-lightweight	-Drawstring Shorts -Lightweight Sweatpants -T-shirts* -Hoodies-lightweight	-T-shirts* -Hoodies-lightweight	All sizes

**any color except white, please.*

Progressive Dinner Event – Monday, September 21, 2026

St. Mark's is honored to host the "***Appetizer Portion and Opening Organ Recital***" of this year's AGO Progressive Dinner.

Appetizers will be served in our Parish Hall from 5:30 to 6:00 pm followed by an organ recital at 6:10 pm in St. Mark's Chancel featuring our former organist, David Wilcox.

At the conclusion of the recital, participants will venture to 1st Methodist for Dinner and a 2nd Organ Recital (by Timothy Scruggs) before continuing on to 1st Baptist for Desert and the final Organ Recital of the evening (by George Dent).

Parishioners are welcome to attend the RECITAL here at St. Mark's at no charge. Those who wish to partake of any of the meal options (Appetizer, Dinner, and Desert) may do so at a cost of \$35 per person. **Interested "diners" must make a reservation and pay the meal fee in advance via the AGO website at: Charlotteago.org**

CHURCH STAFF

The Rev. R. Allan McCaslin.....	<i>Interim Priest</i>
The Ven. Brenda M. Gilbert	<i>Archdeacon, Dio. of Western NC</i>
The Rev. Deacon Cathy Wesson	<i>Deacon</i>
Ms. Dionne Browning	<i>Business Administrator</i>
Ms. Debbie Brake	<i>Nursery</i>
Ms. Beverly Bieker	<i>Office Assistant</i>
Mr. Kris Kiser	<i>Church Sexton</i>

CURRENT VESTRY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Mr. Eric Lampke, '27	<i>Senior Warden, Bldgs-Grounds</i>
Mrs. Judy Jackson Malina, '26	<i>Junior Warden, Outreach</i>
Mrs. Suzanne Whatley, '25	<i>Parish Life</i>
Mrs. Fe McLaughlin, '26	<i>Parish Life, Newcomers</i>
Ms. Marilyn Walters, '26	<i>In-reach</i>
Mr. George Sowersby, '27	<i>Buildings and Grounds</i>
Mrs. Pat Townsend, '27	<i>In-reach</i>
Ms. Dionne R. Browning	<i>Vestry Clerk</i>
Mr. Steve Campbell	<i>Treasurer</i>
Mrs. Kenna Watts	<i>Assistant Treasurer</i>

