



ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Our Mission

Growing Disciples - Making Christ Known

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DECEMBER 31, 2023

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

10:30 AM SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

The psalmist calls on the natural world, celestial bodies, fire and earth, creatures, and all humanity, to praise God. The voices of Simeon and Anna join the chorus today, recognizing what God is doing in Jesus. Simeon's song is often sung after communion, for we have seen God's salvation in the assembled community and have held Jesus in our hands in the bread. Then, like the prophet Anna, we tell of Jesus to all who look for the healing of the world.

GATHERING

Bold responses are spoken by the congregation.

Prelude

“Carol of the Manger”

Tune CRADLE SONG by W. J. Kirkpatrick
Setting for cello and organ by David M. Cherwien

Please stand as able.

Processional Hymn

“The First Noel” ELW 300

NOWELL

1. The first Noel the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deed.

Refrain: Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

2. They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.
3. And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
and to the king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went. *Refrain*
4. This star drew near to the northwest,
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
and there it did both stop and stay
right over the place where Jesus lay. *Refrain*

5. Then entered in those wise men three,
full rev'rently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence
their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.
Refrain: Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

Text: English traditional; Music: English traditional; arr. John Stainer, 1840-1901

Please be seated.

Welcome

Pastor Timothy McKenzie

Confession and Forgiveness

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is
marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
the Word made flesh,
our life and our salvation.

Amen.

The congregation may kneel or sit for the Confession. Silence is kept for reflection.

Trusting the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior, let us confess our sin.

God of life,

you promise good news of great joy for all people, and call us to be messengers of your peace.

We confess that too often we hoard our joy, our resources, and our security.

We nurture conflict and build barriers. We neglect the needs of our neighbors and ignore the groaning of creation. Have mercy on us.

Where we are self-centered, open our hearts. Where we are reluctant, give us courage. Where we are cynical, restore our trust. Renew us with your grace and give us again the hope of eternal life in you. Amen.

Hear the good news: We are children of God and heirs of God's promises through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In † Jesus we are forgiven and redeemed. Sing with joy, for all the ends of the earth shall know the salvation of God. Amen.

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.

Please stand as able.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray. Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Please be seated.

WORD

First Reading

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Flora Chance, lector

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. ¹For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. ²The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. ³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Psalm 148

Christian Souza, Delenn Rumbolo, cantors

Psalm 148:13; (Robert Benson); Refrain from Psalter for Worship year B © 2008 Augsburg Fortress



The splen - dor of the LORD is o - ver earth and heav'n.

¹*Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights!* ²*Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!* ³*Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars!* ⁴*Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!* ⁵*Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created.* ⁶*He established them forever and ever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.* ⁷*Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps,* ⁸*fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!* ⁹*Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!* ¹⁰*Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!* ¹¹*Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth!* ¹²*Young men and women alike, old and young together!* ¹³*Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.* ¹⁴*He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful, for the people of Israel who are close to him. Praise the LORD!*

Second Reading

Galatians 4:4-7

Flora Chance, lector

⁴But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. ⁶And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Please stand as able.

Gospel Acclamation

"Alleluia, Lord, to whom shall we go" from *ACS Holy Communion Setting Twelve*

Al-le-lu - ia, al - le-lu - ia, al-le-lu - ia.

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

Repeat alleluia

The Holy Gospel Luke 2:22-40

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 2nd chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.” ²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, ²⁹“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; ³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” ³³And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.” ³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanael, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. ³⁹When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

Sermon

“With the Spirit in your hearts”

Pastor Timothy McKenzie

Please stand as able.

Hymn of the Day

“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” ELW 276

W ZLOBIE LEZY

1. Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;
 oxen lowing, little knowing Christ the child is Lord of all.
 Swiftly winging, angels singing, bells are ringing, tidings bringing:
 Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!

2. Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of a gospel true.
Thurs rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

Text: English carol; tr. Edith M.G. Reed, 1885-1933, alt.; Music: Polish carol

The Apostles' Creed

Together, let us confess our faith in the words of the Apostles' 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.

The service continues with the Prayers.

Prayers of Intercession

(Pastor McKenzie, prayers)

The congregation may kneel or sit for the prayers.

With hope and expectation of Christ's coming, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration. *A brief silence.*

God of possibility, Mary responded with faith and hope in your promise. In our divided world, send your unifying Spirit into our hearts that the church may work as children and heirs of your peace and promise for all people through the light and love of Jesus the Messiah. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God of Creation, guide and empower all who lead in government, industry, and academics to create policy and engage in research that will slow and repair the abuse of our earthly home so that generations around the world may, as children and heirs of your creation, enjoy the abundant environment that you continue to sustain. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God of Peace, look favorably on all your children and cause warfare to cease across this world. Lead nations and leaders, international agencies and organizations to work for peace and the cessation of war in every place in the world. Inspire all public leaders to bind up wounds and heal the traumas of war; may they work to feed the hungry, care for refugees, and welcome the stranger. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God of Healing, grant healing and peace to the sick and the dying, and strengthen all caregivers, medical staff, and first responders who care for so many each day. We ask that you bless and keep our loved ones in your tender care: Jay Harbinson, David Mathis, Virginia Stackel, Joseph Tolbert, Robert Shirley, Rachel Fulp, Danielle Clausen, Carl Sepmeyer, David Kutscher, Vann Milheim, Oakley Coburn, Arlene Fielding, Sergei Kobiakov, Bill Schwartz, Jimmy Schwartz, Roxi Tolbert, Shirley Larson, Ingrid Keiris, Martha Stackel, Tina Wiland, Ben Watson, Louisa Coburn, Mindy Curley, Dannye Olin Bragdon, Sarah Lindberg,

Marilyn Denison, Eileen Dunlap, Jim Middleswarth, Christopher Shirley, Pat & Gary Ragsdale, Tanner Grant, Michael Frye, Ken Foust, and Gene Ellington. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God of Eternity, in the fullness of time you sent your Son that we might receive adoption as your children. We thank you for your manifold blessings this past year, and ask you to strengthen our work as a congregation as we seek to care for your many children in this world. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God of Grace, we bless you for all your servants in every generation who lived according to your promise. Strengthen us by their example and may we also see the coming of your Son in the new heaven and the new earth. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Peace *(Please stand as able, sharing the peace of the risen Christ.)*
The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

MEAL

Please be seated.

OFFERING *(Offerings for the mission of the church are gathered by the ushers.)*

Anthem “Away in a Manger” David Ashley White

*Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay. The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay. The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes. I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky, and stay by my side til morning is nigh. Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care, and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.*

Please stand as able.

Offertory *(The offering is brought forward by the ushers)*
“O Come, All Ye Faithful” ELW 283 ADESTE FIDELIS

1. O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem;
come and behold Him born the king of angels:
Refrain: O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, sts. 1, 3-4; tr. Unknown, st. 2; Music: attr. John Francis Wade

Offering Prayer

Let us pray. God of abundance, receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world

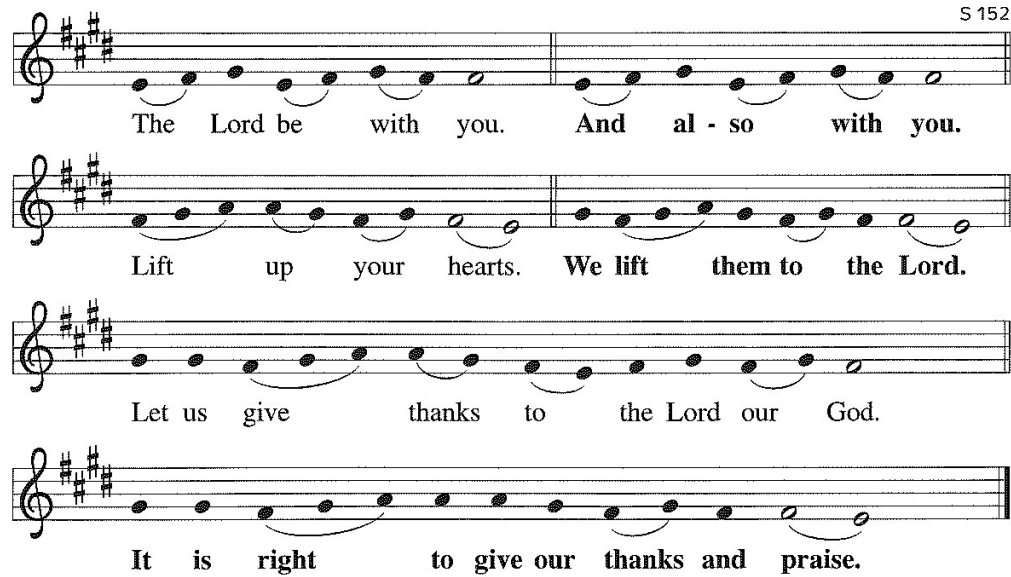
the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.
Amen.

Holy Communion

The Great Thanksgiving

Holy Communion Setting Four

S 152



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

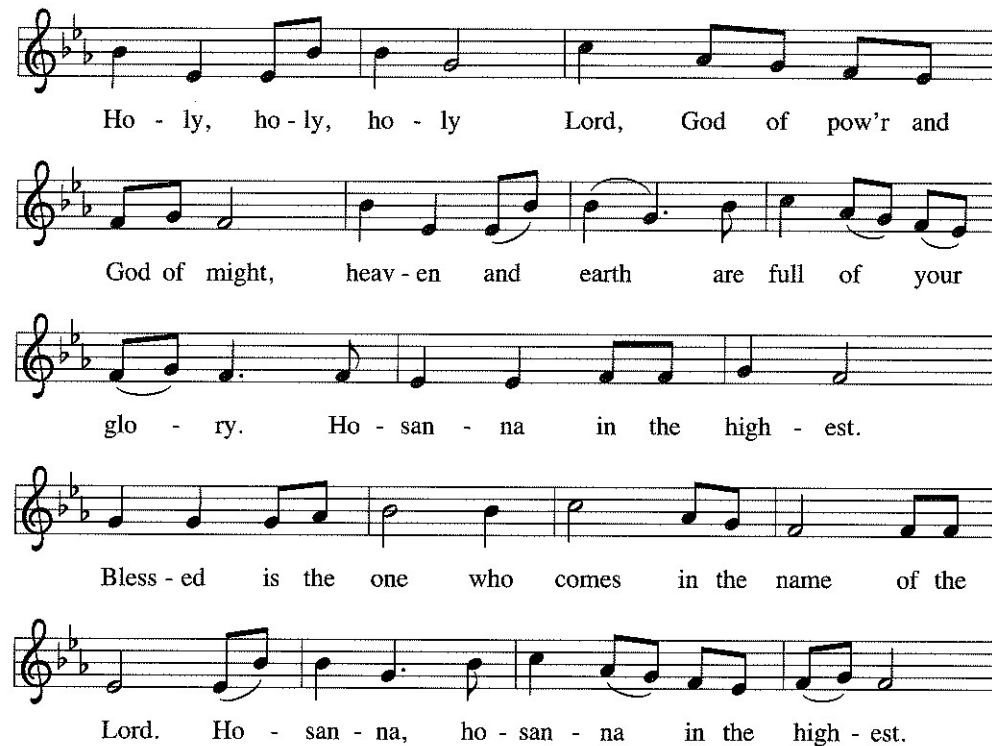
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

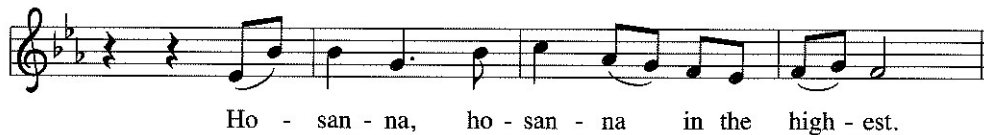
Proper Preface

Sanctus

“Holy, Holy, Holy” from *All Creation Sings, Holy Communion Setting Twelve*



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and
God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your
glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the
Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.



Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Words of Institution

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.

The Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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

Glory to God in the highest!
Come to the table of peace.

Please be seated.

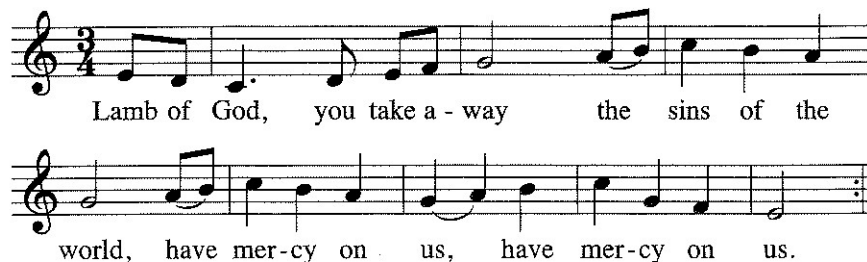
Distribution of Holy Communion

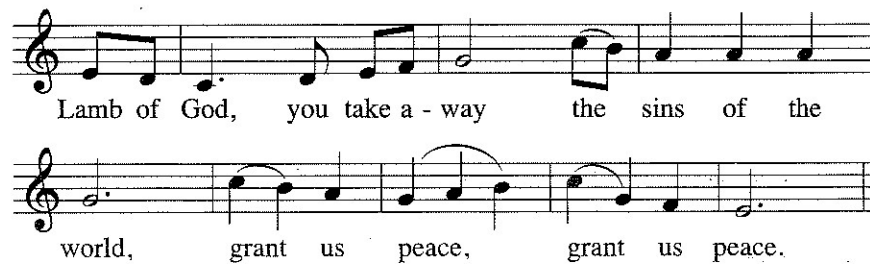
Holy Communion is offered continuously in front of the freestanding altar, or at the rail of the high altar in two ways, by wafer and wine in a small cup or "Communion Kit." Please follow the ushers' prompts, walking forward to the desired communion station, and returning via the side aisles. If receiving a "kit" please seal the used utensils in the zip-lock bag, placing the bag after worship in the marked bowl in the Narthex. Gluten free wafers and grape juice are also available.

Communion Music

"Lamb of God" from *Christmas Carol Mass*

Traditional English Carol





“Dance Prelude on ‘Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella’”

Setting for organ by Christopher Uehlein

“In the Bleak Midwinter”

Tune BRANHAM BY Gustav Holst

Setting for cello and organ by David M. Cherwien

Please stand as able.

Post-Communion Blessing

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and keep you in his grace.

Post-Communion Prayer

Let us pray. God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

SENDING BLESSING

God bless you and keep you,
 † Jesus grant you grace and truth, and
 the Spirit send peace upon your hearts, now and forever.

Amen.

Recessional Hymn

“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice” ELW 288

IN DULCI JUBILO

1. Good Christian Friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
 give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;
 ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.
 Christ is born today! Christ is born today!
2. Good Christian Friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
 now ye hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this!
 He has opened heaven’s door, and we are blest forevermore.
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

3. Good Christian Friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Now ye need not fear the grave; Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866
Music: German carol, 14th cent.; arr. Robert L. Pearsal, 1795-1856

DISMISSAL

Christ the Savior is born! Go in peace. Proclaim the good news.

Thanks be to God.

Please be seated.

Postlude

“Allegro con fuoco” from *Carol Rhapsody*

Richard Purvis

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Worship Leaders: Pastor Timothy McKenzie (prayers) ; crucifer/acolyte: Brady Ferner; lector: Flora Chance; live streaming camera: A.J. Pridgen; soundboard: John Brumbaugh; ushers: Doug Milheim, Marc & Susan Ginns, Eddie Goodall, Sean Fielding; greeters: Millie Cansler, Jay Jacob; communion assistants: Lisa Barnette, Rebecca Huang, Nick Wartner; communion helper: Kay Finlon; tabulators: Meg Fielding, Doug Milheim, Charles Lakeman; musicians: St. Mark's Choir; John Brumbaugh, cellist; Delenn Rumbolo, Christian Souza, cantors; Lester Ackerman, Director of Music Ministry and Organist

Next Sunday Leaders: prayer assistant: Mike Doyne; crucifer/acolyte: Needed; lector: Charles Lakeman; live streaming camera: Joe Barrett; soundboard: Kevin Feezor; ushers: Team C; greeters: Eileen Dunlap, Charles & Susan Lakeman; communion assistants: Charles, Susan & Michael Lakeman, John Simon, Chris Stevenson; communion helper: Sandy Rach; tabulators: Dianne Thomas, Doug Milheim

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From the pastor -

"For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore." (Isaiah 9:6-7)

As we celebrate the Nativity of Jesus Christ, we are encountered by the God whose kingdom dwells in the human heart, a kingdom crossing all borders of nation, culture and language. Isaiah points toward a kingdom giving unity to human beings across the globe and across time. In Christ, our time has been forever interrupted by God's eternity. Isaiah's "born for us" reveals that the Messiah's kingdom of peace will be established not in one particular nation or people, but in all nations and peoples.

If you have ever worshipped in another nation or language, you will readily understand that through faith, Jesus Christ is born into the hearts of people all over this world, crossing boundaries and borders, making us all sisters and brothers with Jesus. At Christmas we celebrate a holy mystery that has been, as Isaiah wrote, growing "continually" since Jesus' birth. He seeks to dwell in your heart so that through you, Christ might extend his reign of justice and righteousness further and further across time and space. Your life is the means by which God furthers this kingdom. Christ has come down to earth to raise you to heaven so that you might share God's infinite kingdom of grace and peace with all whom you meet.

A blessed Christmas to you,
Pastor Tim McKenzie
pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org

Coming Up at St. Mark's

Worship and Congregational Life

Altar Flowers Today are given to the Glory of God, and in honor of our Wedding Anniversary by Cliff and Joann Edahl.

A Blessed New Year to you! The church office will be closed 1/1/2024 New Year's Day. May you be led by the light and love of Christ throughout the New Year.

REMINDER: To our able bodied members please park across Queens Rd in our church parking lot or on the side of the church along Edgehill Rd and come in side door saving the parking lot by the church for less able bodied members. Thank you.

ROOM in the INN begins this Tuesday! Volunteers are needed to supply DINNERS, BREAKFASTS and bag LUNCHESES. Especially needed will be NIGHT SITTERS and VAN DRIVERS. Look for more information and a signup poster in the gathering place. Another way to help is to donate BEDTIME SNACKS for our guests such as lunch size bags of pretzels, goldfish, chips; granola bars (preferably without nuts); small bags of fruit snacks. Reminder - We DON'T NEED soap, shampoo or conditioner as we have dispensers in the showers. We CANNOT OFFER mouthwash as ordered by Roof Above. A collection basket is in the hall across from the restrooms. We thank you in advance for your participation in this outreach to the homeless in our community.

Thinking of joining St. Mark's? Please see Pastor Tim to set up a time to talk. All people are welcome at St. Mark's!

The Christian Education Hour is at 9:30 am on Sundays. In January we begin "Other Scriptures". We'll discuss the lost texts of other early Christians based on Bart D. Ehrman's writings. Dr. Ehrman is the James A. Gray Distinguished Professor at UNC Chapel Hill. Please join us as you are able in the Large Conference Room.

Online worship continues to be streamed every Sunday at 10:30 am on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/SaintMarksLutheran/>).

The Ethnic Restaurant Group will dine at Wan Fu Chinese Restaurant on January 16, 2024 at 7:00 PM. Wan Fu presents a lovely environment in which to enjoy their carefully crafted cuisine, starting with the exterior of the building (which resembles a Chinese temple) and definitely including the carved wood paneling inside the restaurant. This restaurant has weathered the economic storms of many years and produces beautifully presented dishes which range from simple and easily accessible to highly spiced and complex flavors. Wan Fu is located at 10719 Kettering Dr, Charlotte, NC 28226 (on the east side of Pineville, just north of NC-51 – Pineville-Matthews Road). Our group always enjoys visits at Wan Fu! Contact Tom & Judy Tolbert for seating by noon on Sunday, January 14.

Ushers for Sunday Worship The ministry of ushering is a crucial part of worship because it is one of the most visible ministries in the Church. Please volunteer by contacting the church office or John Simon.

St. Mark's email list If you are not receiving emails from St. Mark's, we may not have your correct email address. Please contact the church to let us know. We send at least 2 emails every week.

Family Ministry

Nursery: A fun-filled nursery, staffed by volunteers, is located downstairs. An usher is available to show you the way. Our safety protocols offer peace of mind so you can worship without worry.

Youth Classes

Sundays at 9:30: Youth Group in the Youth Room. Godly Play has been temporarily paused.

Confirmation Class meets every Sunday at 9:30.

Stewardship 2024

Sharing our gifts is important to St. Mark's ongoing mission. A pledge is a prayerful commitment to giving in response to God's grace. A pledge may be offered at any time, but pledges help a congregation establish a responsible budget for the coming year. Please consider making a

financial pledge to St. Mark's. Brochures are available in the Gathering Place. Thank you for your faithful gifts to St. Mark's ministries. An online pledge option is also available from our website, or you may use the QR code.

You may use the QR code at left (hover your phone camera to connect) for immediate access to St. Mark's website donation page. Pledges and donations for Altar Flowers may also be made using this code.



2024 Offering Envelopes are in the Gathering Space. If you do not see your envelope box, and would like one, please fill out the form provided and put it in the basket.

2024 Altar Flower Sponsorship If you would like to sponsor live flowers for our Sunday worship service, please sign up on the calendar by the mailbox room or contact the church office.

Social Ministry

We continue to remember the hungry and homeless through our social ministries.

LOAVES & FISHES The baker's rack is a permanent collection location for **NON-BREAKABLE NON-PERISHABLE** food. And remember, all families need condiments, salt & pepper and sugar, along with basic food.

Soup Kitchen St. Mark's Soup Kitchen is serving lunch in the Fellowship Hall every Thursday for our neighbors. If you would like to serve, please contact us. You may also support the Soup Kitchen through financial donations sent to the church, or through St. Mark's online giving portal. Help us share God's love!

Announcements

AA meets in the Fellowship Hall: Monday nights "Third Tradition", 7 p.m.; Wednesday nights "Just the Basics", 7:30 p.m.; and Thursday nights "Not a Glum Lot", 6:30 p.m.; in Room 210: Saturday morning 10:30 a.m. "SLAA".

Music Notes

"The First Noel" ELW 300 is the last hymn in the Christmas section of our hymnal. The first few stanzas have the shepherds in the fields looking up at the star in the eastern sky (Luke 2:1-20), and then the wise men follow that star, which leads them to the baby Jesus (Matthew 2:1-12). We know very little about the origin of either the text or the tune, both English. We do know the text first appeared in print in 1823, *Some Ancient Christmas Carols*, a revised and second publication by Davies Gilbert. Sir John Stainer (1840-1901) composed a harmonization of the tune **THE FIRST NOWELL** in the late nineteenth century, the version that appears in our hymnal.

"Good Christian Friends, Rejoice" ELW 288 This Christmas hymn dates to the 14th century, and was translated into English by John Mason Neale (1818-1866), and included in his collection *Carols of Christmas-tide* (London, 1853). When a carol is written in two languages it is called macaronic. The original text was German with phrases of Latin to teach the Christmas story to folks of little formal education. Austin Lovelace says the music is "foot" music, and obviously was meant to be danced. The early church was more accustomed to austere plainsong and motets, and decided that popular music of the day was too good to miss as a teaching tool. As Martin Luther said, "Why should the devil have all the good tunes?" **IN DULCI JUBILO** (Latin for "in sweet rejoicing") is the tune name, and dates to 14th century Germany.

"In the Bleak Midwinter" ELW 294 This hymn began as a poem in the January 1872 issue of the publication *Scribner's Monthly* by Christina Rossetti (1830-1894), who was born in London of Italian refugee parents. Her poem "A Christmas Carol" transitioned to a hymn, and has the challenges of syllables falling differently with the tune stanza by stanza. The tune **CRANHAM** is by Gustav Holst, (1874-1934) and was composed for this text. Austin Lovelace says of this hymn: "Like many Christmas songs written in the Victorian era, this hymn assumes English surroundings and weather. While it is possible there may have been snows in Bethlehem, the secret of the hymn lies elsewhere in the sensitive and imaginative expression of the Incarn."

This Week: From the Lutheran Church Calendar

January 1, The Name of Jesus

The observance of the octave (eighth day) of Christmas has roots in the sixth century. Until the recent past, Lutheran calendars called this day "The Circumcision and Name of Jesus." The emphasis on circumcision is the older emphasis. Every Jewish boy was circumcised and formally named on the eighth day of his life. Already as a baby, Jesus bears the mark of a covenant that he makes through the shedding of his blood on the cross. Baptized into Christ, the church begins a new year in Jesus' name.

January 2, Johann Konrad Wilhelm Loehe, renewer of the church (1808-1872)

Loehe (Löhe) was a pastor in nineteenth-century Germany. From establishing a school for pastors and deaconesses in the small town of Neuendettelsau, he sent pastors to North America, Australia, New Guinea, Brazil, and the Ukraine. His work for a clear confessional basis within the Bavarian church led to conflict with ecclesiastical authorities. Loehe's chief concern was that a congregation find its life in Holy Communion, and from that source outreach and social ministries would flow. The Missouri Synod and the Iowa Synod are considered founded by his initiative, and Concordia Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN and Warburg Seminary, Dubuque, IA look to Loehe for their origins. His German language "Liturgy for Christian Congregations of the Lutheran Faith" (1844) had a profound influence upon the publication of the first English language Lutheran liturgy in 1860.

Adapted from "Sundays and Seasons"

St. Mark's Prayer List

Jay Harbinson, David Mathis, Virginia Stackel, Joseph Tolbert, Robert Shirley, Rachel Fulp, Danielle Clausen, Carl Sepmeyer, David Kutscher, Vann Milheim, Oakley Coburn, Arlene Fielding, Sergei Kobiakov, Bill Schwartz, Jimmy Schwartz, Roxi Tolbert, Shirley Larson, Ingrid Keiris, Martha Stackel, Tina Wiland, Ben Watson, Louisa Coburn, Mindy Curley, Dannye Olin Bragdon, Nathaniel Coburn, Sarah Lindberg, Marilyn Denison, Eileen Dunlap, Jim Middleswarth, Christopher Shirley, Pat & Gary Ragsdale, Tanner Grant, Michael Frye, Ken Foust, and Gene Ellington.

Please email Pastor McKenzie with Prayer List and other prayer requests (pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org)

Readings for 1/7/2024

First Sunday of Christmas

Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalms 72:1-7, 10/14

*All kings shall bow down
before him. (Ps. 72:11)*

Ephesians 3:1-12

Matthew 2:1-12

Birthdays

1/1 Brenda Durst

1/1 Fay Fisher

1/1 Andrew Puky

1/1 Robert Smith

1/4 Brady Ferner

1/4 Mary L. Hopp

1/4 David Mathis

1/5 Chuck Haley



Do you feel like you are in crisis? In Isaiah it is written, "Fear not, for I am with you; do not be dismayed for I am your God." Stephen ministers are here to show the Lord's love and comfort for you in times of trial. If you would like to confidentially speak to a Stephen Minister, please contact Pastor Tim (pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org)

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Our Ministers

All the people of God at St. Mark's

Rev. Dr. Timothy McKenzie, Senior Pastor
pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org

Lester Ackerman,
Director of Music Ministry, Organist
les@saintmarkscharlotte.org

Sue Wadgymer, Parish Administrator
admin@saintmarkscharlotte.org

Jessie Craig, Finance Administrator
finance@saintmarkscharlotte.org