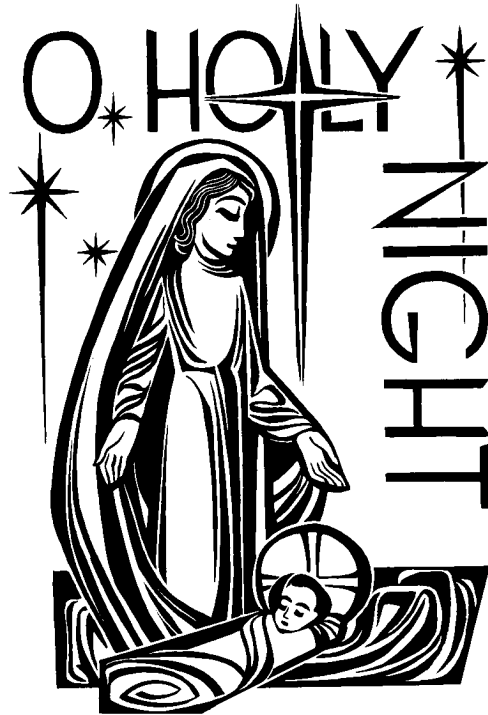


CELEBRATING THE PROMISES OF GOD

December 24, 2023 ... 5:00 PM



GLORIFY HIM ...
GROW IN HIM ...
GO WITH HIS GOSPEL

We are St. Mark's Church & School

A WELST[†]NorCal Ministry ... Other Locations

Foundation – Folsom, Hope – Penryn, Christ – Lodi, St. John – Vacaville

Christmas Eve --- Peace, Hope, & Joy

December 24, 2023

A place to call home: St. Mark's Lutheran Church & School

In the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, welcome home. We especially welcome to our house of worship our guests who have joined us today. We pray you will be strengthened by the good news about God's grace, love, and forgiveness to us through Jesus.

We say with the Psalmist, whether here on campus or viewing online, *"I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the LORD'"* (Psalm 122:1).

May the Lord continue to help us grow in His grace and knowledge as we hear, speak, and sing His holy Word.

Some items to keep in mind as we gather for worship in this place:

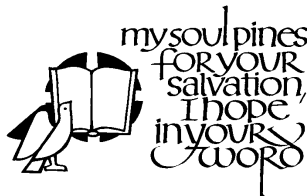
Members & our Guests ... Please pick up and fill out a **Connection Card** which can be found in the Entryway; before you leave place it in the box on the wall or in the basket labeled "Filled out Connection Cards." Thank you!

We do have **LARGE PRINT** copies of the Service; they can be found at the entrance to the Sanctuary.

Hymns from 'Christian Worship' (CW) are in the 'red' book / 'Christian Worship Supplement' (CWS) in the 'blue' 'Christian Worship' New (CWN) is our 2021 Edition (Copies found on Lobby Bookshelf)

Personal **hearing assistance** devices are available on the entryway wall near the west entrance. The Sanctuary is also 'looped' for those who have hearing aids that can pick up the signal.

Holy Communion is offered on the 1st, 3rd, & 5th Sundays. Since Holy Communion is a confession of faith, we ask that at this time only members partake of the Sacrament. If you are not a member and would like to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion, please reach out to our Pastor.



Explore our website. You will find information on Worship, Bible Study, Devotions, Children's Sunday School, and More.

Follow us to stay connected: Like us on Facebook: facebook.com/stmarksch; Follow us on Instagram: Instagram.com/stmarkslutheran; Subscribe to our videos on Vimeo: vimeo.com/channels/stmarksch.

“But when the time had fully come ...” Galatians 4
“A Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord” Luke 2

PRESERVICE

Greeting

Pastor: We worship this Christmas Eve in the name of the Triune God – the Father

Congregation: our Creator

P: the Son

C: our Redeemer

P: the Holy Spirit

C: our Sanctifier.

P: Lord Jesus, You are the light of the world,

C: The light no darkness can overcome.

P: Let Your light scatter the darkness.

C: Let it shine in our hearts and lives. Amen.

HYMN

Musical Introduction

Angels We Have Heard on High

Christian Worship (red) # 63

**Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply, Echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

**Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be Which inspire your heav’nly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

**Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

P: Christmas is about Jesus taking on human flesh and bones for the purpose of rescuing us from the consequences of sin – the physical, the spiritual, the eternal; for the Lord makes it clear through the Apostle Paul in the Book of Romans ...

C: “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...” and “...the wages of sin is death.”

P: Jesus did this by giving His life as a ransom, a ransom He paid by His death on a cross. This is why He came in flesh. This is why we celebrate Christmas. For as the Lord has also had recorded down in Romans ...

C: “and *all* are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus” and “...the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

HYMN

Musical Introduction

Now Sing We, Now Rejoice

Christian Worship (red) # 34

Now sing we, now rejoice, Now raise to heav'n our voice;
He from whom joy streameth Poor in a manger lies;
Not so brightly beameth The sun in yonder skies.
Thou my Savior art! Thou my Savior art!

Come from on high to me; I cannot rise to thee.
Cheer my wearied spirit, O pure and holy Child;
Through thy grace and merit, Blest Jesus, Lord most mild,
Draw me unto thee! Draw me unto thee!

Now through his Son doth shine The Father's grace divine.
Death o'er us had reigned Through sin and vanity;
He for us obtained Eternal joy on high.
May we praise him there! May we praise him there!

Oh, where shall joy be found? Where but on heav'nly ground?
Where the angels singing With all his saints unite,
Sweetest praises bringing In heav'nly joy and light.
Oh, that we were there! Oh, that we were there!

P: Why do we continue to celebrate Christmas, what advantage do we gain in being here tonight?

C: The Apostle Peter reminds us: “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Pet 3:18)

P: The Apostle Paul reminds us how to stand firm in this faith we have been given by God's grace.

C: We are reminded of the fact that “... our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.” (Phil 3:20-21)

HYMN

Musical Introduction

Once in Royal David's City

Christian Worship (red) # 50

(All sing) Once in royal David's city Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby In a manger for his bed;
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.

(Women sing) He came down to earth from heaven Who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable, And his cradle was a stall;
With the poor and mean and lowly Lived on earth our Savior holy.

(Men sing) **But our eyes at last shall see him Through his own redeeming love,
For that child, so dear and gentle, Is our Lord in heav'n above,
As he leads his children on To the place where he is gone.**

(All sing) **Not in that poor, lowly stable With the oxen standing by
Shall we see him, but in heaven, Set at God's right hand on high.
Then like stars his children crowned, All in white, his praise will sound.**

A Reading from Holy Scripture ... Isaiah 7:10-14

What is in a name? A reminder we can all use, and that is ... God is with us.

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹“Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.” ¹²But Ahaz said, “I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? ¹⁴**Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.**

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

SONG *by the Choir*

Italian Piper's Carol

Arr by Richard Proulx © GIA Publications, Inc

While shepherds watched their flocks upon a winter night,
They heard the sound of music throughout the starry night.
(Refrain) *Angels singing, bells are ringing, saints proclaiming sings of love:
Today Emmanuel comes! Venite adoremus, O come and worship him.*

Come now to Bethlehem with shepherds near and far,
To find the manger lowly led by the shining star. *Refrain*

O friends and neighbors all, come out and follow them.
The star shines bright to show us the way to Bethlehem. *Refrain*

P: Jesus, whose birth we are celebrating, has said through His Apostle John:

C: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

P: Jesus knew why He had come to earth. The Evangelist Luke records:

C: For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

P: We have reason indeed to celebrate this evening. Peace has come. Peace through Jesus.

C: This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

HYMN

Musical Introduction

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

Christian Worship (red) # 57

(refrain) **Go, tell it on the mountain, Over the hills, and ev'rywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born.**

**While shepherds kept their watching O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens There shone a holy light. Refrain ...**

**The shepherds feared and trembled When lo, above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus That hailed our Savior's birth. Refrain ...**

**Down in a lowly manger The humble Christ was born;
And God sent us salvation That blessed Christmas morn. Refrain ...**



A Reading from Holy Scripture ... Titus 3:4-7

How generous is God? Recall what He has done for you, and why He did this.

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ **he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.** He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

HYMN

Musical Introduction

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Christian Worship (red) # 61

**Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"**

**Joyful, all you nations rise, Join the triumph of the skies;
With th' angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"**

(Refrain) **Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

**Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come, Offspring of a virgin's womb.**

**Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail th' incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel! Refrain ...**

Hail, the heav'nly Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, Ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, Born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us from the earth, Born to give us second birth. *Refrain ...*

A Reading from Holy Scripture ... Luke 2:1-20

What can Jesus possibly give to us that can make a difference?

The peace He holds out has no equal.

And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³ So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. ⁴ Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. ⁶ So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. ⁷ And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. ⁸ Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. ¹⁰ Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. ¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ¹⁴ **"Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"** ¹⁵ So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us."

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

SONG *by the Choir*

What Child Is This

Howard Helvey © 1994 Beckenhorst Press, Inc

What child is this, who laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing.
Haste, haste to bring Him laud, the babe, the Son of Mary!

Why lies He in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through, the cross he'll bear for me, for you.
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the Son of Mary!

*So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh; come peasant, king, to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone Him.
Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy for Christ is born, the babe, the Son of Mary!*

Luke 2 continues ...

¹⁶ And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. ¹⁷ Now when they had seen *Him*, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. ¹⁸ And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. ¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart. ²⁰ Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

PEACE ... PEACE ... PEACE

HYMN

Musical Introduction

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

Christian Worship (red) # 24

**The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
“All hail,” said he to meek and lowly Mary,
“Most highly favored maiden.” Gloria!**

**“I come from heav’n to tell the Lord’s decree:
A blessed virgin mother you shall be.
Your Son shall be Immanuel, by seers foretold,
Most highly favored maiden.” Gloria!**

**Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;
“To me be as it pleases God,” she said.
“My soul shall praise and magnify his holy name.”
Most highly favored maiden, Gloria!**

**Of her Immanuel, the Christ, was born
In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say,
“Most highly favored maiden.” Gloria!**

FOCUS ON THE SCRIPTURES

Based on Isaiah 7

“Trying The Patience Of God ... Not Us”

JOY ... JOY ... JOY

OUR THANK OFFERING

Thank you for continuing to support our ministry. Your thank offering can be received in the following ways: placed in the box on the wall as you enter the Sanctuary, mail your thank offering to the church, give online through our website under the “Resources” tab, or give by texting 916.915.9552. The QR Code to the web giving link is at the end of the bulletin.

RESPONSIVE SENTENCES ... Psalm 96

P: Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day.

C: Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

P: Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.

C: Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it;

P: Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy;

C: for he comes to judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth.

**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.**

And we pray ...

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

P: May the blessing of the eternal God be upon us: His light to guide us, His presence to shelter us, His peace to unite us.

C: Amen.

P: Sing to the LORD,

C: Praise his name.

HYMN

Musical Introduction

Away in a Manger

Christian Worship (red) # 68

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

**The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with you there.**

RESPONSIVE SENTENCES ... Psalm 115

P: Not to us, LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.
C: Why do the nations say, “Where is their God?”

P: Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

C: But their idols are silver and gold, made by human hands. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see.

P: They have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but cannot smell. They have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but cannot walk, nor can they utter a sound with their throats. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them. You who fear him, trust in the LORD -- he is their help and shield.

C: The LORD remembers us and will bless us: he will bless those who fear the LORD—small and great alike.

P: May the LORD cause you to flourish, both you and your children. May you be blessed by the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

C: The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to mankind.

P: It is not the dead who praise the LORD, those who go down to the place of silence;

C: it is we who extol the LORD, both now and forevermore.

All: Praise the LORD.

HYMN

Musical Introduction

Silent Night! Holy Night

Christian Worship (red) # 60

**Silent night! Holy night! All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night! Holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar;
Heav’nly hosts sing, Alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!**

**Silent night! Holy night! Son of God, love’s pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.**

POSTLUDE

*Content requiring a copyright license is reproduced under OneLicense.net #A-711071. All rights reserved.
Scripture Quotations: From Biblegateway.com NIV 2011*

Presiding Minister: Pastor Jonathan Kolander

Musical Accompanist: Rosemarie Boushek

The Advent Candles ... *The first candle (blue) is the prophecy candle (candle of hope). The second candle (blue) is the Bethlehem candle (candle of preparation). The third candle (pink) is the Shepherd candle (candle of joy). The fourth candle (blue) is the Angel candle (candle of love). The fifth candle (white) is the Christ candle.*



Upcoming Worship Services

Christmas Day ... 9:30 AM

Sunday, December 31 ... 8:00 & 10:45 AM

Sunday, January 7 ... 8:00 & 10:45 AM

Services are livestreamed

***Come, worship Jesus ...
the Light of the world, and sing of His praises!***

PEACE ON EARTH ... IT IS POSSIBLE ...

To connect to our website and the auto giving option:



THE *Wonder* OF CHRISTMAS