



THE MESSENGER

Advent & Christmas 2020

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Those who lived in a land of deep darkness-- on them light has shined."

Isaiah 9:2

The season of Advent is one where we await the coming joy of the birth of Christ. In some ways we've been in Advent long before the season arrives. The gift of our faith is that we trust the light and we actively seek it, even when we find ourselves in the dark. Our community has testified to this light over and over again. We have continued to serve our city and those in need, whether it has been with special fundraising for our long-term partners, sewing masks, collecting coats, or gathering food and hygiene kits. We've continued to make progress on our reconstruction efforts, which is an act of daily faithfulness as we seek to restore our facilities. Our worship has been an evolving and creative testament to perseverance. We have sought connection online and recently been able to gather in-person in modest ways. Advent will bring some wonderful opportunities to connect, with some new services outside as weather permits, and streamed worship at 10.00am that will include the opportunity for our congregation to be present. On Christmas Eve, we are having a 4.00pm service in Travis Park with brass and an interactive way to hear the story anew.

Regardless of how you connect, and even if we have to pivot and shift plans in response to current health conditions in our city, Christ will be born.

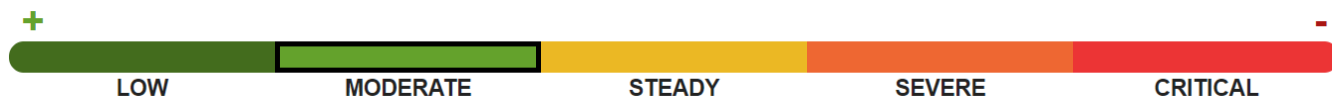


Christmas is all the more precious in this season during which we have sacrificed so much and become so deeply aware of the gift of our faith. I give thanks for our community each day. I'm so grateful for our leadership, especially for our COVID-19 workgroup which has included Dr. David Byrd, Dr. David Ross, and Ms. Ann Leafstedt, along with our senior staff. They have guided our decision making using the best available information. I continue to be amazed by the faithfulness of our staff. The behind the scenes efforts to keep us connected are herculean and fill me with gratitude. And I give thanks for each one of you. If you didn't watch the video of reflections at our Parish Meeting, I commend it to you. Our people continue to seek the light, and on us light has shined.

Peace,

Beth +

ARE SERVICES HAPPENING? ST. MARK'S COVID-19 PLAN



St. Mark's Advent and Christmas offerings will follow the risk levels reported by the city. When we are in the green zone, indoor and outdoor services will continue as planned. Yellow zone: only outdoor services will continue. Orange or red zones: streaming only, no in-person attendance. City guidance at: www.covid19.sanantonio.gov.

SERVICES

Sunday Worship Schedule starting Advent I, November 29

Sundays | 10.00am | Holy Eucharist, Rite II
In-person inside the church and live streamed on our website, Facebook, YouTube, and the app. Please register online.

Sundays | 11.30am | Holy Eucharist, Rite II
In-person outside in Tucker Courtyard, weather permitting. Please register online.

To register, click on the In-Person Worship button on our website (stmarks-sa.org).

Advent Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 13

5.00 & 7.00pm streamed on Facebook, the Watch Live page of the website, YouTube, and our app

Advent is a season of both quiet reflection and joyful expectation. This service is intended to be a time of spiritual preparation as we watch and wait for the coming of the Kingdom of God. Advent Lessons and Carols continues the season of Advent with readings, prayers, and carols sung by the combined choirs of St. Mark's. This year, we will offer a virtual presentation of this favorite annual service.

ADVENT FORMATION

Where the Light Shines Through: The Stained-Glass Speaks

Sundays in Advent, November 29 - December 20 | 9.00am-9.50am | Zoom

The Rev. Matthew Wise & Meredith Rogers, Director of Youth Ministries

We are all missing our gorgeous, historic sanctuary, so why not learn a bit more about that sacred space? Portrayed in each of our beloved stained-glass windows at St. Mark's are stories from scripture, from the Diocese of West Texas, and from our history as a parish in San Antonio. This class calls us to listen to the stories our windows tell about who we are and where we've come from. Zoom information for this class can be found online.

OUTREACH

Christmas to the Street



For more than a decade, St. Mark's - led by our youth - has embraced the tradition of preparing and serving a barbecue meal for our neighbors experiencing homelessness. This beloved project has adapted time and again, through renovations in 2010 and post-scaffolding-collapse hurdles in 2019. The St. Mark's community has found a way to continue this joyful effort in the COVID era. On December 17, we'll virtually host a special meal at Haven for Hope, made possible by your contributions. Dinner for approximately 1100 guests will be prepared and served on Haven's campus. Look for details about how to contribute in upcoming eNews editions during Advent.

"I'm glad St. Mark's is having a virtual Christmas to the Street because providing to the community is always essential, and even now we know that nothing is promised during these troubled times. We can still come together to provide a celebration and a warm meal."

- Carmen Grimes, one of St. Mark's college freshman

Holiday Happiness Gift Drive and Party at Crockett Academy

Our annual holiday gift drive for Crockett Academy students is back! Our goal is to provide gifts for 75 children at the "Holiday Happiness Party" to be held at Crockett on December 16 at 9.00am. Through the help of some holiday elves, we know several wishes for each child on the list. You'll have a chance to sign up online to shop for a particular child, then wrap and deliver gifts to St. Mark's no later than Sunday, December 13. Alternately, you may wish to donate money and let Santa's little helper shop and deliver the gift to the church for you! Volunteers are also needed to assemble cookie and juice packets, help deliver gifts to Crockett, and assist with the (masked, distanced) party. To participate, visit the Advent/Christmas page of the website.



2019 Crockett Academy Christmas Party

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ST. MARK'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
San Antonio

PERIODICAL

CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

4.00pm | Christmas Eve in the Park | Travis Park

We hope you'll join us for this in-person, festive celebration of Christ's birth in Travis Park. This family-friendly, distanced Eucharist will include music provided by the San Antonio Symphony brass, masked singing of our favorite Christmas carols, and a joy-filled, interactive version of the Nativity story (hint: everyone will have a special role). Please make your reservation online so we can plan for a socially distanced service.

8.00pm & 10.30pm | Festal Holy Eucharist, Rite II | Online only

This liturgy will feature a virtual offering from our choir. Light your candles at home and participate in this online liturgy on the St. Mark's website, Facebook page, YouTube, and app.

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE

10.00am | Holy Eucharist, Rite II

In-person inside the church and live streamed on our website, on Facebook, on YouTube, and on the St. Mark's app. Please register online if you'd like to attend in-person.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

Consider making a contribution to the Altar Flowers Fund for Christmas flowers in memory of, in honor of, and in thanksgiving for family and friends. Use the enclosed envelope. Forms are also available at www.stmarks-sa.org. Include a \$25 donation for each memorial or honorarium. Deadline for forms with donation is December 18. Direct questions to Ann Coiner at 210-827-2073 or atcoiner@gmail.com.

PHOTO CREDITS

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