

**Holy Eucharist, Rite II,**  
**The Third Sunday in Lent, March 7, 2021**

*The Celebrant and LEM stand, maintaining physical distance. There is no procession.*

**Opening Rites**

Celebrant: Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins,

LEM: *The mercy of the Lord endures forever.*

Celebrant: Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Celebrant: Lord have mercy.

LEM: *Christ have mercy.*

Celebrant: Lord have mercy.

**Opening Hymn: God himself is with us**

**The Hymnal 1982, # 475**

God himself is with us;

Let us all adore him, and with awe appear before him.

God is here within us;

Soul in silence fear him, humbly, fervently, draw near Him.

Now his own, who have known God,

In worship lowly, yield our spirits wholly.

Thou pervadest all things;  
Let thy radiant beauty light mine eyes to see my duty.  
As the tender flowers  
Eagerly unfold them, to the sunlight Calmly hold them,  
So let me quietly  
In thy rays imbue me, let thy light shine through me.

### **The Collect of the Day**

Celebrant: The Lord be with you,

LEM: *And also with you.*

Celebrant: Let us pray.

*The Celebrant says the Collect.*

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

### **The Lessons<sup>1</sup>**

#### **The Old Testament Lesson**

Exodus 20:1-17

<sup>1</sup>Then God spoke all these words:

<sup>2</sup>I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; <sup>3</sup>you shall have no other gods before me.

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<sup>1</sup> The readings are from the Revised Common Lectionary. See: <https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/>.

The table for readings in Year B (Lent) may be found here:

<https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/lections.php?year=B&season=Lent>

<sup>4</sup>You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup>You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, <sup>6</sup>but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

<sup>7</sup>You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

<sup>8</sup>Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. <sup>9</sup>Six days you shall labor and do all your work. <sup>10</sup>But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work — you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. <sup>11</sup>For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

<sup>12</sup>Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

<sup>13</sup>You shall not murder.

<sup>14</sup>You shall not commit adultery.

<sup>15</sup>You shall not steal.

<sup>16</sup>You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

<sup>17</sup>You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

LEM:           *The Word of the Lord.*

Celebrant:   Thanks be to God.

**Psalm of the Day**

Psalm 19

<sup>1</sup>The heavens tell of the glory of God;  
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

<sup>2</sup>Day to day pours forth speech,  
and night to night declares knowledge.

<sup>3</sup>There is no speech, nor are there words;  
their voice is not heard;

<sup>4</sup>yet their voice goes out through all the earth,  
and their words to the end of the world.

In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,  
<sup>5</sup>which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy,  
and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

<sup>6</sup>Its rising is from the end of the heavens,  
and its circuit to the end of them;  
and nothing is hid from its heat.

<sup>7</sup>The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul;  
the decrees of the LORD are sure, making wise the simple;  
<sup>8</sup>the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;  
the commandment of the LORD is clear, enlightening the eyes;  
<sup>9</sup>the fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever;  
the ordinances of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

<sup>10</sup>More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold;  
sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb.

<sup>11</sup>Moreover by them is your servant warned;  
in keeping them there is great reward.

<sup>12</sup>Who can detect their flaws?  
Clear me from hidden faults.

<sup>13</sup>Keep back your servant also from the insolent;  
do not let them have dominion over me.  
Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.  
<sup>14</sup>Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart  
be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. *Amen.*

## **The New Testament Lesson**

I Corinthians 1:18-25

<sup>18</sup>For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup>For it is written,

”I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

<sup>20</sup>Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup>For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup>For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.

LEM:        *The Word of the Lord.*

Celebrant: Thanks be to God.

**Gradual Hymn: Creator of earth and skies**

**The Hymnal 1982, # 148**

Creator of the earth and skies,  
to whom the words of life belong,  
grant us your truth to make us wise;  
grant us your power to make us strong.

We have not known you: to the skies  
our monuments of folly soar,  
and all our self-wrought miseries  
have made us trust ourselves the more.

**The Gospel**

John 2:13-25

*Then, all standing, the Deacon or a Priest reads the Gospel, first saying*

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

LEM: *Glory to you, Lord Christ.*

<sup>13</sup>The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. <sup>15</sup>Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. <sup>16</sup>He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" <sup>17</sup>His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

<sup>18</sup>The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" <sup>19</sup>Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." <sup>20</sup>The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" <sup>21</sup>But he was speaking of the temple of his body. <sup>22</sup>After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

<sup>23</sup>Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs which he did. <sup>24</sup>But Jesus did not commit himself to them, because he knew all people, <sup>25</sup>and had no need that anyone should testify of them, for he knew what was in them.

Priest: The Gospel of the Lord.

LEM: *Praise to you, Lord Christ.*

### **The Sermon: He Found People Selling...**

...and he knew what was in them. He knew what was in them all: the buyers, the sellers, the debtors, the creditors, the priests, the paupers, the faithful, the faithless, those who needed his help, those who wouldn't admit that they need his help, those who needed his wisdom, and those who needed a swift kick of his boot in the...never mind. But he knew them – oh yes, he knew them. From what we can tell, he did not like them very much, or did not much like very many of them.

What is it that Bilbo Baggins says at his eleventy-first birthday, to hobbits he's known all his life and theirs? "I don't know half of you half as well as I

should like, and like less than half of you half as well as you deserve.” Jesus might know them better and like them less. Or, as one hopes were the case, God’s only begotten looks upon his fellow, but flawed, human beings with more the mind of Shakespeare’s Hamlet. The young Danish prince had a good sense of human frailty and fallibility, not least his own, but for that very reason knew how important it was to treat people well, and not as they deserved. “Use every man after his deserts, and who should ‘scape whipping” (*Hamlet* II.ii.492-3). Instead, he tells a doddering old fool he would later murder by mistake, to “Use them after your own honor and dignity” – that is, treat them as well as you would treat yourself if you treated yourself well and deserved it (*ibid.* 493-5). “The less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty” (*ibid.* 495-6).

Shades of St. Paul, there: treat your enemies well, and show kindness to those who do you wrong. In so doing, you will heap burning coals upon their head. The tone there is rather of a southern woman saying, “Bless your heart” or Presbyterians from back home telling me they need to have a word with me “in love”. Oh, boy. So: be kinder than folks deserve, speak to them more softly than you want to, and all will be well. One catches more flies with honey than with vinegar – although vinegar is much better than honey at cleaning things up. It is what it is.

Hamlet, when he said to treat people better than they deserved, was speaking of ordinary folks – a troupe of actors, to be specific. He was not speaking of people like the moneychangers and butchers of livestock and doves in the gospel, or those whom they served – parasites profiting on the faith, poverty, and indebtedness of others, making money not for God but from God, to Jesus’s disgust. In John’s gospel, once Jesus got started

treating people according to their deserts, all who deserved it felt the sting of his leather and the lash of his tongue.

Remember that the next time someone asks you What Would Jesus Do? Whipping bad people, sheep, and cattle until they run away, and decisively impeding the business activities of exploiters, is a perfectly acceptable option.

But, you say, come on. Moneychangers and cow-sellers are people, too, just trying to make a living in a world where the living ain't easy. Where does Jesus get off getting all up and in the way of their hustle and flow?

Walk with me a bit. I'm convinced that all religions worthy of the name were invented by poets, and then appropriated by lawyers, bureaucrats, and accountants, in that order – the classic declension. What the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had become by Jesus's time, what we call Second Temple Judaism, is a good example. The First Temple, the one Solomon had people build, had been torn down by the Babylonians, its remnants used as building materials by those who did not go into exile. The Second Temple the one that the people returning from exile built, and that King Herod the Great, of all people expanded and completed starting some 46 years before Jesus stopped by to whine about it. Much as the peasantry and laborers throughout Europe worked and paid for generations to erect and then maintain the great cathedrals, the people of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee worked to build and paid to maintain the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple, a great edifice whose foundation wall, now the Wailing Wall, remains a site of sacred devotion.

Jesus didn't like it, not one bit. As far as he was concerned, whatever went on at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple was more about Herod and the priests than it was about serving God and drawing people closer to him. The religion Jesus' heavenly father had given the people way back when had become something far different than what it was meant to be.

See, the whole thing had begun way back in the deserts of Sinai, and the fleshpots of Egypt, as people tried to figure out how to live good, wholesome, holy lives to the God that made them and called them to be a people. Whatever it was to be, slavery in Egypt was not it, and lives spent wandering without a home wasn't it. No, the religion meant to have one's place in the world, to know where one belonged, and what one was to do, how to live, whom to love, and whom to serve. The people God called to be his chosen were called primarily to be a people apart, but also to have a home, and to live in that home as people of integrity and goodwill, doing not unto one another as they'd not have done unto themselves. The whole world would see that and, in awe, do likewise, seeing that when we treated each other with honor and dignity, and not according to our deserts, everyone's lives got better. The poets sang and told stories about why, and the lawyers codified how. The first ten of the 613 or so commandments laid down in the laws of Moses, which we heard read to us this morning, they found to be a good beginning, and sound foundation of how a people should live who would live well. Live according to their precepts and it should go well with you and with all who live likewise. You shall each dwell under your own vine and fig tree, grow old enough to see your children's children, and none shall want or suffer, use or be used, exploit or be exploited. No, you shall live free. Exactly how shall you live who would live

free? Well, follow God – the real God, not some idol or power you dreamt up out of your own needs or fears. Don't misrepresent that God, don't lie to people, and don't dishonor anyone. Don't take, or even want to take, what isn't yours, whether it be property, love, family, integrity, or life itself. Just don't – and if we all just don't, the world and those who live in it will be as happy and fulfilled as they can be.

We forget this to our peril. The laws of God or of any just nation are not arbitrary impositions of power, but articulations of good sense and the common good. They get their power to do good from the only place that such power can come from: the truth. What truth? The truth of the moral law written on our hearts that we must treat others as we would be treated, and work out all that that entails. We must do nothing that could not be the basis of a universal law if we want to live in a world that is free from all human wrong and can free itself from any human error or mistake. A law's power derives from its morality, and if a law is not moral, it can do no good. Thus, if a particular law does people harm when it is followed, that law must be understood as immoral, and hence no longer morally binding.

Which leads us back to that 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple Jesus loathed so much. I mean, he hated it, hated everything it stood for – I mean, not so much the building, but those who got paid by it. Why else do you think he went nonlinear so quickly in the gospel this morning? In the Gospel of John this is the second thing Jesus ever does – and the first one was to turn water into wine because the people he was partying with had drunk up all the wine. Jesus's second act is to drive out of that temple the thieves that made it run and made it seem like true religion. These people, these sellers of animals for sacrifice and traders of unclean for clean money to buy them with, as

far as Jesus was concerned, were simply thieves: stealing, to support a false religion, from those who came there seeking a true one – people who could not afford to lose what the temple demanded to get them right with God. Who gets you right with God? God gets you right with God, not this falderol – as Jesus spent his life telling them, his days showing them, and his death to prove it to them. “Tear down this temple and I will rebuild it in three days” he says, shouts, yells so that the very walls shake with it. “Go on. I dare you.”

To say it more simply: the economic exploitation and magical-religious trickery that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple embodied was no less disturbing to Jesus for being done under sanction of law. That actually made it worse.

Jesus understood, as we should, that being moral and being legal are not the same thing. Just because it's legal to, say, over-charge people for a sheep or a cow that the priests will sacrifice on your behalf and then eat the best parts of doesn't mean that it's moral. It may be legal where Jesus lived to take a life because some monarch or Roman said to, but that does not make it right, and can't. “Just following orders” conveys no moral sanction and no moral protection, as the shame they feel who would justify their acts by saying so reveals all-too plainly. It is that shame that marks the power of the moral law, the one written on our hearts and in our guts, our intuition of what is right and what is wrong – the moral law that showed a young Abraham Lincoln, as Mark Twain let it show to Huck Finn, that slavery was simply wrong, that no human being could justly own another, or the labor in another, no matter what law or legal code or social norm and practice said he could. To defy that moral law is to defy and to deny what it means to be fully human – and to rob people of their humanity, of their

dignity, of their very selves is to fall just about as deep into sin as anyone can.

Three crosses on a hill outside Jerusalem will show in a few weeks that defiance and denial, just as an empty tomb three days later will show God's final answer to it, as Paul writes to the church at Corinth he founded, in this passage we heard this morning. Precepts of wisdom, let alone precepts of law, will not reach as far down into human depravity and wrong as that cross will, those three crosses, on which die one thief repentant, one thief mocking, and one of the best people who ever lived, and whom they killed because of it. Some say he earned his trip to Golgotha that very day, Jesus did, when he turned over the moneychangers' tables and sent the livestock out to wander where it would in the city, getting in everybody's way. The wise, like the foolish, realize that the powers-that-be would not stand to see trade thwarted or rabble roused, even if the moral law demanded it and all hearts not mad cried out that he was right, you know, to do that, Jesus, right to break the power of arbitragers and debt collectors, of all parasites on society of whom the society could not rid itself nor set itself free. He had to do that, by any means necessary, even though it cost him everything. He knew what was in them, and what they deserved, and he gave it to them.

Then he lived to make them holy. Then he died to set them free.

His truth goes marching on. *Amen.*

*There is no passing of plates or reception of gifts.*

*The Deacon or Priest prepares the altar and sanctuary for the Eucharist.*

*The People make ready their gifts of bread and wine. The LEM continues*

## The Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God, begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father.  
Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:  
by the power of the Holy Spirit  
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made human.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father *and the Son*.  
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the Prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## **The Prayers of the People**

*The LEM prays. In the silence after each bidding, the People offer their prayers without speaking.*

I ask your prayers for all God's people; for our bishops, our clergy, and this gathering, and for all ministers and people. Pray for the Church.

*Silence*

I ask your prayers for peace; for goodwill among nations; and for the well-being of all. Pray for justice and peace.

*Silence*

I ask your prayers for the poor, the sick, the hungry, the oppressed, and those in prison.

Pray for those in any need or trouble.

*Silence*

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of God. Pray that they may seek, and pray that they might find.

*Silence*

I ask your prayers for the departed [*especially N.N.*]. Pray for those who have died.

*Silence*

I ask your prayers for those on the prayer list of this parish, and those whose needs are known to you alone.

*Silence*

*The Celebrant adds a concluding collect.*

## **The Peace**

*The People stand.*

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you,

LEM: *And also with you.*

*The Ministers and People greet one another in silence while keeping physical distance.*

## **The Holy Eucharist: The Great Thanksgiving**

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

LEM: *And also with you.*

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.

LEM: *We lift them to the Lord.*

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

LEM: *It is right to give God thanks and praise.*

*Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant continues*

God of might and compassion, Lord of all that is, unto you be glory and praise.

LEM: *Glory to you for ever and ever.*

By your word all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, stars, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home.

LEM: *By your will they were created and have their being.*

From water, earth, and sky you brought us into being, blessing us with memory, reason, and skill. You made us masters of creation, and creators in our turn. But we abused your trust, misused your gifts, turned against one another, and wandered far from you.

*LEM: Have mercy, Lord, for we are sinners in your sight.*

Time after time, you called us to return. Through prophets and sages you revealed your righteous will, and wrote your law upon our hearts – to no avail. Then, in the fullness of time, you sent your only begotten Son, of woman born, to open to us the way of life and salvation, the way of freedom and peace.

*LEM: By his blood, he reconciled us, by his wounds, we are healed,*

And by him we praise you, joining with the heavenly host, with prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and with all who have looked to you in hope, to proclaim your glory:

*The LEM continues*

*Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.*

*Hosanna in the highest.*

*Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.*

*Hosanna in the highest.*

*The Celebrant continues*

And now, Father, redeemed by him and made a new people by water and the Spirit, we offer you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our Lord.

*The Celebrant and People hold the elements in their various vessels. The Celebrant continues*

On the night he was betrayed, our Lord took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to his friends, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, given for you. Do this in memory of me."

After supper, he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in memory of me."

Remembering his work of redemption, and offering this sacrifice of thanksgiving,

*LEM: We celebrate his death and resurrection as we await the day of his coming.*

Lord God of our Fathers and Mothers: God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; God of Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, and Rachel; God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Open our eyes to see your hand at work in the world about us. Deliver us from the presumption of coming to this Table for solace only, and not for strength; for pardon only, and not for renewal. Let the grace of this Holy Communion make us one body, one spirit in Christ, that we may worthily serve the world in his name.

*LEM: Risen Lord, be known to us in the breaking of the Bread.*

Accept these prayers and praises, O Lord, through Jesus Christ our great High Priest, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, your Church gives honor, glory, and worship,  
from generation to generation. AMEN.

Now, as Christ taught us, we are bold to say,

*The LEM prays*

*Our Father, 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,  
for ever and ever. Amen.*

## **The Breaking of the Bread**

*The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread, and then keeps a period of silence. The Celebrant continues*

Celebrant: Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

LEM: *Therefore, let us keep the feast.*

Celebrant: The Gifts of God for the People of God.

*The People consume their gifts. After Communion, the Celebrant says*

Let us pray. *The Celebrant prays*

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **Blessing and Dismissal**

*The Celebrant says*

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you.

The Lord be with you, this day and always, and give you peace.

*The LEM says*

Let us go forth, in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

**Withdrawal Hymn: O worship the King**

**The Hymnal 1982, 388**

O worship the King, all glorious above!  
O gratefully sing his power and his love!  
Our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,  
pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise.

O tell of his might! O sing of his grace!  
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space.  
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,  
and dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

*The Celebrant, the LEM, and the People depart, maintaining physical distance.*

**St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Fairland, MD**

12621 Old Columbia Pike

Silver Spring, MD 20904

[office@stmarks-silverspring.org](mailto:office@stmarks-silverspring.org) \* 301-622-5860 ext. 1002

The Rev. Dr. Christopher Wilkins, Priest-in-Charge

[rector@stmarks-silverspring.org](mailto:rector@stmarks-silverspring.org) \* 301-622-5860 ext. 1001

Linda Lee, Parish Administrator

[administrator@stmarks-silverspring.org](mailto:administrator@stmarks-silverspring.org) \* 301-622-5860 ext. 1003

Beresford Coker, Musical Director

Joyce Walker, Administrative Assistant

Lee Mericle, Senior Warden

Rosanne Tingley, Junior Warden

For information about St. Mark's, please visit our website:

[www.stmarksfairland.org](http://www.stmarksfairland.org)

[www.stmarks-silverspring.org](http://www.stmarks-silverspring.org)

We hope that today's service has been a blessing to you.

We are here to serve you, and hope to see you again.

Please feel free to call us, email us, or visit us online.