



# SAINT MARK

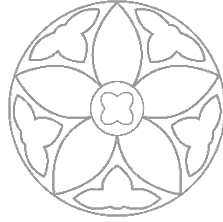
## UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

God's Grace Transforming Lives

**Sunday, September 17, 2023**  
**Eleven O'clock**

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost





## **11 AM Morning Worship**

*\*You are invited to stand as you are able in body and spirit.*

### **The Gathering**

#### Words of Welcome and Grace

We welcome each of you to this service! No matter who you are or where you are from, you are a child of God, and you are welcome here!

#### Prelude

**Recit de Tierce en Taille**

**Nicholas D'Grigny**

#### \*The Call to Worship

One: Today we come with our hopes and our fears.

**All: We come to God who cares for us.**

One: We come with the doubts and uncertainties that are stirring within us.

**All: We come knowing God is our constant and unchanging Friend.**

One: We come with all we have to lay before the Source of our grounding.

**All: We come trusting in God's divine grace.**

### **Praise and Thanksgiving**

#### \*Hymn of Praise

**UMH No. 77 | How Great Thou Art**

\*Prayer of Confession & Pardon

**All: Ever-present and faithful God, you promise never to leave us or to forsake us. You give us the assurance of your presence through the gift of your Holy Spirit, who confirms your love in our hearts. Yet so often we forget you are with us, allowing fear to dictate our responses to the daily cares of life. Forgive us we pray. Remind us of your constant presence, and give us your grace to trust that you are with us.**

One: Hear the good news: God is with us, now and to the end of the ages. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

**All: In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.**

\*Gloria Patri

**Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, Three in One: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.**

\*The Passing of the Peace

One: The Peace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, be with you.

**All: And also, with you.**

*Let us offer each other signs of peace, reconciliation, and love.*

Concerns and Celebrations of the Congregation

Pastoral Prayer & The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father (God), who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

# Proclamation of God's Word

Invitation to the Offertory & Offertory Prayer

Anthem

**Be Not Afraid**

**Craig Courtney**

*Be not afraid for I have redeemed you. Be not afraid, I have called you by name. When you pass through the waters I will be with you; when you pass through the floods, they will not sweep o'er you; when you walk through the fire, you will not be consumed. You are mine; you are precious in my sight. My love for you is everlasting, my love for you shall have no end.*

\*Doxology

**UMH No. 95 | Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures here below, Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Creator, Son, and Holy Ghost! Amen.**

The Scripture Lesson

**Romans 14:1-12**

One: The Word of God for the people of God.

**All: Thanks be to God!**

\*Hymn of Preparation

**UMH No. 526 | What a Friend We Have in Jesus**

\*The Gospel Lesson

**John 14: 1-4; 25-29**

One: The Gospel of Our Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God!**

Sermon

**Life Hack Series: How to Overcome Fear**

## **Response to God's Word**

\*Affirmation of Faith

### **The Apostles' Creed**

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic\* church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

\* universal

## **Sending Forth**

\*Hymn of Dedication

**UMH No. 377 | It Is Well With My Soul**

\*Benediction

Postlude

**Song of Joy**

**Jean Langlais**

## **We Welcome You**

*As a United Methodist Church, we are proud to be a congregation with open hearts, open minds, and open doors. We strive to be a congregation that embodies God's absolute love and hospitality, proclaiming Jesus as our savior and as our model of the ultimate embodiment of God's love. We believe that all persons are of sacred worth and dignity as part of God's good creation. Saint Mark United Methodist Church welcomes all persons into the full life and ministry of our congregation, regardless of race, culture, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, family, or socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability, or faith history.*

## **Worship Team**

**Preaching:** Rev. Dr. Carolyn Stephens, *Senior Pastor*

**Liturgists:** Aaron Groves, *Lay Member*

Meagan Williams, *Assistant to the Pastor of Youth and Young Adults*

**Music:** Jon Easter, *Director of Fine Arts and Organist*

**Audio Visual:** Johnny Sims, *Coordinator of Online Ministry*, Jay Drew, Deana Hilton, Eric Steverson, and Julie Tootle

**Usher Team:** Buddy Wofford, *Head Usher*, Joel Black, Bob Brown, Deana Hilton, and Yin Xu-Moore

**Greeter Team:** Chip DuPont and Luke Murphy

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### **Attendance**

Please sign the attendance pad located at the end of your row or scan this QR code to register your attendance and share prayer requests using our online Connection Card.

## **Tithes & Offerings**

Please place your offering in the plate during this morning's service, or use the Secure Giving App, or Saint Mark's assigned number for text donations is 844-703-1444 and the keyword is 'operating'. To give via text, text the word 'operating', a space, and the amount you would like to give. For example, to give \$25, text 844-703-1444 operating 25. Your generosity allows us to love, accept and serve the people of our community.

## **We Invite You to Stay Connected with Saint Mark**

Visit [www.stmarkumc.org](http://www.stmarkumc.org) and subscribe to the newsletter on the homepage. We send our Remarks newsletter every Wednesday, a message from our Senior Pastor every Friday, and a Sunday Morning at Saint Mark email.



### **Wednesday Night Fellowship | September 20 | 5:30 PM Low County Boil**

Includes Boiled Shrimp, Sausage, Corn, and Red Potatoes  
All dinners include an assortment of salads, desserts and iced tea.  
Cost is \$11 per person. \$10 for seniors 65 and over.

Make your reservations now for Wednesday Night Dinners.

<https://forms.office.com/r/29Xbv198wy> or email **Robert** in the Church Office at [RJGileo@stmarkumc.org](mailto:RJGileo@stmarkumc.org).

### **Congregation Listening Sessions**

Pastor Carolyn and members of the Church Council will be hosting listening sessions with the congregation in the coming weeks

The first two will be held today and Sunday, September 24, at 12:15pm, following the 11am service. Both sessions will be held in the chapel.

The sessions are open to 20 persons per gathering, to permit the time needed to answer the questions asked.

<https://forms.office.com/r/3uLaYmUVXy>



### **AIDS Walk Atlanta**

Saint Mark's own Church Treasurer, Joel Black, will be walking in the AIDS Walk this year. Help support Joel's fundraising efforts. He will match your contribution dollar for dollar.

<https://tinyurl.com/2p8kwksa>



### **PRIDE T-Shirts**

Buy your 2023 Saint Mark Pride T-shirt online.

**Today is the last day to order with guaranteed arrival before PRIDE.**

<https://www.bonfire.com/saint-mark-umc-pride-2023/>





### **Don Schoner's Celebration of Life**

On Saturday, September 30, 2023 at 1 PM, please join Don's husband, **Bobby Strickland**, for a time of celebration here at Saint Mark UMC. Wear comfortable clothes and fun colors. There's no minister, no formal program. There will be an open mic and you are welcome to share a favorite story with the group, but it's totally up to you. Bobby will be facilitating the celebration. He will be speaking from his heart, and hopes you do the same. We will be together for two hours.

### **Hispanic Heritage Month**

Bienvenido familia de la iglesia de San Marcos. Welcome, Saint Mark family.

We will be celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month, spanning Sept. 15 to Oct. 15. Hispanic Heritage Month's purpose is not only designated for celebrating the accomplishments of famous Hispanic figures; it is designed to celebrate all the Hispanic people in the world, no matter how large or small their contributions are.

Celebrating cultural and social icons like Frida Kahlo and Cesar Chavez, but also our own members like **Noelia (aka Noey) Barrera-Disler, Lily Berrios**, and former member **Harvey Oaxaca**. Hispanic Heritage Month encourages people to recognize diversity and practice inclusivity. During the Hispanic Heritage month, we will share more information on the culture and contribution of certain Hispanic icons and events to attend.

We would also like to hear from members who identify as Hispanic. Please email **Noelia (aka Noey) Barrera Disler** at [bdfamily99@gmail.com](mailto:bdfamily99@gmail.com).

Gracias por celebrar el mes de Herencia Hispana. Thank you celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month.





## **An Evening with Thressa Gardner Price**

<https://www.stmarkumc.org/an-evening-with-thressa>

Saturday, September 30, 2023 | 6:30 PM | Wade Hall

Reception with Heavy Hors D'oeuvres at 6:30pm

Concert starts at 7:00pm

Catered by Chef MK Durand

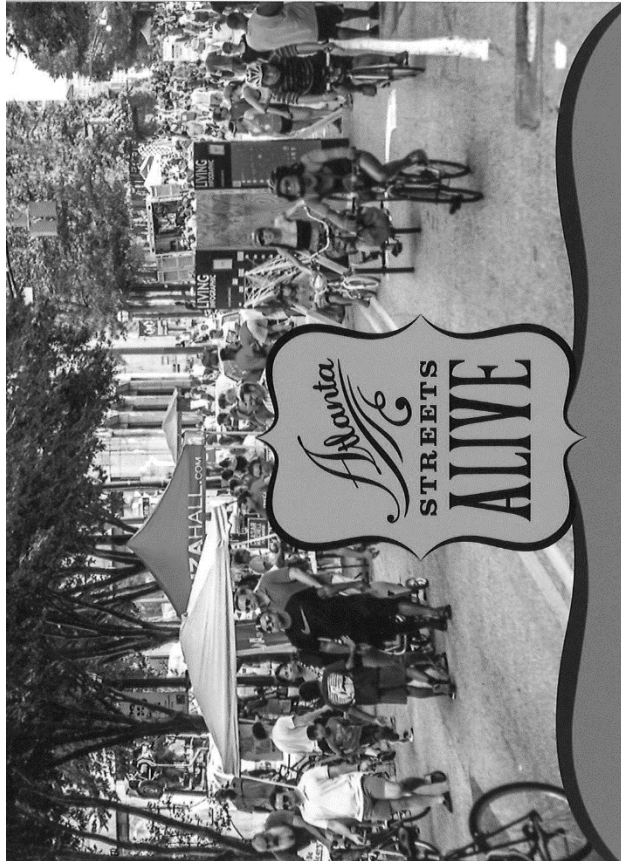
### **About Thressa Gardner Price**

Thressa is a classically trained vocalist, having attended Georgia State University where she obtained a bachelor's degree in Music Education and a Master's Degree in Music Vocal Performance. She was a vocal student of the famed Contralto Florence Kopleff (1924-2012) during her undergraduate years from 2001 to 2003. She sings everything from Opera to Rock, Jazz to Pop. She has performed several roles, including Carmen in the same titled opera, Baba/Madame Flora in the Medium, Susanna Walcott in The Crucible, Singer#3 in Transformations, and The Mother in The Consul. Thressa has performed many oratorios with local churches and other organizations, including Fauré's Requiem, Handel's Messiah, Beethoven's Mass in C, Vivaldi's Gloria, Durafle's Requiem, and Bach's St. John Passion.

While at Georgia State University, Thressa attended the summer programs in 2002 and 2008, performing with Mezzo-Soprano Denyce Graves in 2008. She completed 2 recitals while at Georgia State University, one in 2002 for her Undergraduate requirement, and one in 2011 for her Graduate requirement. Her Graduate recital included original compositions by Dr. Sharon J. Willis from the operas Pink Lady and The Great Divide.

Thressa also plays the piano and writes, penning various plays, short stories, and vocal arrangements. She began her staff singing career with St. Mark United Methodist Church in 2004 until 2009, and she assisted with worship at Buckhead Baptist Church as a staff singer from 2012 until May 2015.

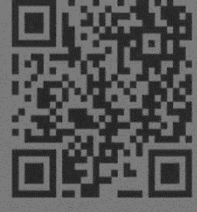
Currently, she is a staff singer at Peachtree Road United Methodist Church under the baton of Scott Atchison, and does special performances with Spirit and Truth Sanctuary choirs, in addition to private functions: weddings, receptions, and corporate gatherings.



# SUNDAYS FALL 2023

SEPT 24 ★ OCT 22 ★ NOV 12  
\*TENTATIVE\*

More info at  
[AtlantaStreetsAlive.org](https://AtlantaStreetsAlive.org)



**1PM to 5PM**

FREE & FAMILY-FRIENDLY

CAR-FREE STREETS

TO WALK, BIKE, ROLL & PLAY  
STREET CLOSURE: 11AM - 6PM

PEACHTREE STREET: FROM MITCHELL ST SW TO 15TH ST NE

## SUNDAYS FALL 2023

ROUTE CAR CROSSING MARTA



An initiative of the Atlanta Department of Transportation with support from Propel ATL and the Atlanta community  
[AtlantaStreetsAlive.org](https://AtlantaStreetsAlive.org) #AtlantaStreetsAlive



**SAINT MARK**  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Dr. Carolyn A. Stephens | Senior Pastor

Dear Saint Mark Family,

I write this note to answer a few questions and reaffirm my position and the Conference's support for Saint Mark.

A few persons have shared that they are unfamiliar with the proceedings of the denomination and want to know what is General Conference, and if the discriminatory language in United Methodist Book of Discipline will be changed.

The General Conference is the only body that can set official rules and speak for the denomination. General Conference usually meets every four years. The next one will be from April 23 to May 3, 2024, in Charlotte, North Carolina.

One of the issues we at Saint Mark are hoping that will be addressed at General Conference next year is for the removal of the discriminatory language against the LGBTQIA+ community from our Book of Discipline. While The United Methodist Church affirms that all people are of sacred worth and are equally valuable in the sight of God, the discriminatory language, which was added to the Book of Discipline in 1972, prevents members of the LGBTQIA+ community who are "self-avowed, practicing homosexuals" from being ordained in the denomination, to be married in our church, and United Methodist Clergy to officiate same-sex weddings. It is only by the General Conference can the discriminatory language be removed from the Book of Discipline.

We are hoping that there will be proposals to remove this language from the Book of Discipline, and that they will pass. We do not know what the outcome will be at this point, but we are hoping it will be what has been long awaited.

Let me reaffirm my position. I support full inclusion in our denomination. I fully support you, Saint Mark. I love you. I love serving you and doing ministry with you and alongside you, and I am here for you. As I have told you before, you are beloved children of God, made in the image of God. You belong here at Saint Mark and in the United Methodist Church. Saint Mark will always be your home and you will always be welcomed here. Saint Mark is still active because of you, the LGBTQIA+ community, and we will continue opening the doors of this church to you and to the many others who will come.

A member shared with me recently that there might be some fear creeping in because we are seeing change with the new faces coming here, and change can be scary. Yes, change can be scary, but please know that as we are growing and new members are coming, it does not mean that the LGBTQIA+ community will no longer have a place at Saint Mark. Let me be clear, you are loved, and this is your home and will always be your home.

Let me also reaffirm the Conference support for Saint Mark. I have had the full support of both Bishop Sue and Bishop Dease for Saint Mark. They have repeatedly expressed their support for our church. When I was appointed here, and I asked Bishop Sue about my appointment, on two different occasions she gave me the same answer: "I wanted someone who would truly love that congregation, so I prayed and the Lord placed you on my heart." She has also shared that with some of the members here at Saint Mark.

Bishop Sue came as our guest preacher at Pride Sunday last year. She walked the parade with us and expressed her gratitude for the invitation to preach. You may not know that she was severely criticized for preaching at Saint Mark that day. She was called a liar online, even as she was preaching. She was trolled and accused of twisting the gospel. We both received emails and letters harshly criticizing us, but she received far more.

Bishop Dease has also expressed her position of support for full inclusion in the denomination, and she shared it openly when she was nominated as a candidate for bishop. Although she is relatively new to our Conference, and we are still getting to know her, she has already made it clear that she is fully supportive of Saint Mark.

I have shared multiple times that my office door is always open, and I welcome members to come in and talk with me. If you are uncertain about something, or if you have a question, please feel free to stop by the office or call me. I would love to hear from you and answer any question you may have. If I do not know the answer, I will ask others who may know and get back to you. Please come.

Saint Mark, I love you and I fully support you, and I am here for you.

In Christ's love,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Carolyn", with several horizontal lines extending to the right.

Pastor Carolyn.

