

ST.MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

PENNSBURG, PA

December 13, 2020

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WELCOME

CANDLE READING

We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord's coming in glory.

Enlighten us with your grace, that we may serve our neighbors in need. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. Amen

(The third Advent Candle is lit)

NATIVITY SCENE

This morning we add to our manger scene – the shepherds. They heard the message of the Savior and acted on it right away. May we hear the message and take action just as quickly.

ADVENT HYMN

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

257 v. 1,2,6

v.1: O come, O come Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel

v.2: O come, O Wisdom from on high, embracing all things far and nigh: in strength and beauty come and stay; teach us your will and guide our way. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel

v.6: O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer; O Sun of justice now draw near. Disperse the gloomy clouds of night and death's dark shadow put to flight. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit
whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever.
Amen.

Together let us honestly and humbly confess that we have not lived as God desires.

Loving and forgiving God,

We confess that we are held captive by sin. In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger; we have not loved our neighbor; we have not been Christ to one another. Restore us, O God. Wake us up and turn us from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen

People of God, hear this glad news: by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free - free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love, † comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit. **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.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen

SCRIPTURES

FIRST READING: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.

¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;

²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;

to comfort all who mourn;
³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.
⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

⁸For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.
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.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ's coming.

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: John 1:6-8, 19-28

The Holy Gospel according to St. John
Glory to you, O Lord.

John's gospel describes Jesus as the "light of the world." John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,
'Make straight the way of the Lord,'"
as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Pastor David

SPECIAL MUSIC *Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding!* Trumpet Arrangement, Bill Folk

***APOSTLES' CREED**

Together, with the whole church, let us confess our faith with 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.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of power and might, shine your radiance and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

God of preachers and messengers, you have entrusted your church with the work of proclaiming good news. Strengthen the witness of bishops, pastors, deacons, church musicians, lay leaders, and all people who contribute their prayers and talents to public worship. Embed your word in their hearts. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of every living creature, you announce the year of your favor for all of creation. Extend your kindness and relief to endangered animals and plants. Strengthen the human beings who rely on the rhythms of nature to make their living. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of all peoples and nations, you plant us as your oaks of righteousness and ask us to care for one another. Be present with the leaders of every nation as they govern. Give them a spirit of righteousness, that your goodness and mercy is revealed through their actions. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of exiles and wanderers, you repair what was once destroyed. We pray for people who have been displaced from their homes by fire, flood, earthquake, or storm. Support the work of Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Disaster Response, and all disaster relief organizations in their recovery efforts. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of the powerful and helpless, you clothe us with strength when our spirits are weak and weary. Bestow your spirit upon this congregation and empower us to comfort the people who turn to us in times of need. We pray especially for **Lillie, Lisa, Jack, Marilyn, Randy, Andrew, Renae, Marie, Catherine, David, Paul, Harold, Marie, Dennis, Merle, Barbara, Kenneth, Deb, Barbara, Lenny and Harold**. Make your church a place of refuge and healing. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of sinners and saints, you offer joy even in the midst of our grief. We are grateful for the beloved, imperfect people whose lives testified to your radiant love. Anoint all who mourn with the oil of gladness. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

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

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you
And also with you.

OFFERING

OFFERING PRAYER

Generous God,
you have created all that is,
and you provide for us in every season.
Bless all that we offer,
that through these gifts the world will receive your blessing.
In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray.
Amen.

***WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread 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.

***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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Prepare the banquet table
where Christ gives himself as food and drink.

COMMUNION

Gathered together in your homes or wherever you are, you may now offer communion to each other (or to yourself) by saying: "This is the body of Christ, given for you" when you offer the wafer/bread. Then in a similar manner with the juice/wine say, "This is the blood of Christ, shed for you." Each of those receiving the bread and the wine may respond with, "**Amen.**"

*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Gracious and abundant God,
you have done great things for us, and we rejoice.
In this bread and cup you give us life forever.
In your boundless mercy, strengthen us
and open our hearts to the world's needs,
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

*BLESSING

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting,
the long-expected Savior fill you with love,
the unexpected Spirit guide your journey,
✠ now and forever.
Amen.

HYMN

People, Look East

248 v. 1,3,4

v.1: People look east, the time is near of the crowning of the year. Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table. People look east and sing today. Love, the Guest is on the way.

v.3: Stars keep the watch when night is dim, one more light the bowl shall brim, shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together. People look east and sing today, Love, the Star is on the way

v.4: Angels announce with shouts of mirth him who brings new life to earth. Set every peak and valley humming, with the word, the Lord is coming. People look east and sing today, Love, the Lord is on the way

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

We welcome everyone to worship today.

Message from Church Council

Please be sure to read the December 2nd Remarks & Reminders. It was asking for your approval of Church Council nominees and the 2021 budget. Normally this is our Congregational Meeting, held before our worship services. We need your response by December 21st. Thank you!

HAPPENINGS THIS WEEK:

The Adult Bible Study invites you to join a Zoom meeting at 9AM Sundays. Please contact Deb Long for more information at debra.reed588@comcast.net A Zoom link will be sent to you.

Life Line Screening will be returning here at St. Mark's on **Wednesday, December 16th**. They will offer five screenings that scan for potential health problems: Carotid Artery – plaque build-up which can lead to stroke; Abdominal Aortic Aneurysms – which can lead to a ruptured aorta; Peripheral Arterial Disease– hardening of arteries in legs; Atrial Fibrillation – also tied to stroke; Bone Density Screenings – which assesses the risk of osteoporosis.

They adhere to strict safety protocols. If you would like to make an appointment for one or more of these screenings, please go to: www.lifelinescreening.com/communitycircle or if you want to call, the number is: 1-800-679-5609.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to all who participated in the Twelve Days of Holiday Donations.

Also, thank you to all who sponsored fruit baskets for our senior members of St. Mark's church family:

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| Ruth & Paul Bartlett | Angela Berger | Michaela Buck |
| Linda & Gil Ebright | Bill & Becky Folk | Amy Hagenbuch |
| Kay Hallman | Amy Hawkins | Karen Keller |
| Ellen & Kerwin Leh | Deb Long | Carol May |
| Karen Mengel | Kenny & Diane Mohr | Robyn & Brian Mowrer |
| Donna & Jeff Ney | Jenn & Don Pyne | Lenny Rafalko |
| Robert & Linda Reed | Pete & Maribeth Reigner | Al & Sharon Schultz |
| Marion Simons | Mike & Julia Slotter | Ed & Blake Stauffer |

You just made the holidays a little bit brighter for some pretty special people!

Preparing for next week:

Mon: Psalm 125; 1 Kings 18:1-18; Ephesians 6:10-17

Tues: Acts 3:17—4:4; 2 Kings 2:9-22

Wed: Mark 9:9-13; Malachi 3:16—4:6

Thur: Psalm 89:1-4; 19-26; 2 Samuel 6:1-11; Hebrews 1:1-4

Fri: Hebrews 1:5-14; 2 Samuel 6:12-19

Sat: John 7:40-52; Judges 13:2-24

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