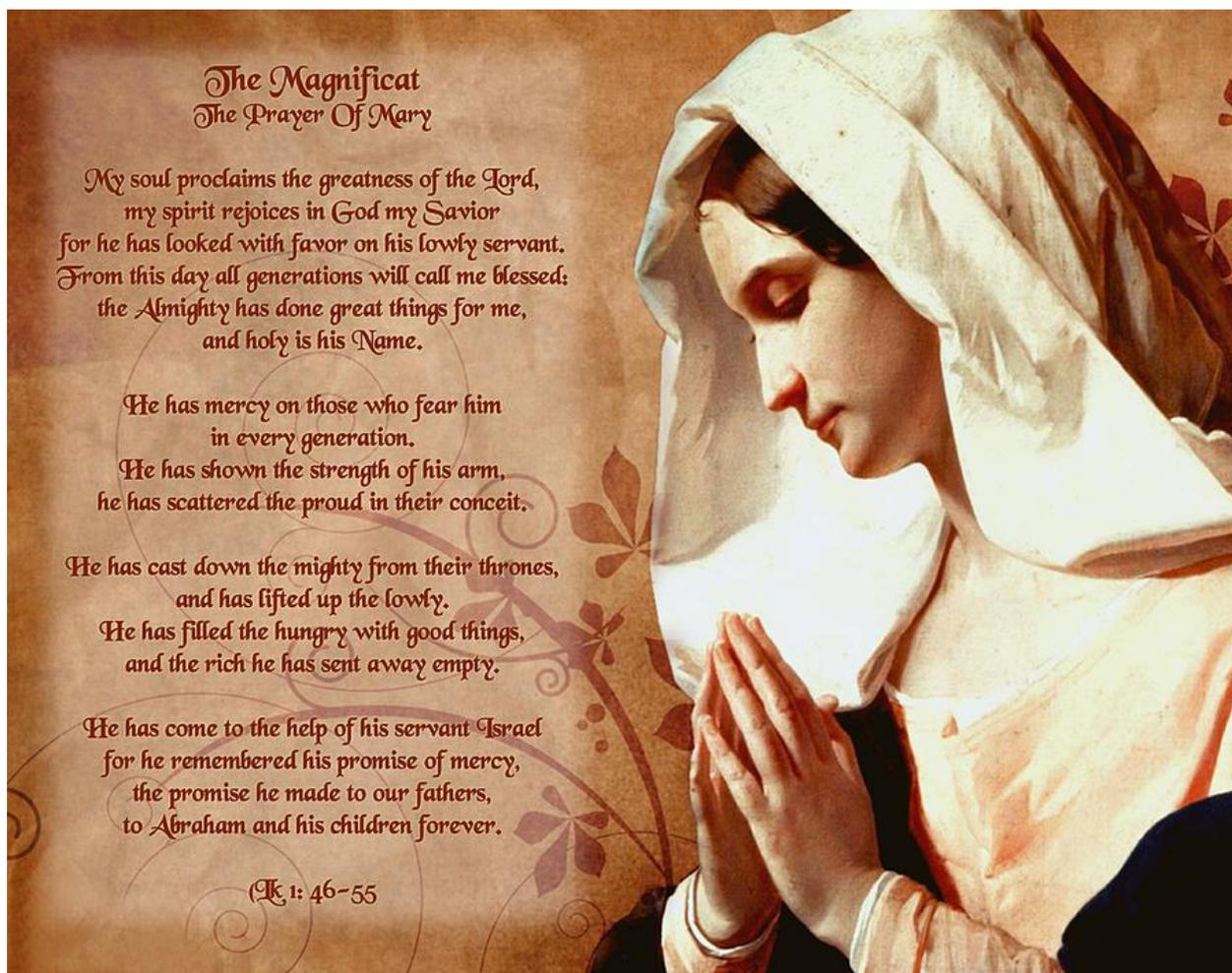


ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
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Website: www.stmarkwb.org



The Fourth Sunday in Advent

19 December A✠D 2021
Divine Service, Setting III

✠ Welcome in the name of Jesus! ✠

Today we observe the Fourth Sunday of Advent. On this day, as we continue waiting eagerly for the Christ, we consider the joy that He brings into our hearts. Truly, right now we live in a world where joy so often seems out of reach. However, no matter how dark this world might be, in Christ we can “rejoice always” (Philippians 4:4), just as Mary and Elizabeth did long ago, for He comes to be our Savior from sin, death and every evil.

If you are a VISITOR here, we’d like to offer you our warmest welcome! We pray that your experience among us is blessed, and that you depart filled with God’s peace and life.

Also, toward the end of our service today we will be celebrating Holy Communion, in which we will eat and drink Jesus’ body and blood, under bread and wine, for the forgiveness of our sins (Matthew 26:26-28). Therefore, we ask that you would please see the statement titled “On the Sacrament of Holy Communion,” printed below, which describes our beliefs and practices regarding this sacred gift.

O Lord, my creator, redeemer, and comforter,
as I come to worship You in spirit and in truth,
I humbly pray that You would open my heart
to the preaching of Your Word so that I may
repent of my sins, believe in Jesus Christ as my
only Savior, and grow in grace and holiness.
Hear me for the sake of His name. Amen.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION: We believe that when we receive Holy Communion together, we are publicly declaring both our unity in Christ and our agreement in doctrine (1 Cor. 10:16-17; 1 Cor. 1:10). We also believe that if we receive this sacrament in unbelief, we risk God’s judgment (1 Cor. 11:27-30).

Therefore, communion at this altar is reserved for those who believe and confess the teachings of our church body, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Those who have not been formally instructed in our teachings should wait to commune until completing a course of instruction with us.

If you are a VISITOR and would like to commune with us today, please speak with the pastor before the service. If you will not be communing, you are welcome to kneel at the altar with your arms folded across your chest to receive a blessing, or you may simply remain in your pew.

Confession and Absolution

Stand

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth.

P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

C and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Kneel/Stand

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P O almighty God, merciful Father,

C I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Stand

Hymn of Invocation: 343 Prepare the Royal Highway



1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; The King of kings is near!
2 God's peo - ple, see Him com - ing: Your own e - ter - nal king!
3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen To greet your prom - ised king!
4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; It comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley A lev - el road ap - pear!
Palm branch - es strew be - fore Him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!
Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion Its trib - ute too should bring.
His rule is peace and free - dom And jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of Glo - ry Fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:
God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!
All lands, bow down be - fore Him! All na - tions, now a - dore Him!
So let your praise be sound - ing For kind - ness so a - bound - ing:



Ho - san - na to the Lord, For He ful - fills God's Word!

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Service of the Word

Introit (*spoken responsively*)

Psalm 19:1, 4–6; antiphon: Isaiah 45:8a

- P** Shower, O heavens, from above,
and let the clouds rain down righteousness;
- C** **let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit;
let the earth cause them both to sprout.**
- P** The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.
- C** **Their measuring line goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of
The world.
In them he has set a tent for the sun,**
- P** which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.
- C** **Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them,
and there is nothing hidden from its heat.**

**All: 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.**

- P** Shower, O heavens, from above,
and let the clouds rain down righteousness;
- C** **let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit;
let the earth cause them both to sprout.**

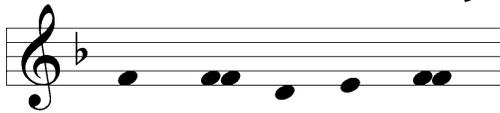
Kyrie

Mark 10:47



C Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up -
on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

Salutation and Collect of the Day



P The Lord be with you.



C And with thy spir - it.

P Let us pray. Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



C A - men.

Sit

Old Testament Reading

Deuteronomy 18:15–19

¹⁵[Moses said,] “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen— ¹⁶just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’ ¹⁷And the LORD said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. ¹⁸I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.’”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gradual (*spoken responsively*)

Psalms 145:18, 21

P The LORD is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.

C My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD,
and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.

Epistle

Philippians 4:4–7

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Stand
Alleluia



C Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia.

Holy Gospel

Luke 1:39–56

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the first chapter.



C Glo - ry be to Thee, O Lord.

³⁹In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, ⁴⁰and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, ⁴²and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

⁴⁶And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

⁵⁰And his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

⁵²he has brought down the mighty from their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;

⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent empty away.

⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

⁵⁶And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.



C Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

Nicene Creed

C I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life \dagger of the world to come. Amen.

Hymn of the Day: 357 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel



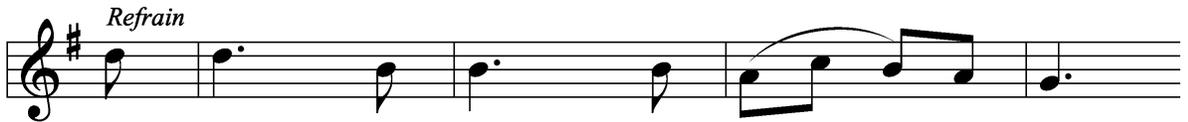
1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som
2 O come, Thou Wis - dom from on high, Who or - d'rest
3 O come, O come, Thou Lord of might, Who to Thy
4 O come, Thou Branch of Jes - se's tree, Free them from



cap - tive Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly
all things might - i - ly; To us the path of
tribes on Si - nai's height In an - cient times didst
Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny That trust Thy might - y



ex - ile here Un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
knowl - edge show, And teach us in her ways to go.
give the Law In cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.
pow'r to save, And give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.



Refrain
Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el



Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

- 5 O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery. Refrain
- 6 O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight. Refrain
- 7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,
And be Thyself our King of Peace. Refrain

Sermon

Offering

During the Offering, we ask that you please sign a black attendance book located in your pew.

Stand

Offertory

Psalm 51:10–12



C Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -
new a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a -
way from Thy pres-ence, and take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it
from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Thy sal - va -
tion, and up - hold me with Thy free spir-it. A - men.

Stand

Prayer of the Church

P In peace, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For our congregation, as we rejoice in the first advent of Christ in the flesh and await His second advent on the Last Day, that God would keep us in this Word and faith unto the end, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For all pastors who, like John the Baptist, cry out with the Word of truth in the wilderness of this fallen world, that they would be preserved in their labors; and that God would send workers into His vineyard and bring forth a bountiful harvest, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the schools of the Church, especially for Ziah Town Lutheran School in Liberia, that our young people may be taught to delight and treasure the Word of God above all riches, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For relief from war and disasters, strife and rebellion; and for good government, faithful magistrates and peace to aid the spread of the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For all Christian citizens, that God would renew our hearts with thanksgiving for His many blessings and grant us the wisdom to use them for His good purposes, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the sick and the suffering, [*including _____,*] that they would be anxious for nothing, but instead make their requests known to Christ, the God of peace, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For all preparing to receive the Lord's Supper, that we may rejoice in the presence of Christ, our true Emmanuel, who gives us a share in His divine life and forgiveness by His body and blood, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P In thanksgiving for the faithful departed who now await the joyous return of Christ, who shares our human nature from the womb of the Virgin and has forgiven our sin and destroyed death, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P Lord God, heavenly Father, we give You thanks for Your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, who is both the Root of Jesse and the Righteous Branch from his stump. By Christ's death You have set Him up as a banner before the peoples to draw all to Yourself. By His resurrection, You have silenced the kings who stood against Him and taken away the power of death. Grant that, as we recall with thanksgiving His advent in the flesh, we may always confess Him and remain watchful for His advent in glory at the Last Day; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Service of the Sacrament

Preface

2 Timothy 4:22; [Colossians 3:1]; [Psalm 136]



P The Lord be with you.



C And with thy spir - it.



P Lift up your hearts.



C We lift them up un - to the Lord.



P Let us give thanks un - to the Lord, our God.



C It is meet and right so to do.

P It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared, proclaiming Him the promised Messiah, the very Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and calling sinners to repentance that they might escape from the wrath to be revealed when He comes again in glory. Therefore, with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus

Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 21:9



☐ Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth;



heav'n and earth are full of Thy glo - ry. Ho - san - na,



ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is He,



bless - ed is He, bless - ed is He that com - eth in the name of the Lord.



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

Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13

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.

The Words of Our Lord *Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25*

☐ Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Pax Domini

John 20:19



P The peace of the Lord be with you al - ways.



C A - men.

Agnus Dei

John 1:29



O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak - est a-way the sin of the



world, have mer - cy up - on us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that



tak - est a-way the sin of the world, have mer - cy up - on us.



O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak - est a-way the sin of the



world, grant us Thy peace. A - men.

Sit

Distribution

Visitors – Please see the note on the inside front cover of this service folder regarding our Holy Communion policy.

Distribution Hymn: 333 Once He Came in Blessing



1 Once He came in bless - ing, All our sins re -
 2 Now He gent - ly leads us; With Him - self He
 3 Soon will come that hour _____ When with might - y
 4 Come, then, O Lord Je - sus, From our sins re -



dress - ing; Came in like - ness low - ly,
 feeds us Pre - cious food from heav - en,
 pow - er Christ will come in splen - dor
 lease us. Keep our hearts be - liev - ing,



Son of God most ho - ly; Bore the cross to
 Pledge of peace here giv - en, Man - na that will
 And will judg - ment ren - der, With the faith - ful
 That we, grace re - ceiv - ing, Ev - er may con -



save us; Hope and free - dom gave us.
 nour - ish Souls that they may flour - ish.
 shar - ing Joy be - yond com - par - ing.
 fess You Till in heav'n we bless You.

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Distribution Hymn: 352 Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord



1 Let the earth now praise the Lord, Who has tru - ly
2 What the Fa - thers most de - sired, What the proph - ets'
3 A - bram's prom - ised great re - ward, Zi - on's help - er,
4 As Your com - ing was in peace, Qui - et, full of



kept His word And at last to us did send
heart in - spired, What they longed for man - ya year,
Ja - cob's Lord— Him of two - fold race be - hold—
gen - tle - ness, Let the same mind dwell in me



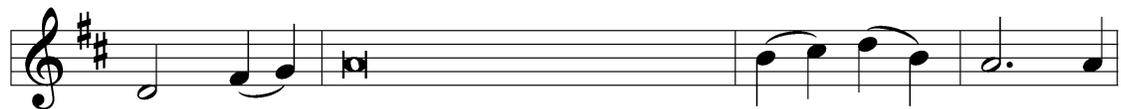
Christ, the sin - ner's help and friend.
Stands ful - filled in glo - ry here.
Tru - ly came, as long fore - told.
Which is Yours e - ter - nal - ly.

- 5 Bruise for me the serpent's head
That, set free from doubt and dread,
I may cling to You in faith,
Safely kept through life and death.
- 6 Then when You will come again
As the glorious king to reign,
I with joy will see Your face,
Freely ransomed by Your grace.

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Stand
Nunc Dimittis

Luke 2:29-32



C Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant de - part in peace ac-



cord - ing to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,



which Thou hast pre - pared be - fore the face of all people,



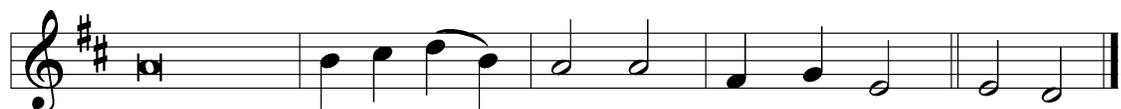
a light to light - en the Gen - tiles and the glo - ry of Thy



peo - ple Is - ra - el. Glo - ry be to the Father and



to the Son and to the Ho - ly Ghost; as it was in the beginning,



is now, and ev - er shall be, world with - out end. A - men.

Thanksgiving

Psalm 107:1



A O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,



C and His mercy endureth for - ev - er.

P Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy, You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



C A - men.



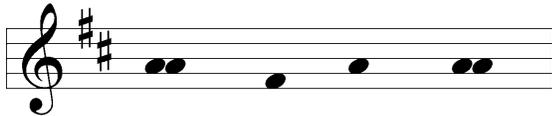
P The Lord be with you.



C And with thy spir - it.

Benedicamus

Psalm 103:1



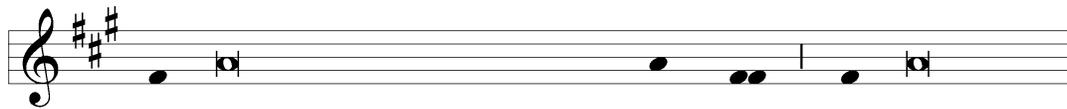
A Bless we the Lord.



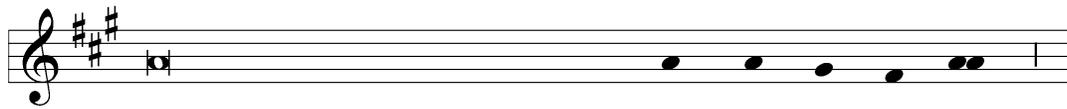
C Thanks be to God.

Benediction

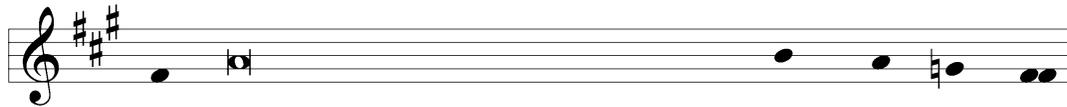
Numbers 6:24–26



P The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make



His face shine upon you and be gra - cious un - to you.



The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and † give you peace.



C A-men, a-men, a - men.

Closing Hymn: 350 Come, Thou Precious Ransom, Come



1 Come, Thou pre - cious Ran - som, come, On - ly hope for
2 En - ter now my wait - ing heart, Glo - rious King and
3 My ho - san - nas and my palms Gra - cious - ly re -
4 Hail! Ho - san - na, Da - vid's Son! Je - sus, hear our



sin - ful mor - tals! Come, O Sav - ior of the world!
Lord most ho - ly. Dwell in me and ne'er de - part,
ceive, I pray Thee; Ev - er - more, as best I can,
sup - pli - ca - tion! Let Thy king - dom, scep - ter, crown,



O - pen are to Thee all por - tals. Come, Thy beau - ty
Though I am but poor and low - ly. Ah, what rich - es
Sav - ior, I will hom - age pay Thee, And in faith I
Bring us bless - ing and sal - va - tion, That for - ev - er



let us see; Anx - ious - ly we wait for Thee.
will be mine When Thou art my guest di - vine!
will em - brace, Lord, Thy mer - it through Thy grace.
we may sing: Hail! Ho - san - na to our King.

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Acknowledgments

Divine Service, Setting Three from Lutheran Service Book

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THIS WEEK'S CHURCH CALENDAR

- Sun. 12/19 The Fourth Sunday in Advent**
- **Divine Service 9:30 a.m.**
 - **Adult Bible Class 10:45 a.m., Fellowship Hall**
 - **Sunday School for Kids 10:45 a.m., Upstairs Youth Room**
 - **Christmas Caroling in the Neighborhood 6:30 p.m.**
- Mon. 12/20 Pastor out of the Office**
Handbell Practice 6:00 p.m.
- Tue. 12/21 First Day of Winter**
- Wed. 12/22 Midweek abbreviated Communion Service 4:30 p.m. (masks required)**
- Thu. 12/23 Distribution of January's church newsletter**
Pastor out of the office in the afternoon
- Fri. 12/24 Church Office closing at 3:00 p.m.**
Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service 6:00 p.m.
- Sat. 12/25 Christmas Day Divine Service 10:00 a.m.**
- Sun. 12/26 The First Sunday after Christmas**
- **Divine Service 9:30 a.m.**
 - **Adult Bible Class 10:45 a.m., Fellowship Hall**
 - **Sunday School for Kids 10:45 a.m., Upstairs Youth Room**

TODAY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

OUR EFFORTS TO HELP MITIGATE CORONAVIRUS – Here's what you can expect for our Sunday morning Divine Services:

1. Hand sanitizer and face masks will be available on the table in the entryway if you decide to use them.
2. Those who wish may request a squirt of hand sanitizer from the usher before Holy Communion, and sanitizer will also be sitting on small tables in the side altar rooms for your use following Communion.
3. The "Sharing of the Peace" has been temporarily suspended.

Pastor's sermons will still be posted on St. Mark's Facebook page a day or two after each service. Thank you for your gracious cooperation and your flexibility!

ADULT BIBLE STUDY TODAY – All adults are welcome to join Pastor for Adult Bible Study in the basement fellowship hall **this morning** directly following the Divine Service (**around 10:45 a.m.**) as he continues to teach on the book of Genesis. Coffee and snacks will be available too.

CHILDREN’S SUNDAY SCHOOL TODAY – Preschool through Elementary-age school kids are welcome to join Mrs. Kaufman in the upstairs youth room (behind the choir loft) right after the Divine Service for Sunday School. Sunday School **from 10:45 – 11:45 a.m.** Kids will hear a different Bible story each week; what a great way for them to learn about Jesus! And kids are certainly welcome to bring friends and/or family with them also!

NEIGHBORHOOD CHRISTMAS CAROLING TONIGHT - If anyone would like to carol in the neighborhood behind church **this evening starting at 6:30 p.m., please let Pastor know ASAP!** The more singers we have, the better! A booklet of your favorite Christmas hymns will be provided, and feel free to bring a friend or two!

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON COMMUNION SERVICES - We rejoice that even in the midst of the current surge in COVID cases, many have continued to come to church and receive God's Word and Sacrament among His people. However, we also understand that among our brothers and sisters in Christ, there are special cases which prohibit attendance at the gathered assembly. Therefore, so that we might all be able to receive the strength of Christ in the Sacrament, we are now offering special **midweek communion services**. These services will take place weekly on **Wednesday afternoons at 4:30 p.m.** and are meant for those who are unable to attend, or are uncomfortable attending, the Divine Service on Sunday morning. The service will be brief (~15 minutes) and those who attend will be asked to wear masks. This will be a temporary part of our worship schedule. (Please note that Pastor will not hold this midweek communion service on Wednesday, December 29.)

ADVENT PLEDGE DRIVE - When we give offerings to Church, we do it because we love the Word of God and want to see it proclaimed in our community for years to come. Indeed, such giving is our Christian duty. Therefore, in the season of Advent, St. Mark's will be holding a Pledge Drive. Here, we are asking all congregation members to consider whether the Lord has positioned them to increase their giving going forward, and to pledge to give accordingly as long as circumstances allow. Pledge forms, with accompanying instructions, can be found at church near the elevator door across from the sanctuary exit. All received pledges will be presented to the Lord with thanksgiving on **Sunday, January 2**. Please consider participating, as we await our coming Savior, who has freed us to be generous by His blood!

READ THROUGH THE BIBLE IN 2022! The Board of Elders is leading a reading program in which we will be going through the entire Bible in the year 2022. We hope you will participate! There's nothing more important for us than the Word of Christ, for His Word is "Spirit and Life" (John 6:63)! **The readings for Week 1 (Jan 1-8) are: Genesis 1-4 (Jan 1); Genesis 5-8 (Jan 2); Genesis 9-12 (Jan 3); Genesis 13-17 (Jan 4); Genesis 18-20 (Jan 5); Genesis 21-23 (Jan 6); Genesis 24-25 (Jan 7); Genesis 26-28 (Jan 8).** Yearly reading plans are available on the back table in the sanctuary.

FUNDRAISERS TO SUPPORT LIBERIAN LUTHERAN SCHOOL – St. Mark’s Board of Human Care will be hosting several different fundraisers over the next year in an effort to raise the \$3,000 that is needed to install a new well at the Liberian Lutheran School that we support. Please watch for additional fundraising details in our Sunday bulletins. **We are only \$700 short of having the entire \$3,000 now!** You may also choose to give a cash donation by placing any amount (checks made payable to St. Mark’s Lutheran Church) in a green pew envelope (write “Joe Boway” on the front of the envelope), or you can visit St. Mark’s website and click on our online giving button where you can donate to the fund called “Joe Boway/Liberian School.” Check the fundraising poster at the top of the basement stairs for dollar updates.

THE MICHIGAN DISTRICT IS SPONSORING A THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE called *Beyond the Walls with Jesus* on **Saturday, February 5** from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Our Savior Lutheran Church, 7910 W. St. Joseph Highway in Lansing, Michigan. The conference will focus on ways we can make our faith shine as we engage with the culture outside the walls of the church in a world where the church is often marginalized and ridiculed. For more information, or to register, go to: michigandistrict.org/theological22. The cost is \$20 per person.

ST. PAUL, PONTIAC SEEKING FOOD DONATIONS - The Food Pantry at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Pontiac is getting low on the items listed below.

1. Rice
2. Tuna
3. Green beans
4. Baked beans (we are set for pinto, black and kidney)
5. Soups
6. Spaghetti noodles
7. Other plain pastas
8. Canned fruits
9. Family sized bars of soap (Dollar stores have best deal on personals)
10. Family sized toothpaste
11. Deodorants
12. Razors
13. Hand sanitizers
14. Diapers (newborn and size 5 and 6) we are set for other sizes
15. Diaper wipes
16. Family sized shampoo
17. Laundry detergent
18. Canned chicken and meat
19. 1# packs of chicken or hamburger
20. Dried or packages milk

These items can be purchased either at a local store or on Amazon. Donations should be dropped off at St. Paul, Pontiac. Their address is: 1133 Joslyn Ave., Pontiac, MI.

JANUARY MEN'S BIBLE STUDY – All men are welcome to join Pastor Vergin for Bible Study & Breakfast here at St. Mark's on **Saturday, January 8** from 9 a.m. – 10:30 p.m. This is a great way to gather as men of Christ to delve deeper into scripture. Bring a friend or two also, if you'd like! **For those who'd like to stay after the Bible Study to help UNDECORATE THE CHURCH, your assistance would be greatly appreciated!**

TOILETRY/HYGIENE DONATIONS FOR THE OPEN DOOR OUTREACH CENTER – We continue to receive hygiene & toiletry products year around for the Open Door Outreach Center in Waterford. There are two bins located on the shelves at the bottom of the sanctuary stairs where you can place product donations. The Open Door is a non-profit organization that assists needy families in the Lakes Area. They are ALWAYS in need of toiletry and hygiene items, so **if you can provide any of these throughout the year, it would be appreciated.**

WE CONTINUE TO COLLECT used postage stamps for Wycliffe Bible Translation Ministries, and used eyeglasses for MOST Ministries in the two plastic bins on the shelves at the bottom of the sanctuary stairs. Wycliffe sells the stamps to stamp collectors and then uses the proceeds to fund Bible translation projects throughout the world. MOST Ministries repairs/refurbishes used eyeglasses and distributes them via eyeglass clinics to the needy around the world. If you donate postage stamps, please be sure to leave 1/4" of the envelope paper around the stamp.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT OUR *INVISIBLE DAD* FUNDRAISER where you can donate your extra coins or cash into the jar on the rear table in the sanctuary in order to help provide lunches to underprivileged students at Keith Elementary School. We will continue to receive donations year round, and will deliver a check for the accumulated donations to Keith sometime during March of 2022. Thanks in advance for helping students in need in our community!



SERVING THE LORD WITH GLADNESS THIS MORNING

Presiding Minister

Pastor Aaron Vergin

Acolyte

TBD

Altar Guild

Jennie Kaufman

Elder on Duty

John Sidelink

Greeter(s)

Carolyn Achimov

Offering Counters

Jennie & Karen Kaufman

Organist

Rob Wheeler

Percussionist

David Drake

Trumpeter

Chris Gerard

Usher

Tom Kaufman

Video Technician

Debbie Sidelink