ST. MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH

A congregation of the
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
welcomes you!

December 21, 2025

The 4th Sunday of Advent

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

SATURDAY

"SHINE" CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP: 6:00 PM (1ST SATURDAYS-CHAPEL)

SUNDAY

THE DIVINE LITURGY: 9:00AM
EDUCATION HOUR: 10:30AM

105 EAST "D" STREET BELLEVILLE, IL 62220
EMAIL: WORSHIP@STMARKBELLEVILLE.ORG

THE REV. BRIAN M. ROBISON, PASTOR
THE REV. RONALD C. NEUSTADT, PASTOR EMERITUS

+ **To parents with small children:** We are glad your family is worshiping with us today! ***"Quiet Bags"*** (supplies & activities for use by small children) are available in the Welcome Area. If you or your child need a break from the service, feel free to use the Welcome Area/narthex (the service is audible over the speakers).

+ An **accessible Restroom** is available off the Welcome Area/Narthex next to the **accessibility lift** to the lower level. **Parish Hall and additional Restrooms** are located on the lower level of the main church building. The stairway is off the entrance foyer. An usher will be happy to assist you with the lift.

+ **Assistive listening devices** and **low vision items** are available. Please ask one of our ushers for assistance.

+ **Land Acknowledgement:** This church is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the **Quapaw**, **Myaamia**, **Kaskaskia**, and **Kickapoo** peoples, and we give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also recognize and honor all our Indigenous siblings who have and still call this land home.

PRELUDE *"In the Bleak Midwinter"* *Arr. by M. Hayes* Flugelhorn: *Charlie Duncan*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS *Please* **STAND** *as you are able*

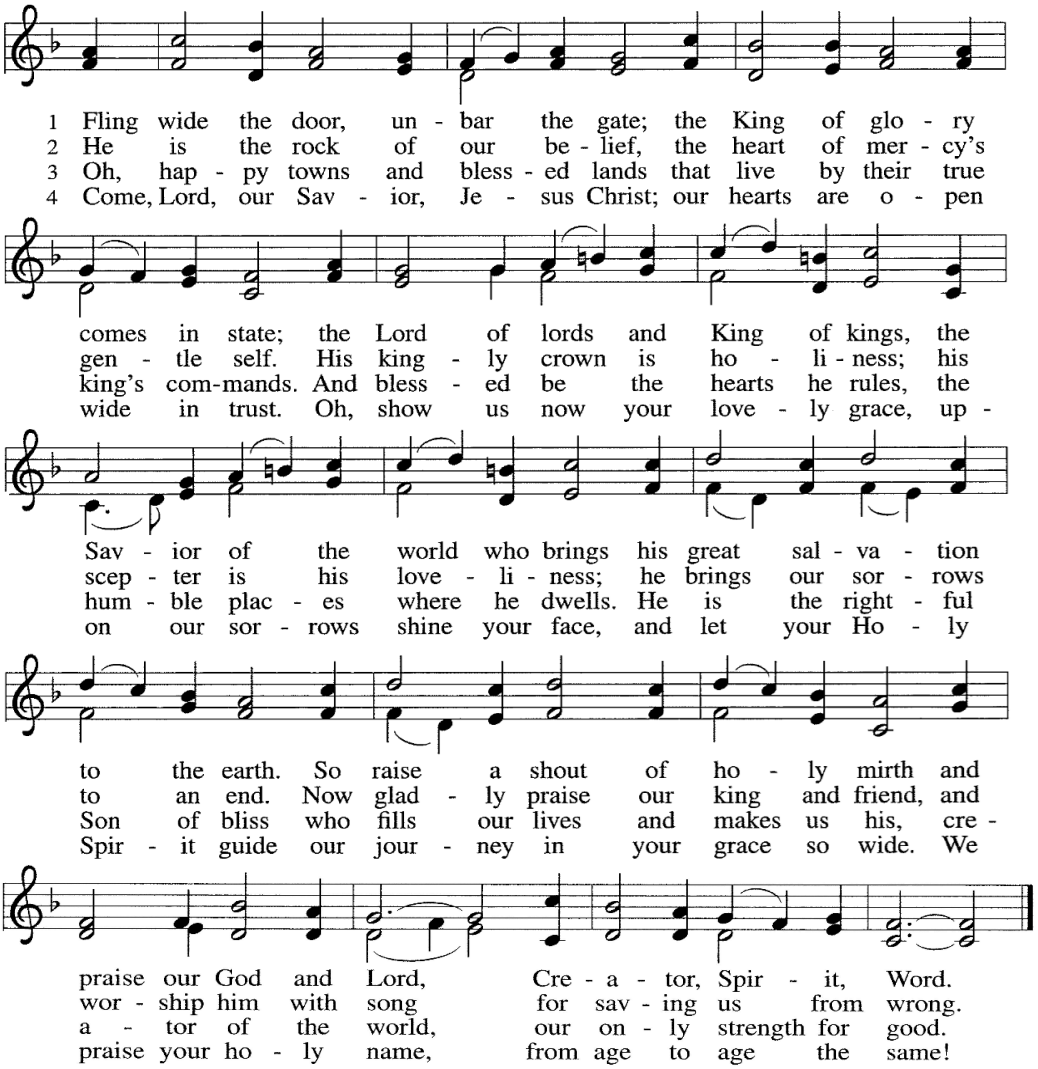
Blessed be the Father, +Son, and Holy Spirit – the one God whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Please **KNEEL**, *or* **remain as you are**. *Silence is kept for reflection.*

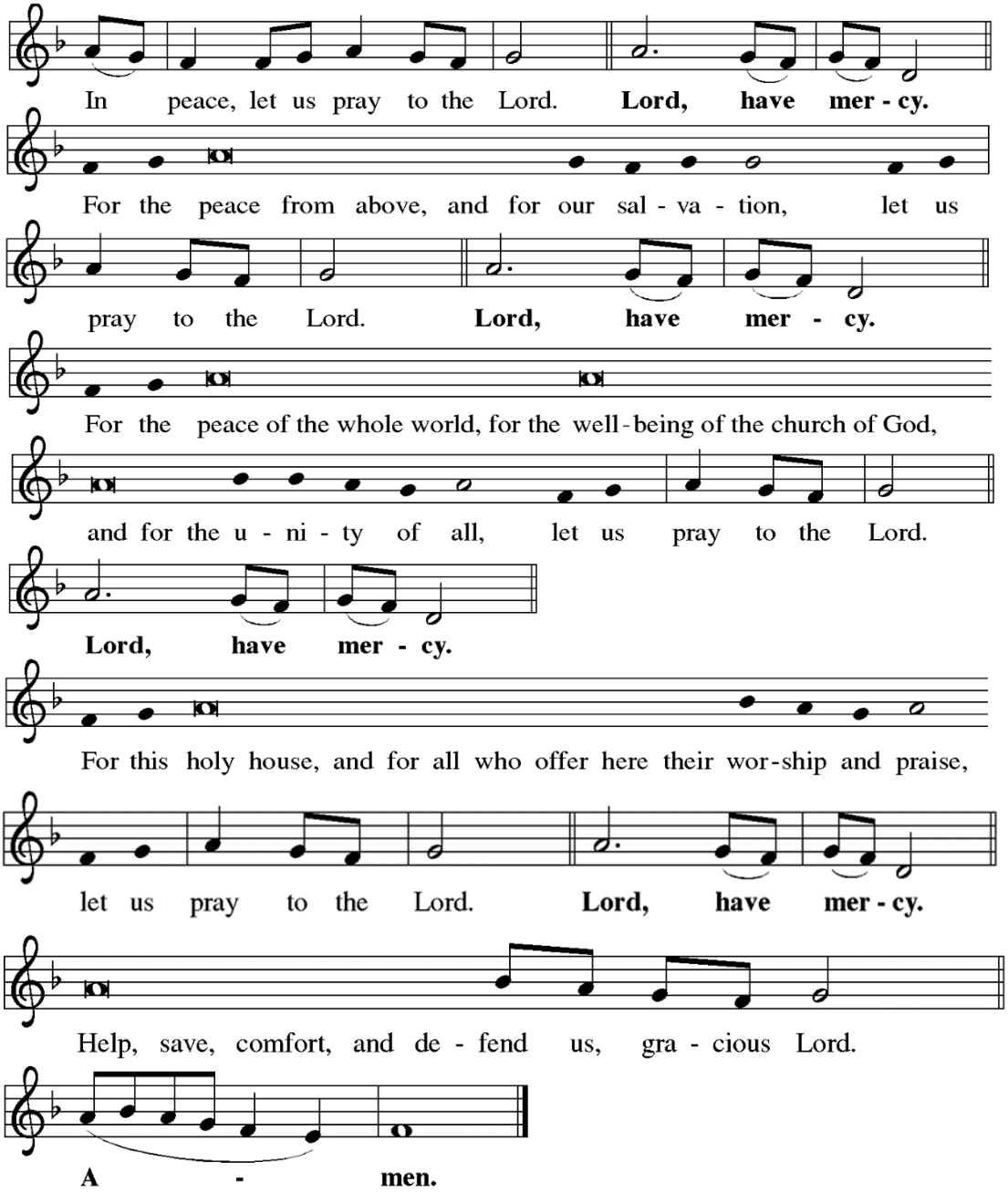
Long-expected God, **we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake.**
Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors.
Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us,
that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.

God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. You are freed and + forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN **"Fling Wide the Door"** **ELW 259**

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

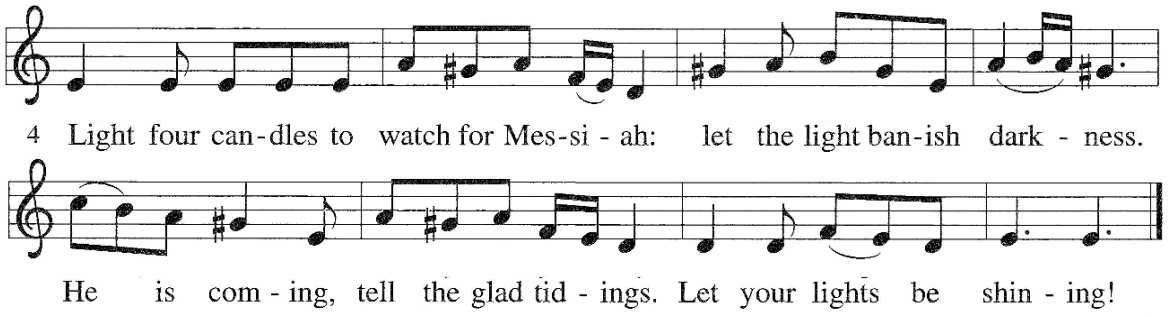


LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

Blessed are you, God of hosts, for you promised to send a son, Emmanuel, who brought your presence among us; and you promise through your Son Jesus to save us from our sin.

As we light these candles, turn again to us in mercy; strengthen our faith in the word spoken by your prophets; restore us and give us life that we may be saved. O house of David, come,

let us rejoice, for the Son of God, Emmanuel, comes to be with us. Amen.

"Light One Candle" **ELW 240 vs. 4**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray... Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Following the prayer, please **SIT.**

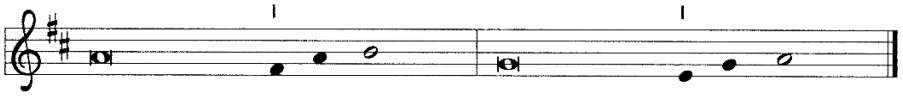
WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 7:10-16

10 The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, 11 "Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or
high as heaven." 12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test." 13 Then
Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary
my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with
child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. 15 He shall eat curds and honey by the
time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. 16 For before the child knows how to
refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be
deserted."

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

PSALM 80:1-3, 17-19 *chanted responsively between choir and congregation*



1 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph | like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned up- | on the cherubim.
2 **In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, | and Manasseh,**
stir up your strength and | come to help us.
3 Restore | us, O God;
let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.
17 **Let your hand be upon the one at | your right hand,**
the one you have made so strong | for yourself.

[18] And so will we never turn a- | way from you;
give us life, that we may call up- | on your name.
[19] **Restore us, O LORD | God of hosts;**
let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.

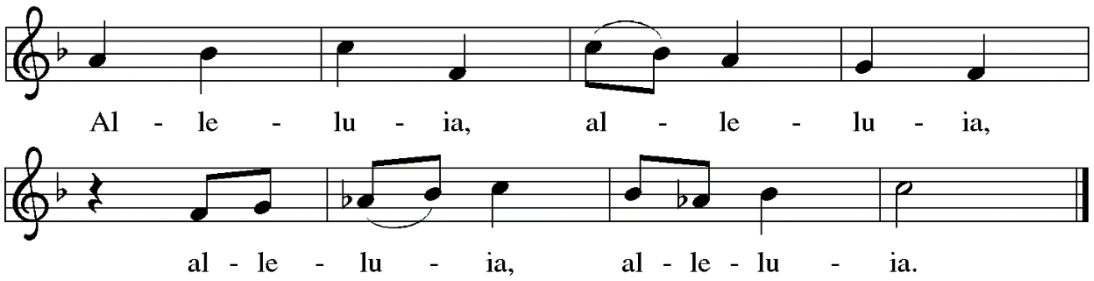
SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-17

[1] Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, [2] which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, [3] the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh [4] and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, [5] through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, [6] including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, [7] To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

ALLELUIA VERSE *The assembly* **STANDS** *to welcome the gospel.*



GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

A reading from the Holy Gospel as recorded by the Apostle Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[18] Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. [19] Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. [20] But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. [21] She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." [22] All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: [23] "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." [24] When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife [25] but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

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

SERMON *"Grace Born in the Dark"* **The Rev. Brian M .Robison**

Following the sermon, the assembly **STANDS** *to proclaim the word of God in song.*

HYMN OF THE DAY **"Joseph, Faithful, Gentle Servant"** *Tune: Hyfrydol*

1. Joseph, fai-thful, gentle ser-vant,
Called to bear a ho-ly trust,
God has se-t before your fo-otsteps
Paths both righteous a-nd unjust.
Still you fo-llowed where God le-d you,
Vigil ke-pt by Ma-ry's side;
Gra-nt that w-e may lea-rn your cour--age,
Walking o-n where fears abide.

2. In the qui-et dark of mi-dnight,
When your heart was fil-led with fear,
God revealed a word of com-fort:
"Joseph, know the Lo-rd is near.
Mary be-ars the promised Sa-vior,
Light that bre-aks the de-epest night;
Ri-se and ta-ke her a-s your par--tner,
For in he-r the world finds Light."

3. Teach us, Jo-seph, in our wai-ting,
How to trust when ho-pe is far;
Help us gua-rd the fragile pro-mise
Of God's mercy whe-re we are.
By your stea-dfast, watchful ke-eping,
Guide us i-n this A-dvent grace;
Le-ad us tow-ard the chi-ld of wo--nder,
God's great lo-ve made flesh in Christ.

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 INTERCESSION *The names of those for whom we pray aloud (members, staff, first-time additions) are listed below. Please read only the first names. Other prayer intentions can be found in the back of this bulletin. The response to "God of grace," is* **"Hear our prayer."**

Ken Augustine, **Eleanor** Benton, **Toni** Brendel, **Gary** Dozier, **Charlie** Duncan, **Evelyn** Duncan,
Art Engelage, **Michael** Foppe**, Morris** Kugler, **Bruce** Martens, **Lucy** Montgomery,
Ron Neustadt, **Kim** Palmer, **Tina** Partelow, **Marilyn** Robinson, **Cohen** Summers,
Carol Weshinskey**, Gary** Weshinskey, **Angie** Fletcher

PEACE *The assembly is invited to share a greeting of God's peace with one another. Following* ***the Peace****, you may be* ***seated*** *for a few moments.*

HANDBELL CHOIR *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*

OFFERING *Should you wish to leave an offering today, it may be placed in the wooden box on the table near the baptismal font at any point during or after the service.*

OFFERING PRAYER *Please* **STAND** *as you are able*

Assistant: Let us pray together…

Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come. Amen.

OFFERTORY "O Little Town of Bethlehem" ELW 279 v. 1

O little town of Bethlehem, how still w-e see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the sile-nt stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

GREAT THANKSGIVING *(Tune: "O Little Town of Bethlehem")*

The Lord be with you.
And with you.
Lift up yo-ur hearts to pray.
We lift them up unto the Lord, for we tha-nk God this day.
It's right to praise God al-ways, through Christ for whom we wait;
whose advent wakes creation's song, its joy to celebrate.

For Christ is born of Ma-ry, and, gather-ed all above
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of- wond'ring love.
O morning stars, toge-ther proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!

The night before he died, our Lord had supper- with his friends.
He broke the bread and took the cup, and giv-ing thanks he said:
"This is my body bro-ken; this cup, my blood for you;
And when you eat rememb'ring me, forgiveness flows to you."

THE LORD'S PRAYER *traditional*
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
God is now in flesh appearing. Come to the feast of joy!

LAMB OF GOD *(Tune: "O Little Town of Bethlehem")* *Please* **SIT**
O Lamb of God, you take away the sin o-f all the world;
O Lamb of God, you take away the sin o-f all the world;
Have mercy on us, Lamb of-God, and give your people peace.
Have mercy on us, Lamb of God, and give the- world your peace.

Acknowledgements: *Reprinted from Words for Worship, copyright 2024 Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission. Scripture quotations (except psalms) from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. All rights reserved. Used by permission. Liturgy reprinted from Evangelical Lutheran Worship. Used with permission of OneLicense #SBL07861. "O Little Town of Bethlehem" liturgy arranged by the Rev. Joan Beck. Songs and hymns reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-729176 "Fling Wide the Door" ©2006 Augsburg Fortress Publishers; "Light One Candle" © 1984 Augsburg Fortress; "Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly" Music: © Estate of Skinner Chavez-Meks; "O, Lord Now Let Your Servant" © 1925, Augsburg Fortress; "Prepare the Royal Highway" ©1978 Augsburg Fortress Publishers. All rights reserved. "Joseph, Faithful, Gentle Servant" by the Rev. Brian Robison, 2025. Some hymn music has been altered due to space considerations. All other printed hymns used are in the Public Domain.*

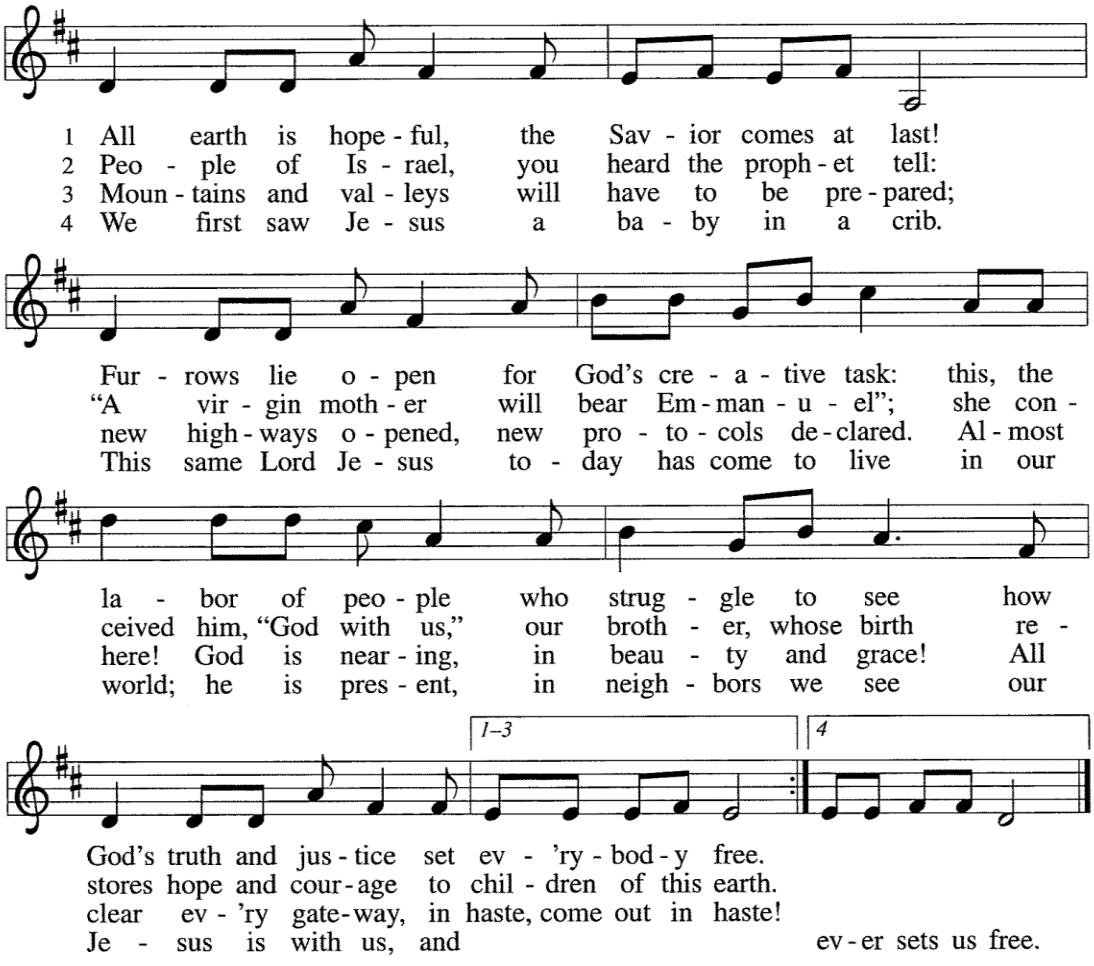
COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

***Communion is open to everyone**. In this sacrament, **we believe that Christ is truly present in the bread and wine**. At this service, communion will be served from around the altar rail. At the usher's direction, please come forward and kneel at the altar rail.*

- ✠ *After receiving the bread, you may take an individual cup or drink from the chalice.*
- ✠ *You may return to your seat after communing.*
- ✠ *Those who do not wish to commune may come forward for a blessing. Please cross your arms over your chest to indicate this preference.*
- ✠ *Reception of the Eucharist under one kind (bread or wine) is valid communion for those who must avoid either for health reasons.*
- ✠ *If you are unable to go to the altar for communion, please notify an usher or the pastor, so that communion may be brought to you in your pew.*

SONGS DURING THE DISTRIBUTION:

"All Earth is Hopeful" **ELW 266**



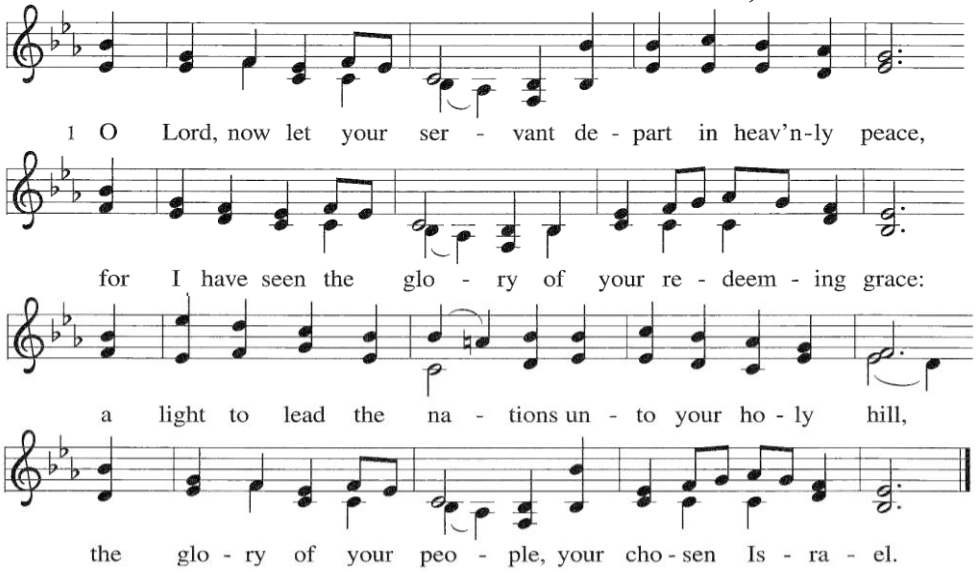
CHANCEL CHOIR *"Midnight Clear"* *Schulz-Widmar*

Text can be found on the last page of the bulletin

After the distribution is complete, the assembly **STANDS** *for the blessing.*

TABLE BLESSING

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

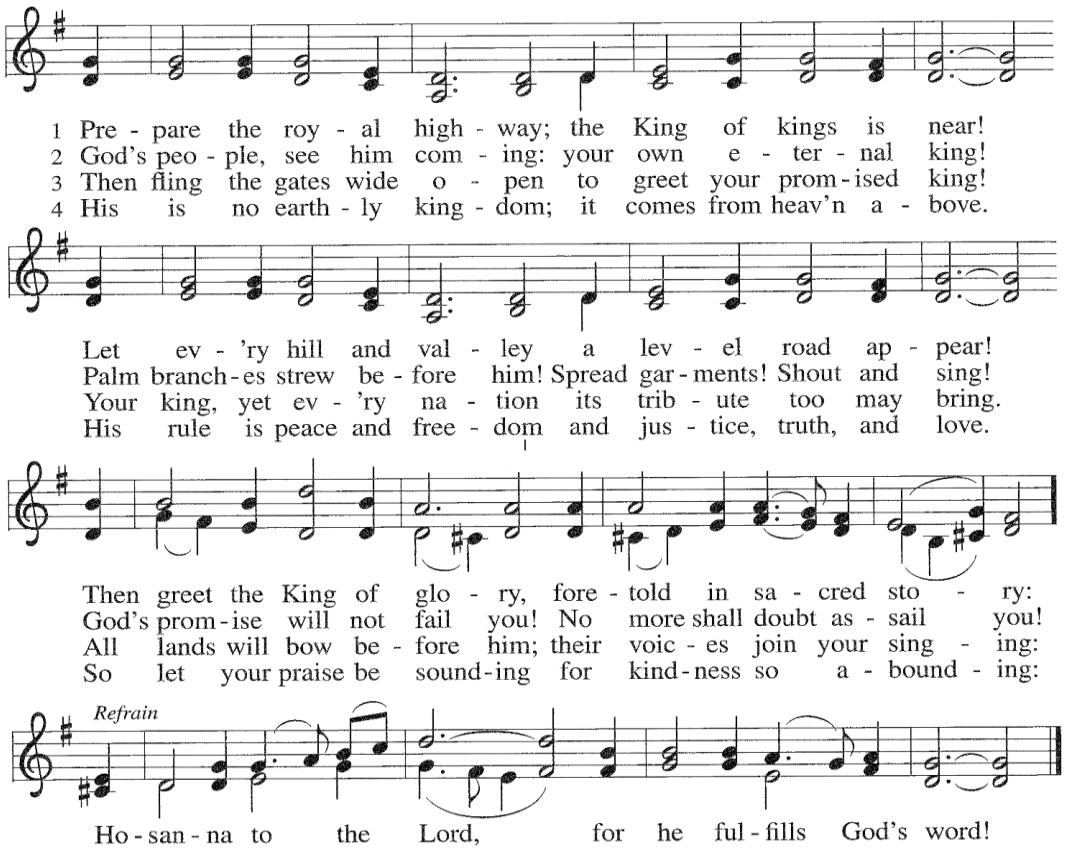
CANTICLE AFTER COMMUNION "O Lord, Now Let Your Servant" ELW 313 v. 1

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Assistant: Let us pray together…

God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. Amen.

BENEDICTION

May our God who comes among us grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share - Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit - today and always. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN "Prepare the Royal Highway" ELW 264

ANNOUNCMENTS

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Do not lose heart.
Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE *"My Dancing Day"* *L. Koch*

MINISTERS OF THE LITURGY

Presider & Preacher: The Rev. Brian M. Robison + **Assisting Minister:** Danielle Tribout
Lector: Curtis Dowty + **Crucifer:** Keith Kniepkamp + **Chalice Bearer:** Mike Murakami
Tech Minister: Greg Martens + **Safety Volunteer:** Frank Dressel
Ushers: TBD & Curt Gansmann + **Organist**: Evelyn Duncan
Guest Musician: Charlie Duncan

Prayer Intentions

St. Mark Members

Ken Augustine, Eleanor Benton, Toni Brendel, Gary Dozier, Charlie Duncan, Evelyn Duncan, Art Engelage, Michael Foppe, Morris Kugler, Bruce Martens, Lucy Montgomery, Kim Palmer, Tina Partelow, Marilyn Robinson, Cohen Summers, Carol and Gary Weshinskey

St. Mark Family and Friends

Dennis Althardt, Bert Alvarez, Stellamarie Bearth, Bonnie Baete, John Belz, Thomas Boxdorfer, Jim Braeutigam, Patty Brennecke, Susan Carson, Christine, Jody Cosson, Arianna Curnes, Catherine Davis, Mike Ellison, Katrina Fenner, Angie Fletcher, Josh Gansmann, Marge Gardner, Christine Gass, Viv Gillespie, Joni Giordano, David Graber, Donna Greenwell, Stephanie Groennert, TC Groennert, Andrea Hendrix, Jamie House, Glenda Jacquot, Jimmy Jurgens, Austin Lickenbrock, Dusty Little, Donna Loesche, Becky Loeschner, Wyatt Madison, Christopher Martiszus, Bobby & Joyce McCall, Don McCoy, Allen Martens, Janet Middendorf, Linda Munn, Pr. Ron & Debbie Neustadt, Dean Norrenberns, Hilda Parnell, Tim & Missy Partelow, Debbie & Larry Powers, Goldie Rideout, Darrell Robinson, Shirley Saia, Sarah and Family, Jill Schlueter, Stefanie Schroeder, Denise Sebastian, David & Donna Sims, Margie Snep, Ingrid Thompson, Bob Vaughn, David Vaught, Toni Walston, Louise Wilson, Margie Wilson, Karen Woolf, Wilma Woolf, Jeanie Workman, Ken Zika, Chloe Zipperer

Members and Friends Serving in Our Nation's Military

Taiylar Foppe Merrel, Josh Merrel, Ryan McKenzie, Amy Morgan

Members who celebrate birthdays this week

Kara Monfre (12/21), Sam Simard (12/21), Ash Robinson (12/22), David Crosby (12/23), Melaina Robison (12/23), Jamie Perry (12/23), Curt Gansmann (12/26), Danielle Tribout (12/26), Leah Richards (12/26), and Marilyn Robinson (12/27)

Midnight Clear *by Russell Schulz-Widmar*
Based on the original by Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven's gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suffered long;
Beneath the heavenly hymn have rolled two thousand years of wrong;
And warring humankind hears not the tidings which they bring;
Oh hush the noise and cease your strife and hear the angels sing.

For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.

St. Mark Staff

Pastor: The Rev. Brian M. Robison + **Pastor *Emeritus***: The Rev. Ronald C. Neustadt
Administrative Assistant: Randi Cardoza + **Music Director**: Carol Kugler
Organist: Evelyn Duncan + **Parish Nurse:** Becky Schnitzius

MARK TIMES

NEWS and NOTES for December 21, 2025

Monday, December 22:	1:00PM	Caroling at Westfield
Tuesday, December 23:	10:00AM	Christmas Decorating
Wednesday, December 24:	7:00PM	Christmas Eve Divine Liturgy
Thursday, December 25:	10:00AM	Christmas Day Liturgy with St. George's
December 25 & 26:	*Church Offices Closed*	

Adult Forum: *What was the Star of Bethlehem?*

For the past 2,000 years, people have wondered about the identity and nature of the **Star of Bethlehem**. And for hundreds of years, some of the world's smartest people have tried to use science to find the answer. However, no matter which astronomical phenomenon is suggested, there is one *massive* problem: **Nearly all modern science-based solutions ignore how ancient people thought about and examined the sky**. During today's Adult Forum, we'll look at some of the suggestions and explore how the ancients – including the Magi – may have interpreted what they actually saw.

Cleaning & Decorating Days

We will finish decorating for Christmas at **10:00AM** on **Tuesday, December 23**. This is a joint effort by the altar guilds of St Mark and St George's, but ALL are encouraged to come and help!

Winterizing Worship

While always a **last resort**, it is possible that severe conditions plus insufficient time for road treatments might lead to the cancelling of a Sunday morning service. If this happens, we will make every effort to communicate the cancellation of church to you.

We will utilize **six different modes of communication** in an attempt to contact you: we will send an "**email** blast;" Pastor will send **text messages** to everyone whose number he has in his phone or in the directory; we will put a cancellation message on the **church voicemail** and on the **church website**; our church will be put on the **KMOV (Channel 4), KSDK (Channel 5) & KTVI (Channel 2) church cancellation lists**; the notice will be on our **Facebook** page a couple of times; and we will send out an automated "**RoboCall**" with the cancellation announcement. **If we can't reach you in one of these ways, then your contact information with the church probably needs to be updated**. Please contact the office to do so.

Communication may be the greatest challenge in canceling worship, but there is another challenge that is right behind it. **The loss of a Sunday worship also means the loss of a Sunday's income**. If church is cancelled or you simply decide not to risk travel, please consider making your next Sunday offering "a double," or give a little more over subsequent weeks to offset that loss. Electronic giving is also an option.

Thank you for your consideration and understanding!

Christmas Schedule

Festival Christmas Eve worship
Wednesday, December 24, 7:00PM

Christmas Day worship
Thursday, December 25, 10:00AM
Joint service with St. George's Episcopal Church

The First Sunday of Christmas
Sunday, December 28, 10:00AM ← Special Time!
Joint service of Lessons & Carols with St. George's Episcopal Church

The Second Sunday of Christmas
Sunday, January 4, 2026, 9:00AM

The Epiphany of Our Lord
Tuesday, January 6, 2026 10:00AM
Joint service with St. George's in the chapel

PLEASE *use your* code *for the chapel door; do* NOT *unlock it with a key or using the bar!*
The Wednesday before Thanksgiving, St. George's choir members departing after rehearsal found the chapel door to have been unlocked at some point during the evening. Since both choirs were rehearsing that night, we want to strongly emphasize to our folks that the doors should NEVER be unlocked with a key or by securing the crash bar *unless* a worship service is being held in the chapel. Doing so at any other time creates a safety risk to anyone using the building while expecting the door to be secure.

NEW ALSO, when you leave the chapel, please make sure the door is secure. The door mechanism has been glitchy and sometimes does not reengage. Turn the handle and pull on the door; if it opens, then be sure the handle is in the correct (horizontal) position and close the door back. That *should* reengage the locking mechanism. Turn the handle and pull on the door; if it opens, share the information with someone and do all you can to secure the door.

Presiding Bishop Curry's Christmas Message

In his Christmas message to the church, Bishop Yehiel Curry delivers a children's sermon, describing the night when Jesus was born. "One silent night, far away in a town called Bethlehem, the stars twinkled brighter than ever. And the angels were there too. It was as if the whole sky was whispering: 'Something wonderful is happening.'"

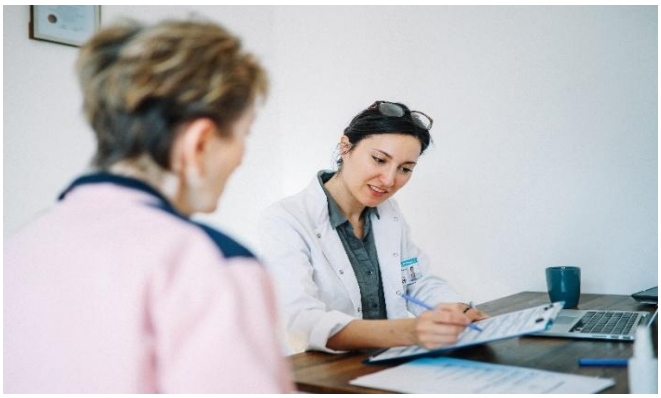
Curry emphasizes that "whispers make us stop, listen and pay attention" and reminds us that, this Christmas, we should listen closely because "the heavens are still whispering: 'Jesus is here. God loves you. Share that love with the world.'"

We thank the children, pastors and staff of Ascension Lutheran Church in Waukesha, Wis. and Hephatha Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, for their participation in the recording of this Christmas message.

Download the video: https://bit.ly/4pLBBgL

Read the message: https://resources.elca.org/wp-content...

Offerings (12/14): General Fund: $7,257.78; Staff Gift: $285; Angel Tree: $232.28; Christmas Flowers: $20; Thrivent Choice: $75



St Mark Lutheran Church
Parish Nurse Corner
Rebecca Schnitzius RN
December 2025

Influenza Vaccinations

In December, we typically observe Influenza Vaccination Week. This serves as a reminder to inform everyone that it is not too late to get a flu vaccine. Flu season typically peaks between December and February but can last into Spring. The importance of this reminder is to help prevent severe flu-related illness, hospitalizations, and especially deaths.

The flu vaccine protects vulnerable groups such as young children (infants under six months, young children, adults 65+, pregnant people, and those with chronic conditions like diabetes, heart disease, or lung disease who are at higher risk. The vaccine protects the community by shielding people who cannot get the shot, such as infants or immunocompromised individuals. Even if the vaccine doesn't prevent infection entirely, it lessens symptoms and lowers the chance of serious complications.

The symptoms of influenza are usually sudden-onset. The symptoms that are usually seen first are tiredness, fever, aches, and chills. At the first signs of the flu, contact your physician and he may give you an antiviral medication to help fight the disease. If you do get the flu, please stay home to prevent spreading it to the more vulnerable populations.

The peak hospitalization rate is predicted to be high again this year because of an influenza strain with severe outcomes and lower rates of immunization due to a lot of misinformation and disinformation being spoken about regarding immunizations in general.

As long as influenza is circulating in the population, it is not too late to get the flu vaccine. Remember, it takes about two weeks for the vaccine to become effective, so the sooner you get it, the more protection you will have.

Handwashing Awareness

Handwashing is such a simple act, but it's one of the most powerful tools we have for staying healthy.

Why Handwashing Matters

- Removes germs, bacteria, and viruses that can spread illness.
- Prevents foodborne diseases when preparing or eating meals.
- Protects vulnerable groups like children, the elderly, and those with weaker immune systems.
- Reduces the spread of respiratory infections (like colds, flu, and COVID-19).

Proper Handwashing Steps

1. Wet hands with clean, running water (warm or cold).
2. Apply soap and lather well.
3. Scrub thoroughly for at least 20 seconds:
    - Palms
    - Backs of hands
    - Between fingers
    - Under nails
    - Thumbs
    - Wrists
4. Rinse under clean, running water.
5. Dry with a clean towel or air dry.
6. A fun tip: singing *“Happy Birthday”* twice takes about 20 seconds, the perfect timing guide.

Key Times to Wash Hands

- Before eating or preparing food
- After using the bathroom
- After coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose
- After touching garbage
- After handling pets or cleaning up after them
- When coming home from public places