2 Christmases

“It’s the most wonderful time of the year,” so sings Andy Williams in his 1963 Christmas billboard hit that celebrates the Christmas season, focusing on get-togethers with family and friends. This is what I would call one of two very different Christmases. On the one hand, Christmas “1” fills airways, screens and glossy pages of magazines with shiny gold stars, smiling faces, and perfection in style and décor. Google “Christmas” and you’ll see Christmas “1” images of evergreen trees with out-of-focus orbs of light, red stockings, bejeweled ornaments and comfy fireplaces. It’s a dream world that beckons us to enter into, to become part of, at least for a few weeks each year. And who doesn’t want to be part of this? And to be part of it means you need to buy presents, put up decorations, bake cookies, listen to Christmas music and most important of all, internalize a sense of cheer. The momentum builds until it’s Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. And then, on December 26, the dream is over and Christmas 1 ends with a whimper. The warm glow fades and used up cheer is put out on the curb with the Christmas tree.

There is another Christmas – Christmas “2” - best presented in first-person narrative. While everyone seems to be happy and excited about Christmas, I don’t feel it. I am going through the motions, trying to be nice, but it’s hard. What’s wrong with me? I can’t seem to get past the losses, pain and struggles I am experiencing in my life, and the more I hear Christmas music and see Christmas decorations, the worse it gets. It’s not that I’m depressed. It’s just that I can’t get into and be part of the Christmas hype without feeling phony and forced. When December 26 arrives, the pressure to be artificially happy is finally over, and it feels like relief.

Most of us live somewhere in between Christmases 1 and 2. Christmas 1 has legitimate roots, however distorted, in the hope that the birth of Jesus brings to the world. There is palpable joy in the birth of a baby, and Christmas 1 reflects that joy. Christmas 2 is about our honest humanity that longs for a deeper meaning beyond tinsel and plastic. Both Christmas 1 and 2 are invited to the manger, one bearing gifts of gold and frankincense and the other burdens of pain and loss. Whatever you have in your arms or in your heart this Christmas season, come to the manger, where you will find what you are truly looking for.

Yours in Christ, George+
Pumpkin Patch Update: $8,552.41 to DuPagePADS!

It was a banner year for our pumpkin patch! Sales at this year’s St. Mark’s Pumpkin Patch for DuPagePADS exceeded $25,000, resulting in a donation of $8,552.41 to DuPagePADS. Since 2007, the combined donation to DuPagePADS totals approximately $79,500! Thank you to everyone who unloaded pumpkins, took a turn at the sales tent, purchased pumpkins and helped with clean-up. A special thanks goes once again to Phil Adler for organizing this year’s Patch. Mark your calendar for Saturday, October 5, 2019, when next year’s shipment of pumpkins from New Mexico arrives at St. Mark’s.

Pizza and Social Justice

All are welcome! Pizza and Social Justice meets the first and third Tuesday evenings at St. Mark’s in Lehman Parlor. The next scheduled dates are December 4 and December 18. Come at 6:30 pm for pizza and conversation, or at 7:00 pm for a short video and discussion afterwards. Please RSVP to 630-942-0800 or psjustice18@gmail.com so we can be prepared with appropriate materials and food. PSJ is a community organization dedicated to building a society free from racism and discrimination by fostering lasting relationships all racial, religious, and ethnic backgrounds; by recognizing bias in ourselves and our communities; and by working together to promote a more just society. Learn more here: https://pizzaandsocialjustice.org.

Annual Women’s Ornament Exchange

Inviting all women of St. Mark’s for this hilarious swap/swipe ornament exchange on Wednesday, December 12 from 7:00 pm to 9:30 pm at the home of Penny Taback (378 N. Main St., Glen Ellyn) – across the street from St. Mark’s. Bring an ornament (value not to exceed $15) – plus an appetizer, salad or dessert. RSVP appreciated to Jennifer Dorn at jenniferdorn0211@gmail.com.
Holiday Stress?

Catharine Phillips
Priest Associate for Pastoral Care

Many things cause stress in the holiday season. Perhaps it’s family and their expectations, or our expectations, of how things need to be. This is normal. For many families, this is the only time during the year we are all together in one place. For families which have added other people into the mix, it may make it two or three or even four times as difficult. If there has been a loss of a family member (through death or perhaps divorce) the complications increase. Some families weather these complications well. Others don’t. These are the times to gather round, perhaps in new ways. Include more people in making Thanksgiving dinner. Add (or subtract) a tradition or two. Again, include more people into the mix. If you are alone, grit your teeth and ask a friend to be included into their celebration. Offer to bring a dish to share.

Other suggestions:
* Invite a friend to go to a movie. Preferably a comedy, but if you need a tear-jerker, go and weep.
* Talk to your priest or therapist (or me!)
* Take a walk, work out (exercise is known to decrease stress hormones)

Blessings!
What is Advent?

David Fletcher
Fletcherdavid29@gmail.com

Happy New Year! In the church year, the new year begins on the First Sunday of Advent, which this year is December 2. Advent is a time of waiting and preparation for the Lord’s coming, observed during the four Sundays preceding Christmas. The final and Fourth Sunday of Advent is December 23.

Advent celebrates the coming of the infant Christ at Christmas and anticipates His coming again in glory. It has been celebrated since the earliest centuries of the church, although no one knows exactly when it began. It is celebrated in Episcopal/Anglican, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and other liturgical churches, and increasingly in other churches as well. We avoid the rush to Christmas by choosing hymns of Advent rather than of Christmas for our services. In our services, blue or purple will be the liturgical colors of the season, and the Gloria in Excelsis is omitted from the services until Christmas Eve. Our readings will encourage us to prepare for the Lord’s first and second coming. Advent is a time of special musical celebrations, such as Advent Lessons and Carols, a beautiful service of scripture readings, hymns, and other music, which we will enjoy December 16, 7:00 pm.

Advent customs include the use of an Advent Wreath both in church and at home, with each of the four candles lit each Sunday of Advent. Family devotions may include the home Advent wreath with its candles, the use of an Advent Calendar, and daily readings and prayers.

Many Spanish-speaking Christians observe Las Posadas, an Advent candlelight procession and celebration, reenacting the search for lodging in Bethlehem by Joseph and Mary. Las Posadas involves outdoor processions of Joseph leading Mary as they travel from “inn” to “inn” looking for accommodation followed by musicians and singers. Las Posadas is celebrated during the novena, a nine-day period between December 16 and 24, which we will celebrate at St. Mark’s on Sundays at 2:30 pm and on weekdays at 7:00 pm.
The Lord is Come! Finally, on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day is the celebration of The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, or Christmas. Christmas has been observed annually in the Church since ancient times, at least from the 300s AD. The word “Christmas” was used in the twelfth century, as a contraction of “Christ’s Mass.” Although the date of Christ’s birth is not recorded in the Gospels, December 25 was selected for the celebration of the Nativity to supersede the date of the Roman festival of the Birth of the Unconquerable Sun and the winter solstice. This Roman holiday now was given a new and far richer meaning by the birth of the Light of the World, God’s only Son. We rejoice at Christmas because it celebrates the great doctrine of the Incarnation, the coming of the eternal Son of God into our humanity. The season of Christmas, also called Christmastide, begins Christmas Eve and continues until Epiphany, January 6.

Columbarium Expansion Project Completed!

Members and friends of St. Mark’s now have the opportunity to purchase niches in the two new sections or to purchase an in-ground plot. The price is $2,000 per wall niche and $1,000 per in-ground plot.

Purchasers of Columbarium spaces receive a license for each niche or plot purchased. A bronze plaque bearing the name and birth and death years of the deceased is attached to the face of the niche or to a bronze tableau on the outside chapel wall above the in-ground plots.

If you would like more information about purchasing a niche or plot, please contact Dellana Mote, office manager at frontdesk@stmarksuln.org or 630-858-1020.
Children’s Ministry News

**December 1**, 9:00-11:00 am - AM Christmas Pageant casting for speaking parts (send your child’s name to childrensministry@stmarks Glenellyn.org by November 29 for a speaking role)

**December 2**, 11:45 am and 12:15 pm - Make a family take home nativity in Mahon Hall. Come to coffee hour and make a take home nativity set to enjoy all season. in Mahon Hall at 11:45. No registration or cost. (Want to make an advent wreath at home? The last few wire stands will be available on that morning, free!)

**December 8**, 9:00-11:00 am - AM Christmas Pageant rehearsal for all Gr K-5

**December 9**, 11:45 am – Come for a Visit from St. Nicholas during Christmas Cookie Extravaganza coffee hour in Mahon Hall. No registration or cost.  

*St Nicholas gifting to Lurie Hospital* – Are you coming to the Christmas Cookie Extravaganza and visit from St. Nicholas on December 9 this year? Please bring a **new coloring book for any age** – scribbling babies through teens and adults who need to pass time waiting. 50 pages or less preferred for kids for easier handling. Also needed: Crayola Twistables. Cash donations made out to St. Mark’s and put “Lurie Hospital Kids” in the subject line.

**December 11**, 7:00 pm – Our Lady of Guadalupe festival with reenactment and Mariachi Band in Sanctuary/Mahon Hall

**December 15**, 9:00-11:00 am - AM Christmas Pageant full rehearsal for all participants

**December 16**, 10:30 am – AM Christmas Pageant

**December 19**, 7:00 pm – New Bilingual Posada - Travel with the Holy Family as they seek rooms in crowded Bethlehem! Fiesta follows with pinata. Bring friends to this great multicultural experience.

**December 24**, 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm - “Not so Silent Night” Christmas Eve Story

*Lots of details to come, but get these on the calendar!*
Preschool Priority Enrollment

St. Mark's Preschool
A preschool inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy of education

St. Mark’s Preschool is open to children ages 3 to 5 and offers Monday through Thursday or Tuesday through Thursday preschool classes both morning and afternoons as well as morning and afternoon Kindergarten Enrichment on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The preschool also offers STEAM and Studio Arts enrichment programs on Friday mornings. Children must be 3 years of age by September 1 and bathroom independent.

Parishioner priority registration for the 2019/20 school year begins January 24, 2019. For more information about the preschool please reach out to Kristine Osmond, preschool director, at preschool@stmarksglenellyn.org or 630-858-1020 ext. 234.

Christmas Offering

Your Name: ________________________________

In Memory of: __________________________________________
_________________________ _________________________

In Thanksgiving for: __________________________________________
_________________________ _________________________

Place this form in the enclosed envelope with your cash/check or bring it to the church office.

All submissions received by Monday, December 17
will be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletins.
How are the hymns selected for each service?

Daniel Segner
Director of Music
musicdirector@stmarksglenellyn.org

Before I answer one of my most commonly asked questions, I would like to take you through a quick, basic tutorial of the Hymnal 1982. Our hymnal is in 2 parts: the Service Music (labeled with an “S” followed by the number) and the Hymns (labeled simply with a number). Typically, I copy the service music hymns with their numbers into the bulletin so that our parishioners do not have to hunt for these short supplementary pieces. At the end of our hymnal are profoundly useful resources that I hope all who read this could benefit: The Indexes. There are 6 sections to the indexes, which are the (1) copyright acknowledgments for the service music and hymns, (2) the authors, translators, and sources, (3) composers, arrangers, and sources for the service music, (4) composers, arrangers, and sources for the hymns, (5) the index of tune names, and (6) the index of first lines.

The last two sections (tune names and first lines) are your most useful tool. The title of a hymn is by the tune name, not by the first line as most people assume. In other hymnals, the “first-line-as-the-title” is used but can be confusing when the tune is used for a different text. Here’s the thing: what makes hymns unique are their poetic (read: musical) meters. Every hymn has a metrical label that can be found at the end of a hymn. Typically, you’ll see things like CMD, 87. 87, 8.8.8.8, 76. 76. D, etc. The reason that these are important is that, in general, you can set any text with these meters with any tune that contains the same meter. Therefore, listing hymn titles with text name does not really represent the spirit of hymn-writing, which is that the tune comes first, appropriate poetic text added second. In that way, our hymnal separates the hymns into general topics that can be found opposite the number of the hymn. Sections include topics like “The Kingdom of God”, Christian Responsibility”, Jesus Christ Our Lord”, and more specific sections like “Christmas”, “Epiphany”, and “Lent”.

In selecting hymns, the first thing to do is to read and reflect on the scripture readings in the lectionary cycle. Sometimes, hymns are adaptations or even word-for-word settings of the text in hymn form (refer to the “composers, arrangers, and sources” in the index).
and can be a good starting point for choosing the other hymns. Additionally, there are resources available to church musicians that contain hymns and service music most commonly selected based on the texts and collects for the appointed day. At the beginning of the service, I typically select more commonly known hymns that encourage musical participation in the service and are appropriate for the scripture references and the church season. During communion, I pick hymns that center around communion, the sacrifice and promise of the Eucharist, the forgiveness of sins, and, as always, hymns that reflect the scriptures of the day. Finally, the closing hymn I use as an opportunity to summarize the service’s key points or provide a prayer of encouragement/purpose that can be carried in the hearts of the congregation. For bonus points, I try to pick a hymn that will become stuck in your heads—as a way to carry the service with you throughout your week.

The real work of selecting hymns comes from the over-arching musical tone of the service and the accessibility of the hymns for our congregation. There are some extremely difficult hymns to sing in our hymnal, and others that lack both musical and textual substance. When selecting hymns, it makes more sense for them to all be related in some fashion—whether that be by text, compositional style, musical mode (major, minor, etc.), or length. However, you don’t want only one of those criteria to be the reason you pick a hymn. When you order the lobster meal, there are certain sides and flavors you would expect. You wouldn’t mix lobster with skittles and you shouldn’t do that to your hymns either. The standard at St. Mark’s is for every musical element in the service to be related through text, musical style, and accessibility. Every musical element is thoughtfully considered and assigned for each week so that it works complimentary to the service. Liturgical music is a vital aspect of the worship experience and for there to be a disconnect between the music and the service could greatly detract from both. There will be hymns that you don’t like, just like there will be scripture readings (and sermons) you won’t like. Nevertheless, you can rest assured that the music chosen for each service is carefully selected to support the worship experience and prepared thoughtfully to the glory of God.
2019 Giving Campaign Progress Report

Please prayerfully consider your support for St. Mark's for the coming year. A pledge card has been mailed to your home for you to complete and return to St. Mark’s. Your generosity makes it possible for St. Mark's to serve you and our community with the message of Christ's love for all people through worship, faith formation, prayer, education, outreach, and always a warm welcome.

Visit the St. Mark's Web Site for Resources on Giving
Pledge online or email the treasurer at treasurer@stmarksglenellyn.org.

ST. MARK’S 2019 GIVING CAMPAIGN
Rooted • Growing • Branching
Together
# Upcoming Events

**Sunday, December 9**  
St. Nicholas Event  
11:45 am and 12:15 pm

**Wednesday, December 12**  
Women’s Ornament Exchange  
Taback House  
7:00 pm—9:30 pm

**Sunday, December 16**  
Christmas Pageant  
10:30 am  
Lessons and Carols  
7:00 pm—8:30 pm

**Sunday, December 23**  
Carol Sing Along & Organ Concert  
7:00 pm

**Monday, December 24**  
Christmas Eve  
Services at 3:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 8:00 pm, and 10:00 pm

**Tuesday, December 25**  
Christmas Day  
11:00 am service

**Saturday, January 6**  
Twelfth Night Cabaret  
7:00 pm

**Sunday, January 21**  
Annual Meeting and Cake Auction  
11:45 am

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The St. Mark’s PADS team is looking for winter clothing, socks, and **boot donations**. Please leave the donated items in the PADS collection bin located in the hallway outside of the library. We are also looking for additional food donors. If you have questions or would like to help our PADS team please contact David Dornblaser at david@shelterforall.org or 630-215-7999.
Christmas Eve Service Times

3:00 pm  5:00 pm  8:00 pm  10:00 pm

Nursery available at the 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm services

Christmas Morning Service

11:00 am