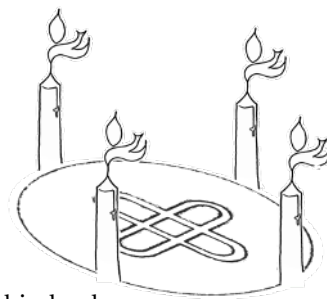


St Mark Lutheran Church

Service of Holy Communion



Welcome to this divine service of worship!

Plain font indicates portions of the liturgy shared by worship leaders.

Bold font indicates portions of the liturgy shared by the congregation.

The obelisk (†) invites the congregation to stand as it is able.

The double obelisk (‡) invites the congregation to kneel or sit as it is able.

Uniting in Worship + Growing in Wisdom + Serving in Love
to embrace all in response to God.

December 22, 2024: Fourth Sunday of Advent

9:00 & 11:00am

Prelude: *Toccata on "Veni Emmanuel"*
Angels Might Be Anywhere at All

A. Carter
T. Hunter/J. Duxbury

Preparation for Worship

Praise to you, O God, who lives with us, sharing our flesh and bones. As we wait with Mary and dream with Joseph, let your face shine upon us more radiantly than these candles and more dearly than all else we seek. Restore us and banish all our fears. We pray in the name of your promised child and our Savior, Immanuel. Amen.

‡Confession and Forgiveness

Gathered in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
let us sit or kneel and confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

I confess to God Almighty, before the whole company of heaven, and to you, my brothers and sisters, my siblings in Christ, that I have sinned by my own fault in thought, word, and deed. I pray God Almighty to have mercy on me, forgive me all my sins, and bring me to everlasting life.

Almighty and merciful God grant you healing, pardon, and forgiveness of all your sins. Amen.

I confess to God Almighty, before the whole company of heaven, and to you, my brothers and sisters, my siblings in Christ, that I have sinned by my own fault in thought, word, and deed. I pray God Almighty to have mercy on me, forgive me all my sins, and bring me to everlasting life.

Almighty and merciful God grant you healing, pardon,
and forgiveness of all your sins. Amen.

†Hymn: *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

Tune: STUTTGART, Christian Friedrich Witt, 1660-1716



1 Come, thou long - ex - spect - ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo - ple free;
2 Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,
3 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;
4 By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long - ing heart.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king - dom bring.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

†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.**

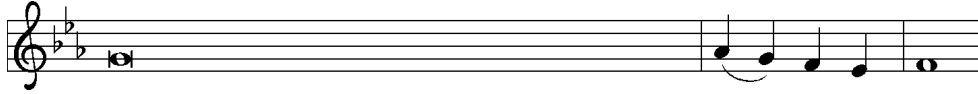
†Kyrie



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



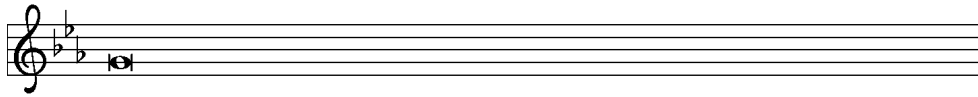
Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



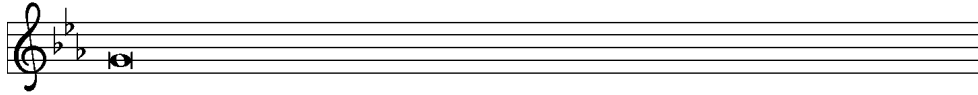
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men, a - men.

†Prayer of The Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading: *Micah 5:2-5a*

A reading from Micah:

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalmody: *Psalms 80:1-7*

Text: from Psalm 80:3; Tune: G. Melson

Refrain:

Re - store us, O God, and let your face shine
up - on us, O God, and we shall be saved.

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph | like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned up- | on the cherubim.
In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, | and Manasseh,
stir up your strength and | come to help us. **Refrain**

O LORD | God of hosts,
how long will your anger fume when your | people pray?
You have fed them with the | bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of | tears to drink.
You have made us the derision | of our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh | us to scorn. **Refrain**

Second Reading: *Hebrews 10:5-10*

A reading from Hebrews:

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, ‘See, God, I have come to do your will, O God’ (in the scroll of the book it is written of me).” When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), then he added, “See, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God’s will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

†Gospel Acclamation

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

Here I am, the servant † of the Lord; let it be with me according † to your word.

†Gospel: *Luke 1:26-45*

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her: "*Do Not Be Afraid*" [(excerpt) *M. McFee/C. Bell*] Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her. In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Pastor Joel Neubauer

†Hymn: *Canticle of the Turning*

Text: Rory Cooney, b. 1952; based on Luke 1:46-55

Tune: STAR OF COUNTY DOWN, Irish Traditional



1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
2 Though I am small, my . . . God, my all, you . . .
3 From the halls of pow'r to the for - tress tow'r, not a
4 Though the na - tions rage from . . age to age, we re -

continued →



God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
work great . . things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the
stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your
mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -



won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
jus - tice tears ev - 'ry ty - rant . . . from his throne.
liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.



You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to
The hun - gry poor shall . . weep no more, for the
This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the



weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the
food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread, ev - 'ry
prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be



name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.



My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.



Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

†Te Deum

**You are God; we praise you.
You are the Lord; we acclaim you.
You are the eternal Father; all creation worships you.
To you all angels, all the powers of heaven,
cherubim and seraphim, sing in endless praise:
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**The glorious company of the apostles praise you.
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.
The clean-clad ranks of martyrs praise you.
Throughout the world the holy Church acclaims you:
Father of majesty unbounded;
your true and only Son, worthy of all worship;
and the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.**

**You, Christ, are the king of glory,
the eternal Son of the Father.
When you became flesh to set us free,
you did not overlook the virgin's womb.
You overcame the sting of death,
and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.
You are seated at God's right hand in glory.
We believe that you will come and be our judge.
Come then, Lord, and help your people,
bought with the price of your own blood,
and bring us with your saints to glory everlasting. Amen.**

‡Prayers of Intercession

Awaiting Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.

God our uniter, increase communication and cooperation in our relationships with those of other traditions and religions. Root your church in the radical message of your incarnation, and enable us to pursue your justice in the world. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God our creator, we praise you for the beauty that surrounds us. Awaken in us a renewed sense of care for the wildlife in our communities. Form us into faithful stewards of what you have made. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God our sovereign, Mary proclaims a new way of life that lifts up the lowly and fills the hungry with good things. Nurture in local governments and municipalities a desire to care for all who are overlooked and ignored. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God our beacon, as the northern hemisphere begins its slow turn toward more daylight, remind us that even in the deepest nights, you are there. Comfort the lonely and bereaved. Hold closely the frightened, anxious, depressed, and ill. Be gentle with all whom we remember aloud on our lips and silently in our hearts including... Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God our guide, shepherd the leadership of this congregation. Bless the council and staff in discerning future ministry and open their hearts to the voices of the community. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God our life, you remember the promises you have made to your people. In gratitude for those who have died, we praise you for your faithfulness throughout history. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

*Savior of the nations, come. Receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts. In Jesus' name: **Amen.***

†Peace and Offering

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

Our offering is given for the mission of the church, and caring for those in need. Offerings may be shared in the plates at the doors of the sanctuary or online by using this QR code with your smart device. As partners in ministry, we thank God for our shared commitment!



Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of blessing.
Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life. Gather the hopes and the dreams of all; unite them with the prayers we offer now. Grace our table with your presence, and give us a foretaste of the feast to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

†Great Thanksgiving (*Dialogue, Preface, Sanctus, Eucharistic and Lord's Prayers*)

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.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of
pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the
name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Sovereign of our cosmos known and unknown.
You have bound yourself in faith to Israel
and you promise even now to be Emmanuel, God with us.

In the advent of your Christ, babe of the blessed Virgin Mary and child of Joseph's adoption,
who was born, who was killed, who has been raised, our Lord:
Come, o come, and dwell among us.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread,
gave thanks, broke it and gave it for them to eat, 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 them to drink, saying,
"Take and drink, this cup is the new testament in my blood,
shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

Remembering Jesus' life, death, resurrection and ascension, we still await the advent of our Lord.

Come upon us, Holy Spirit, that we too may conceive the Word of Life for all your people.
Come upon these gifts of bread and wine,
that we may receive Jesus' body and blood in, with and under them
to welcome the Incarnation of your Word in the humility of the manger,
and to trust the witness of his resurrection as the advent of our own new creation.
Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honor and glory is yours, as you call all souls your children,
One God, in your holy church, coming now and abiding always. **Amen.**

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 to Communion

Taste and see that the Lord is good.
Thanks be to God.

Agnus Dei

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -
way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Communion — *please see back cover for a note on receiving Holy Communion.*

Communion Music: *The Angel Gabriel*

J. Raney

†Post Communion Blessing

The body & blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you & keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

†Nunc Dimittis



Now, Lord, you let your ser-vant go in peace: your word has been ful -
filled. My own eyes have seen the sal - va - tion which you have pre-pared in the
sight of ev - 'ry peo - ple: a light to re-veal you to the na - tions
and the glo - ry of your peo - ple Is - ra - el.
Now, Lord, you let your ser - vant go in peace.

†Benediction

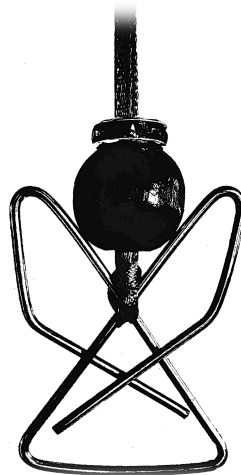
The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD smile on you and be gracious unto you;
the LORD look upon you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

*There are angels among us
that may not meet the eye.
There are messengers of hope
coming from a choir on high.*

*But don't just look up;
for the way God works
is to plant more hope right here on earth
just like it was at Jesus' birth.*

*There are angels among us
bringing hope on earth.*

*Do not be afraid.
Do not be afraid.
Do not be afraid.
Do not be afraid.*



***Messengers of Love, Angels Among Us,
a Gift from God's Heaven to Our Hearts & Homes***

In preparation throughout Advent to share the good news — the gospel message of God's love with us in Christ Jesus — our pre-k through high school-aged Sunday School students have been busy at work fashioning angel ornaments as a gift for every home of every friend of St Mark who gathers with us this season. Please visit and view the filigree tree in our narthex today and select a special angel for your home as a reminder of the angels here, like our students, who serve God as messengers of love.

Let the angels' perpetual song — "Fear not!" — be an anthem of God's gracious and courageous love for this season of Christ's revealing and for every movement in your pilgrimage of faith.

God is with us. O come, o come, Emmanuel.

†Dismissal—*from 3 John 1:2*

Beloved, I pray that all may go well with each one of you, and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul. Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

†Postlude

A Note on Receiving Holy Communion

Believing in the real presence of Christ, this church practices eucharistic hospitality. All baptized Christians are invited to receive Christ's body and blood; all people are welcomed to receive God's blessing in the love and life of Jesus for you today and always.

We share Christ's body and blood in bread and wine. After washing hands with rubbing alcohol, the pastor will dip the host into the cup and offer the bread and wine together; to receive the host without wine, please inform the pastor with words or by placing a hand on your chest. Truly Christ is fully present in each element separately. Christ is for you.

Communicants will come forward to the feast in continuous procession.

PJ's reflection on the Gospel

The wind is sacred in the hills for them
like the breath these pregnant women share
in utero with cells who touch no air
yet leap for joy as Love's own fingers hem
their human seams together like a gem,
a diamond. Earth's deep dust and pressure pair
together; sacred wind erodes 'til, bare,
a diamond— like the star of Bethlehem—
appears— like pregnant women giving birth
as if it were an ordinary gift
to bear each generation God befriends.
This wind is sacred and our hilly earth
will feel it like the Holy Spirit lift
us. Leap for joy: so Life begins, not ends.

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