

December 21, 2025

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF Saint Mark

1505 Kempsville Rd. • Virginia Beach, VA 23464-7201
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✠ Catholics are encouraged to make pilgrimages to their local cathedral during the 2025 Jubilee year.

✠ Bishop Barry C. Knestout has named four churches in the diocese as pilgrimage sites for the Jubilee Year 2025:

1. The Basilica of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Norfolk
2. The Cathedral of the Sacred Heart
3. The Basilica of St. Andrew, Roanoke Parish Pilgrimage: Dec. 13, 2025
4. The National Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, Williamsburg

E- Giving



4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.
- Mt 1:24

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD. ©LPI

MASS SCHEDULE:

**Saturday: 5:30pm/ Sunday at 8:30am and 10:30am/
Tuesday and Thursday at 8:30am/
Wednesday at 7:00pm**

Bulletin Publication date:
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“Rooted in the Word...”

This Week at Saint Mark December 22 - December 28, 2025

MONDAY	
10-1:00pm	Food Pantry/ Great Hall
7:15pm	OCIA Christian Formation/Conference Room
TUESDAY	
8:30am	Daily Mass/Daily Chapel
2:00pm	Daughters of Fatima Prayer Group/DC
WEDNESDAY	
3:30pm	<i>The First Noel, The Birth of Our Savior/S</i>
4:00pm	Nativity of the Lord Mass (Christmas Eve)/S
7:00pm	Nativity of the Lord Mass (Christmas Eve)/S
10:00pm	Nativity of the Lord Mass (Christmas Eve)/S
THURSDAY	
8:00am	Christmas Day Mass/ Sanctuary
10:30am	Christmas Day Mass/ Sanctuary
FRIDAY	
SATURDAY	
5:30pm	Mass/ Sanctuary
SUNDAY	Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus
8:30am	Mass/ Sanctuary
10:30am	Mass/ Sanctuary with Face Book Livestream
	*No Formation



CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES
Wednesday, December 24, 2025
4:00 p.m. Children's Mass and 7:00 p.m. Vigil Mass and 10 p.m. Midnight Mass

CHRISTMAS DAY MASSES
Thursday, December 25, 2025
Mass at 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.



Wisdom Seekers group monthly luncheons (2nd Friday of the month) for parishioners and friends 50+ years of age. The next luncheon on Friday, **January 9th, 12 pm** will be offsite at **Rib City-BBQ and Ribs Restaurant** (self-pay), 4688 Princess Anne Rd. VA Beach. **Please RSVP** Mary Shaw (757) 348-4460 by January 5th if you plan to attend.

Daily Readings

MONDAY	
12/22	1 Samuel 1:24-28; Luke 1:46-56
TUESDAY	
12/23	Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24; Luke 1:57-66
	Lori Thompson †
	Judith Lancaon †
	Elvira Rosario †
WEDNESDAY	Nativity of the Lord during the Night (Christmas Eve)
12/24	Isaiah 9:1-6; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14
	Onofre and Maria Aquino †
	Bobbi Drewiske †
THURSDAY	Nativity of the Lord (Christmas Day)
12/25	Isaiah 52:7-10; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-18
	Emmanuella Izuegbunam (special birthday intention)
FRIDAY	Feast of St. Stephen, First Martyr
12/26	Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Matthew 10:17-22
SATURDAY	Feast of St. John, Apostle, Evangelist
12/27	1 John 1:1-4; John 20:1a and 2-8
SUNDAY	Feast of Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
12/28	Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14; Colossians 3:12-21; Mt 2:13-15, 19-23
	Christina Perez †, Elvira Rosario †
	Frank Ndaya †, Jill Charlton †



Kathy Seddon, Don Coons, Dana Reid, Merla Marcelo, Henrietta Mayr, Creed Clawson, Jayme Oliveira Filho, Louisa Morrison, Maribeth Baumgartner, Dare O'Ravitz, Joy Lepere, Angie Hudson, Caroline Padilla, Gigliola Kamp-Casto, Erlinda Mariado, Lorraine Stambaugh, Susan Colonna, Lexie Murray, Adriane Pennington, Rosendo Ibanez, Reynaldo Francisco, Annora Steiner, Julie Bellinger, Chandler Brewer, Val Kandis, Jay Davis, Olivia Wiggins, Armida Valmeo, Nikolas Pakkidis, Jeremiah Macaraeg, Sarada Kapuwatte, Connie Blanco, Ryan Steele, Paul Caddies

Ministry to the Sick or Homebound: If you know someone who cannot attend Mass or desires a visit or the Sacrament of Anointing, call the Office at 757-479-1010.

Samaritan Ministry: Volunteers visit the sick and those unable to get to mass. Training will be provided. If you would like to be a Samaritan Ministry volunteer, or to receive a visit from a Samaritan Ministry volunteer, contact Ann Marie Cochran at

“Nourished by the Sacraments”

A Reflection on Fourth Sunday in Advent and Nativity of the Lord

From Fr. Eric Asamoah

As we gather on this fourth Sunday of Advent, we find ourselves at the threshold of Christmas, reflecting on the profound mystery of Incarnation. The mood of the liturgy thus shifts from the intense calls to conversion to a focus on the events immediately surrounding the birth of Jesus. Hence, readings of today invite us to contemplate on the significance of God coming into our midst as Emmanuel, **“God with us.”**

Isaiah in the first reading prophesies to King Ahaz during a time of crisis around 739 and 686 B.C; *“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’”* But King Ahaz will not trust in God’s providence.

Ahaz became king of Judah at 20 and had disrespected God by worshipping on mountains instead of in the temple. During his reign there was a lot of instability. The Assyrian Empire whose capital was Nineveh had advanced to new heights, causing the entire region west of Mesopotamia to fight or pay tribute. The kings of Syria and Israel joined forces to stop the advance of Assyria. When king of Judah, Ahaz would not join their alliance, those two kings sought ways to replace Ahaz, with an Aramean man named Tabeel.

Ahaz sought to rescue himself from this threat by appealing to Assyria’s King, even giving him portions of the temple treasury. So, Ahaz was in a lot of trouble. On the one hand two kingdoms are conspiring to unseat him, and on the other he has sold out to an enemy and used “Church” funds for the bribe. And at this troubled time the Lord is saying to Ahaz, ask me for a sign, I want to prove my faithfulness to you.

Ahaz is wanting to sound pious, so he says, **“I will not ask, I will not put the Lord to the test”**. Although we hear him quote the Scriptures, he was rather better at quoting scripture, than trying to live its demands. God who is all faithful responds saying, I will give a sign; *“Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name ‘Emmanuel,’ which means ‘God is with us.’* Then immediately St. Matthew

cites this angel’s instruction to St Joseph in today’s Gospel as the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy, *“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’”*

The angel tells Joseph to name the son, Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. The Hebrew name **“Jesus,”** (actually “Yeshua”) means **“God saves”**. So, Jesus, who will save us from our sins, is connected to the promise that **God is with us**. Because the child Jesus was God Himself. We need this God among us as the sign of His love and salvation for us.

It is interesting that Jesus was born in a city that was called the “House of bread” (Bethlehem) and Mary laid Jesus in a manger, which is not just a stable, but rather a trough where animals would eat. We come for Christmas mass not only to pay homage to God in the flesh of Jesus Christ but also to eat His body and blood which nourishes our souls. And this food is called among us *Eucharistia*, (the Eucharist). It is this bread of the Eucharist that gives us the power to become children of God, Jn 1:10, Jn 6: 54.

Christmas means God’s presence made real in Christ. At every Christmas, this presence is celebrated as ‘Emmanuel’ – God is with us by the Church. We must always remember that God is faithful, God remains Emmanuel, **“God with us”** and, I would say, **God is with-in us**.

This reminds us that God does not abandon us in our struggles; rather, He enters our lives, sharing in our joy and sorrows. Yes, *‘The people that lived in darkness have seen a great light... For a child has been born for us and a son is given’*, Is 9: 1 – 7.

May we take advantage of this year’s Christmas as a moment of reconciliation with God and neighbor, exchange of gifts and visits, making new friends and reconnecting with old ones and generally spreading the light of Christ. May all have a




Thanks to all who joined us for Family Formation Night and our Brunch with St. Nicholas Dec 6th. It was a beautiful time together, filled with joy, community, and meaningful reminders of the true purpose of Advent. We extend special thanks to St. Nicholas for visiting our children of St. Mark, spending time with our families, and reading a book that shared his story. Your participation made our day truly memorable and grace-filled.

"Building the Kingdom of God by Imaging Christ"

Justice Peace

For information on our Justice & Peace Ministries visit:
www.stmark-parish.org/ministries/justice-and-peace, or email:
justiceandpeace@stmark-parish.org

 **December:** 19-30 oz. Plastic Jar Grape Jelly/ \$5 McDonalds Gift card/ Snack Pk Cookies/Crackers



Christmas Giving Tree: Thank you to all who donated to our Holiday meals and our Giving Tree. We are so very blessed.

Through your generosity we were able to provide 300+ toys to families in need, gift cards for Christmas gifts and cards to purchase a Christmas meal for 125 families including our own parish families in need, Catholic Charities, Samaritan House, Refugee resettlement, Department of Human Services, Jewish Family Services and Seton Youth shelters. **THANK YOU** for being the heart and hands of our Lord Jesus Christ for those in need.



We warmly welcome all who have come today to celebrate this glorious feast.

We welcome the stranger, the traveler and guest!

We welcome our students' home from college for a good winter's rest!

We welcome parishioners who have moved far away but join us today as old friends and guests!

We welcome all who have not been active of late in their Catholic faith; and hope they will find new hope and inspiration this Christmas to come back again and again!

We welcome our faithful parishioners, loyal and true; may the Lord bless you for all you do!

Welcome to all! May our gathering this day gladden our hearts and deepen our bonds.

We are after all one People of God, redeemed by the Light. May we walk by the Light and live by the Light, together in love.

To all who volunteered, donated, participated, and prayed with and for our St. Mark Justice & Peace ministry this past year we **THANK YOU!** We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and pray all are blessed with the joy and peace of our newborn Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Christmas Blessings!



Parish Life

"I am the vine, you are the branches."

Upcoming Parish Life Events and Announcements

- Parish Life will host a Christmas Season Wine & Cheese Social on Saturday, January 3rd after the 5:30 mass. If you plan to attend, please sign up at the Parish Life table by January 1st. All are welcome! POC is Linda Major 757-615-0763.

- Marriage is a reason and a season to celebrate! Parish Life is keeping a compiled record of anniversaries in our parish. If you have not yet recorded your anniversary, please stop by the Parish Life table in the Great Hall and add your special day to the Anniversary Booklet. Anniversaries are posted on the Parish Life Bulletin Board each month.

Happy Anniversary to the following St. Mark parishioners celebrating a December wedding anniversary this week!

Manuel and Cristina Figuaroa - Dec. 22, 2009 (16 years)

Stephen and Genevieve Eirich - Dec. 23, 1967 (58 years)

Witold and Karina Turkiewicz - Dec. 28, 1990 (35 years)



Congratulations to the Larson, Perk and Sayers and families who celebrated the Sacrament of Baptism for their children at St. Mark on December 6th and 7th. Please pray God's blessings for these children and their families as they begin their new lives in Christ. Glory to God.

Announcements/ Giving/ Contact Information



If you currently do not give online, but would like to be an online contributor, please sign up at: giving.parishsoft.com/app/giving/stmarkvb or donate on the Parish Giving QR code.



For more details or to donate, contact Parish Bookkeeper, MaryEllen Cussen, at bookkeeper@stmark-parish.org or call the parish office

Fiscal Year July-June	November 30	Needed Year to Date New Fiscal Year	Offertory Year to Date	Excess/ (Short)
Offertory	\$18,600	\$415,500	\$414,900	(\$600)

Family Count: 791

Families using envelopes: 175

Families using online donation: 218

Thanks to all who participated in the “Simbang Gabi” Mass and reception at St. Mark on December 20th, one of nine Masses traditionally held at dawn leading up to Christmas. Always present at Simbang Gabi Masses is the Nativity scene, displayed in preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. The St. Mark Nativity above shows baby Jesus in a manger with Mother Mary and St. Joseph. Together with a shepherd and some sheep, three wise men are represented as they carry gifts to the infant Jesus and the star of Bethlehem that guided them in their journey.



Special thanks to those who participated in the crowning of the Blessed Virgin Mary, paying homage with offerings of beautiful winter flowers and prayers for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception at St. Mark on Monday, December 8th.



The fourth candle, another purple one, symbolizes **PEACE**. Christ is called the Prince of Peace, and His coming brings true peace to our hearts and to the world. As we light this candle, we think about how Jesus' peace can be part of our lives. We ask God to help us bring peace to others, too.



PARISH STAFF

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 Renee McCroskey.....Nursery Supervisor
 Hank Harzold.....Parish Council Chairman
 Tom SmithCustodian
 William McMican.....Finance Council Chairman

RELIGIOUS FORMATION STAFF

Fe Guzman.....Director of Religious Formation/Youth Minister
 Nicole Brimer.....Coordinator of Religious Formation

RELIGIOUS FORMATION OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Thursday 9:00a.m. – 3:00p.m. Sunday 9:00a.m. - 2:00p.m.