

**ST.MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**PENNSBURG, PA**

December 6, 2020

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**Director of Music: Judith A. Love**

**Soloist**

**Jill Haldeman**

**Layreader**

**Avalyn Keller**

**WELCOME**

**CANDLE READING**

We praise you, O God, for this circle of light that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, kindle within us the fire of your Spirit, that we may be light shining in the darkness. Enlighten us with your grace that we may welcome others as you have welcomed us. Grant this through Christ our Lord whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

The second Advent Candle is lit.

**NATIVITY SCENE**

This morning, we have added to the manger scene the animals who share their home with Jesus. May we share our homes and hearts with him as well.

**ADVENT HYMN**

*O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

257 v. 1, 2

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

**\*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 our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; 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 40:1-11**

*In grand, flowing, poetic lines, the prophet announces that the exile of God's people in Babylon is over. God will deliver Israel and will care for her as a shepherd cares for the sheep. This word can be trusted, because the only enduring reality in life is the word of God.*

<sup>1</sup>Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.

<sup>2</sup>Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her  
that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid,  
that she has received from the LORD's hand  
double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup>A voice cries out:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

<sup>4</sup>Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;

the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.  
<sup>5</sup>Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

<sup>6</sup>A voice says, “Cry out!”  
And I said, “What shall I cry?”  
All people are grass,  
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

<sup>7</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades,  
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;  
surely the people are grass.

<sup>8</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades;  
but the word of our God will stand forever.

<sup>9</sup>Get you up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good tidings;  
lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,  
lift it up, do not fear;  
say to the cities of Judah,  
“Here is your God!”

<sup>10</sup>See, the Lord GOD comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;  
his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.

<sup>11</sup>He will feed his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs in his arms,  
and carry them in his bosom,  
and gently lead the mother sheep.

The Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## **SECOND READING: 2 Peter 3:8-15a**

*This short letter deals with pressing concerns regarding the final advent of Jesus, especially concerns that could arise over its apparent delay. The author of the letter calls on Christians to anticipate the promised coming of the Lord through conduct dedicated to God.*

<sup>8</sup>Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. <sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

<sup>11</sup>Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, <sup>12</sup>waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? <sup>13</sup>But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where

righteousness is at home.

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; <sup>15a</sup>and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL: Mark 1:1-8**

The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark

**Glory to you, O Lord**

*The Gospel of Mark does not begin with a story of Jesus' birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.*

<sup>1</sup>The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

<sup>2</sup>As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way;

<sup>3</sup>the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.’ ”

<sup>4</sup>John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup>Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ**

**SERMON**

Pastor David

**SPECIAL MUSIC**

*Creator of the Stars of Night*

soloist, Jill Haldeman

**\*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, comfort your people and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

Faithful God, you teach us to wait for you with faithfulness and patience. Sustain and support us in our doubts and questions. Nurture our faith as we discern and enact your mission. Hear us, O God.  
**Your mercy is great.**

Loving God, you set the stars in the sky and breathe life into the earth. Renew the face of creation where it is in need of your healing touch. Mend the wounds of environmental damage and restore balance to ecosystems so that all creation can declare your praise. Hear us, O God.  
**Your mercy is great.**

Steadfast God, you never tire of seeking justice. Where people suffer from discrimination, judgment, and injustice, speak words of truth and comfort. Lead us toward a world where faithfulness will sprout underfoot and righteousness rain down from above. Hear us, O God.  
**Your mercy is great.**

Leading God, you ask us to make uneven ground smooth. Help us to support people with physical and intellectual disabilities. Teach us to celebrate the great diversity in our midst. Hear us O God.  
**Your mercy is great.**

Tender God, you know sorrow and joy alike. We pray for those in our families and congregation who are not joyful in this holiday season. Comfort those who grieve, be a companion to all who are lonely, tend those who are suffering especially for **Lillie, Lisa, Jack, Marilyn, Randy, Andrew, Renae, Marie, Catherine, David, Paul, Harold, Marie, Dennis, Merle, Barbara, Kenneth, Deb, Barbara, Lenny and Harold** and gather all in your healing embrace. Hear us, O God.  
**Your mercy is great.**

Eternal God, we give thanks for the saints who have prepared your way in the wilderness and taught us to continue their faithful work. Make their generous lives an example for all. 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

*On Jordan's Stormy Bank I Stand*

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v.1: On Jordan's stormy bank I stand, and cast a wishful eye to Canaan's fair and happy land, where my possessions lie.

Refrain: I am bound for the promised land. I am bound for the promised land; oh, who will come and go with me? I am bound for the promised land.

v.2: All over those wide extended plains shines one eternal day; there God the Son forever reigns and scatters night away. (refrain)

v.3: No chilling winds or poisonous breath can reach that healthful shore; sickness and sorrow and pain and death are felt and feared no more. (refrain)

v.4: When shall I reach that happy place and be forever blest? When shall I see my Savior's face and in God's bosom rest? (refrain)

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

\*\*\*\*\*

We welcome everyone to worship today.

## **MESSAGE FROM CHURCH COUNCIL**

### **CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

Our annual congregation meeting is normally held on the second Sunday of December. The purpose of the meeting is to approve nominees for Church Council and to approve the budget. Since we cannot meet in person this year, we are asking you to consider the nominees and budget included in an email sent to you this week and issue your vote via e-mail, letter, or phone call. Please advise us of your vote by December 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **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](mailto:debra.reed588@comcast.net) A Zoom link will be sent to you.

### **Twelve Days of Holiday Donations**

Today (Sunday) is the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the Twelve Days of Holiday Donations! Coats or jackets (new or gently used) can be dropped off at our parking lot between 10AM – 12Noon. Of course, any of the donations can be dropped off on any of these days.. Here's a list of the rest of the days:

Dec 7 (2pm-4pm) - Food donations (non perishable) for Open Link

Dec. 8 (9am-11am) - Items such as coffee, creamer and sugar for the homeless shelter outdoor worship time

Dec.9 (6pm-8pm) - Sanitizer, sanitizing wipes, tissues (regular and purse packs) and cough drops

Dec.10 (6pm-8pm) - \$5.00 Gift Cards from Target, Dunkin Donuts and CVS for the homeless shelter

Dec. 11(5pm-7pm) - Cereal Day (Hot/cold cereals, non- perishable breakfast items)

Dec. 12 (2pm-4pm) – PJ Project (new or gently used pajamas and/or Christmas book for children in need at women's shelters). NOISY OFFERING!!!

All items will be donated to The Open Link, The Welcome Church (homeless shelter) and the PJ Project (women/child shelter)

Please note that the December 8<sup>th</sup> meeting for WELCA had to be cancelled.

### **Muhlenberg Candlelight Carols Service Free Online**

The Muhlenberg College Advent Candlelight Carols Service has been a beloved annual worship for 62 years. It is a service of advent hope through scripture, prayer, music, dance, poetry and song. On this 63<sup>rd</sup> year, due to the unprecedented COVID pandemic, the entire Candlelight Carols Service has been created for online participation. And you can attend for FREE.

- Saturday, December 12 at 7:30 p.m.
- Sunday December 13 at 3:30 p.m.
- Sunday December 13, at 7:30 p.m.



If you would like to join the Muhlenberg community this advent season please register by **Tuesday, December 8**. You will need to register in order to get the streaming link for entry.

Register at: <https://www.muhenberg.edu/student-life/religiouslife/candlelightcarolsinformation/>

**Life Line Screening** will be returning here at St. Mark's on Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>. 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](http://www.lifelinescreening.com/communitycircle) or if you want to call, the number is: 1-800-679-5609.

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

**The Annual Winter Red Cross Blood Drive** sponsored by St. Mark's is scheduled for Tuesday, January 5, 2:00-7:00 PM. The drive will once again be held at the East Greenville Fire Company, 401 Washington Street, East Greenville, to allow for maximum social distancing space. Many thanks to East Greenville Fire Company for generously donating their social hall! Thanks also to those who already signed up for donation appointments. We still have 21 donor slots to fill including 6 reserved for Power Red donors. All Covid safety protocols will be followed. It is never too early to reserve your donation slot! A few minutes of your time can be worth a lifetime to another. Please contact

Maribeth Reigner at 215-679-8563 to schedule an appointment or register online at [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org). Thank you!

Preparing for next week:

**Mon:** Psalm 27; Isaiah 26:7-15; Acts 2:37-42

**Tues:** Isaiah 4:2-6; Acts 11:1-18

**Wed:** Luke 1:5-17; Malachi 2:10—3:1

**Thur:** Psalm 126; Habakkuk 2:1-5; Philippians 3:7-11

**Fri:** Philippians 3:12-16; Habakkuk 3:2-6

**Sat:** Habakkuk 3:13-19; Matthew 21:28-32

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