



St. Mark Lutheran Church
Worship Bulletin
Sunday, December 21, 2025
Fourth Sunday of Advent

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God,
whose home is heaven and earth,
whose salvation is sure.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God
and of one another.

Long-expected God,

**we confess that we look to ourselves
for the peace and security only you can provide.**

**We reach for swords and spears,
reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war.**

**We become impatient while waiting
and weary of keeping awake.**

**Free us from self-reliance,
and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors.**

**Increase our trust in God's timing,
and awaken us to your advent among us,
that we may abound in the hope you have promised.**

Amen.

God judges us not as we deserve,
but according to God's own righteousness.

✚ You are freed and forgiven,
saved by grace,
and ready to welcome the Savior.

Amen.

GATHERING SONG *Fling Wide the Door* (ELW 259)

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Lighting the Advent Wreath: Advent 4

We praise you, O God, for this wheel of time
that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent.
As we light the candles on this wreath,
open our eyes to see your presence
in the lowly ones of this earth.
Enlighten us with your grace,
that we may sing of your advent among us
in the Word made flesh.
Grant this through Christ our Lord,
whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.
Amen.

ADVENT HYMN *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* – Verse 4 (ELW 257)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 7:10-16

A reading from Isaiah.

¹⁰ The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.”

¹³ Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

¹ Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

² **In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,
stir up your strength and come to help us.**

³ Restore us, O God;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.
⁴ **O LORD God of hosts,**
how long will your anger fume when your people pray?
⁵ You have fed them with the bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.
⁶ **You have made us the derision of our neighbors,**
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.
⁷ Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.
¹⁷ **Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,**
the one you have made so strong for yourself.
¹⁸ And so will we never turn away from you;
give us life, that we may call upon your name.
¹⁹ **Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;**
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-7

A reading from Romans.

¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

⁷ To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 151)

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia.

GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of

the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ “Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”

which means, “God is with us.” ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 151)

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY *That Boy-Child of Mary* (ELW 293)

CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living 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.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

In the anticipation of these days, prepare our hearts for your arrival. Stir our spirits through the gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, as together we proclaim your advent among us. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. May we meet the Christ-child we seek in the faces of our neighbors. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill (*especially*). God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your love. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

MUSICAL OFFERING

OFFERING *All Is Ready Now* (W&P 4)

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

DIALOGUE (ELW p. 152)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE (ELW p. 153)

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,
through whom you will also make all things new
in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW p. 153)

Holy, holy, holy Lord,

Lord God of pow'r and might:

Heav'n and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE (ELW p. 153)

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,
the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;

broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup
we remember your Word dwelling among us,
full of grace and truth.
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.
We look with hope for his coming.
Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit.
Come among us.
Bless this meal.
May your Word take flesh in us.
Awaken your people.
Fill us with your light.
Bring the gift of peace on earth.
Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours,
Holy One of Israel,
Word of God incarnate,
Power of the Most High,
one God, now and forever.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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,
forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Here is life. God is with us.
Come, receive what God has promised.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION SONG (LAMB OF GOD) (ELW p. 154)

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
grant us peace, grant us peace.

SONG DURING COMMUNION *What Feast of Love* (ELW 487)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.
God for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry
will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the
greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

May God who comes among us,
Father, ✚ Son, and Holy Spirit,
grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,
and good news to share today and always.
Amen.

SENDING SONG *Joy to the World* (ELW 267)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.
Thanks be to God.

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DEDICATION

The Eternal Flame Candle was given in memory of Jerry Caughlan by Bramblee Bird.

ASSISTING IN WORSHIP TODAY

PREACHER / PRESIDERThe Reverend Kevin M.B. Tracey
MUSICIANFaith Woodward
TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT Bill Caughlan/Tom Petree
LECTORBramblee Bird

THIS WEEK AT ST. MARK

Today Worship Service 10 AM
Wednesday Christmas Eve Family Service5:30 PM
Wednesday Christmas Eve Festival Service7 PM
Sunday Worship Service 10 AM

Announcements

WHO CAN YOU INVITE? Did you know that about 70-85% of folks who don't attend worship say they would come to church if a close friend or family member asked them?

The Christmas season is the perfect time to try it out! Invite a neighbor, a friend, or someone from your family who doesn't have a church home. Here's a little script you could try:

Hey (name)! I'm planning to attend the Christmas Eve service at my church, St. Mark, at 5pm/7:30pm. I love this service because (write a reason here! Like the music, the candlelight, the community). I think you'd really enjoy it. St. Mark is a "come as you are" type of place. You can wear whatever you're comfortable in. Let me know if you have any questions!

I want to challenge each of you to invite at least one person to join you for Christmas Eve worship. Make sure to let me know who the visitor is so I can greet them personally! - Pr. Kevin +

CHURCH STAFF

PASTOR: The Reverend Kevin M.B. Tracey

SCHOOL DIRECTOR: Melisa McDaid

MUSIC DIRECTOR: Faith Woodward

PARISH ADMINISTRATOR: Alice Kaplan

Please note, the church office will be closed Dec. 25th – Jan 5th.

ST. MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH

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