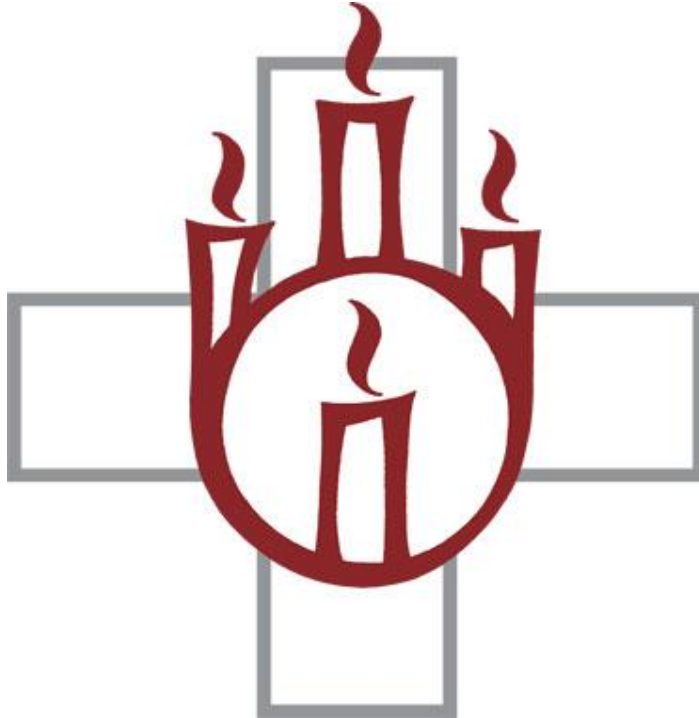


# CELEBRATING THE GOODNESS OF GOD

Worship Bulletin for December 24, 2023



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

**We are St. Mark's Church & School**

**A WELS†NorCal Ministry ... Other Locations**

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

*WELS (Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod) is a National Church Body with locations throughout the United States and with partnerships in over 40 Countries*

# 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent

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:

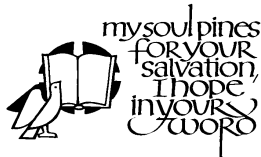
Members & our Guests ... Please pick up and fill out a **Connection Card** which can be found in the Entryway; before you leave place it in the box on the wall or in the basket labeled "Filled out Connection Cards." Thank you!

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 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, & 5<sup>th</sup> 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](https://facebook.com/stmarksch); Follow us on Instagram: [Instagram.com/stmarkslutheran](https://Instagram.com/stmarkslutheran); Subscribe to our videos on Vimeo: [vimeo.com/channels/stmarksch](https://vimeo.com/channels/stmarksch).

# THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

**Worship Focus:** It is easier to believe when we see what it is to believe, however, faith in God also calls for believing (trusting) even when we do not see what it is we are to believe (Heb 11). How can we have such faith? Such is not impossible with our God as the Holy Spirit works in us the trust we need through this life and for eternal life in heaven. God uses His ‘what seems to many just words on a page’ to change hearts which are dead to Him by nature to being alive in Him. God truly can, and does, make the impossible to us possible. And so, to God be the glory from our lips and through our lives!

## PRELUDE

**Away in a Manger**

*Charles Ore*

### *Greeting & Invocation*

Minister: The grace of our Lord ☩ Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

**Congregation: And also with you.**

M: Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

*(Ps 100)*

**C: Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.**

M: Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his;

**C: we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.**

M: Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise;

**C: give thanks to him and praise his name.**

M: For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;

**C: his faithfulness continues through all generations.**

M: Teach me, O LORD, to follow your decrees; then I will keep them to the end.

**C: Give me understanding, and I will keep your law and obey it with all my heart.**

M: Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

**C: Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.**

## HYMN

**Savior of the Nations, Come**

*Musical Introduction ... Song continues on page 4*

*Christian Worship New # 301 (CW # 2)*

**Savior of the nations, come; Virgin's Son, make here your home.  
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth, that the Lord chose such a birth.**

**Not by human flesh and blood, by the Spirit of our God  
was the Word of God made flesh, woman's offspring, pure and fresh.**

**Wondrous birth! O wondrous Child of the virgin undefiled,  
though by all the world disowned, yet to be in heav'n enthroned!**

**From the Father's throne he came and ascended to the same,  
captive leading death and hell. High the song of triumph swell!**

**Praise to God the Father sing, praise to God the Son, our King,  
praise to God the Spirit be ever and eternally.**

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. Jesus has said, as recorded in Matthew 22:

**C: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.**

M: This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it:

**C: Love your neighbor as yourself."**

M: But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

**All: Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

**C: Amen. Thanks be to God.**

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

*(musical introduction, see page 5)*



C: Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Bless - ed are  
they who take ref - uge in him. Your Word, O Lord, is e -  
ter - nal; it stands firm in the heav -  
ens. Your faith - ful - ness con - tin - ues for -  
ev - er. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.  
Bless - ed are they who take ref - uge in him.

M: Let us pray. Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Take away the burden of our sins and make us ready for the celebration of your birth, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always;

**C: for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## A READING FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE

2 Samuel 7:8-16

*It is not the earthly house that matters as much as the spiritual one. Why is this?*

“Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. <sup>9</sup>I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. <sup>10</sup>And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning <sup>11</sup>and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest

from all your enemies. ““The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: <sup>12</sup> When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup> He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. <sup>14</sup> I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. <sup>15</sup> But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. <sup>16</sup> Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.””

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!

## PSALM OF THE DAY

*Musical Introduction ... Song continues on page 7*

## Psalm 100

*Christian Worship New*

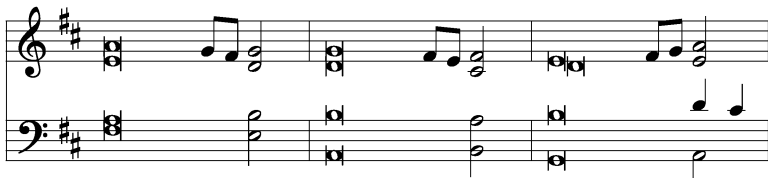
*Opening Refrain first sung by the Vocalist(s), then by the Congregation*  
*Verses to be sung as indicated below*

### Refrain



En - ter his gates with thanks-giv - ing.

### Tone

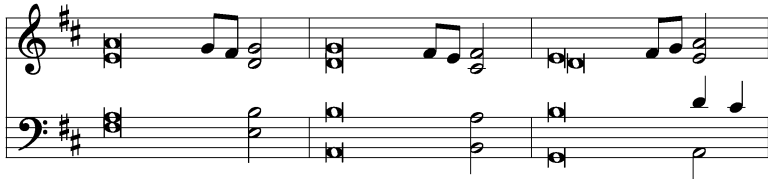


*Vocalist(s)*    *Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.*  
*Worship the LORD with gladness;*  
*come before him with joyful songs.*

**All**                **Know that the LORD is God.**  
**It is he who made us, and we are his;**  
**we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.    Refrain**

*Vocalist(s)*    *Enter his gates with thanksgiving*  
*and his courts with praise;*  
*give thanks to him and praise his name.*

*Tone*



**All** For the LORD is good  
and his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues through all generations.

**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. Refrain**

### **A READING FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE**

**Romans 16:25-27**

*The mystery related to our salvation is no longer a mystery, it is clear Jesus has the salvation we need.*

Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, <sup>26</sup> but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith— <sup>27</sup> to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

**M:** The Word of the Lord.

**C:** Thanks be to God!

### **HYMN**

*Musical Introduction*

**Let Us All with Gladsome Voice**

*Christian Worship New # 332 (CW # 64)*

**Let us all with gladsome voice praise the God of heaven,  
who, to bid our hearts rejoice, his own Son has given.**

**To this vale of tears he comes, here to serve in sadness,  
that with him in heav'n's fair homes we may reign in gladness.**

**We are rich, for he was poor; is not this a wonder?  
Therefore praise God evermore here on earth and yonder.**

**Christ, our Lord and Savior dear, bless us and be near us.  
Grant us now a glad new year. Amen, Jesus, hear us.**

*Our Worship centers on the Gospel Reading for the day.*

## A READING FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE

**Luke 1:26-38**

*Nothing is impossible with God; key words then, and still today.*

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup> Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." <sup>34</sup> "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup> The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup> For no word from God will ever fail." <sup>38</sup> "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

M: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Praise be to you, O Christ.

## HYMN OF THE DAY

**Come, Behold the Wondrous Mystery**

*Musical Introduction ... Song continues on page 9*

*Christian Worship New # 535*



- 1 Come, be-hold the won-drous mys - t'ry, in the dawn-ing of the King,
- 2 Come, be-hold the won-drous mys - t'ry, he the per - fect Son of Man;
- 3 Come, be-hold the won-drous mys - t'ry, Christ the Lord up - on the tree;
- 4 Come, be-hold the won-drous mys - t'ry, slain by death the God of life;



he the theme of heav-en's prais - es, robed in frail hu-man-i - ty.  
in his liv - ing, in his suf - f'ring nev - er trace nor stain of sin.  
in the stead of ru - ined sin - ners hangs the Lamb in vic - to - ry.  
but no grave could e'er re - strain him; praise the Lord; he is a - live!



In our long - ing, in our dark - ness, now the light of life has come.  
See the true and bet - ter Ad - am, come to save the hell-bound man.  
See the price of our re - demp - tion, see the Fa - ther's plan un - fold,  
What a fore - taste of de - liv - rance; how un - wa - ver - ing our hope.





Look to Christ, who con-de-scend-ed, took on flesh to ran-som us.  
Christ the great and sure ful - fill - ment of the law; in him we stand.  
bring-ing man - y sons to glo - ry, grace un - mea-sured, love un - told.  
Christ in pow - er res - ur - rect - ed as will we be when he comes.

## FOCUS ON THE SCRIPTURES

Based on Luke 1:26-38

**“Count On This: Nothing Is Impossible With God”**



## A CONFESSION OF FAITH – THE APOSTLES’ CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his 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 into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## 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.*

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

**M: Lord, our maker and preserver, we praise and thank you for all that you give us each day.**

**C: We are not worthy of all the mercies you show us.**

**M: You have given us your precious Word to nourish our souls and to protect us from the temptations of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature.**

**C: We thank you for those who teach and preach your saving truth at this place and everywhere. Grant them a rich measure of patience, wisdom, and love.**

M: Heavenly Father, we pray that you shield us from every kind of danger: sudden catastrophe, terrors of crime, and the pain of disease. Watch over those who travel by land, sea, and air. Keep our loved ones from whatever perils may threaten them.

**C: Heal those who are sick, cheer those who are sad, calm those who are distressed, and comfort all who are old and infirm.**

M: Bless our land, our people, and those who hold offices of high trust. Keep our government and schools upright and strong for the advancement of good citizenship and useful vocations, that we may enjoy your gifts of peace, security, and well-being.

**C: Grant your blessing to every nation on earth. Where there are wars, may there be peace. Where there is hatred, let it be healed. Where there is poverty, danger, or disaster, come with your almighty power to help and restore.**

*Special prayers and intercessions may follow.*

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

*Silent prayer.*

M: We bring these requests before you in the name of Jesus our Lord, and ask you to hear us. Take all that we have, our bodies and minds, our time and skills, our ministries and offerings, and use them to your glory.

**C: We give ourselves to you that we may serve you in whatever way is pleasing in your sight. Amen.**

*And we also pray ... Sung by our Vocalist(s)*

*Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come;  
Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.*

*And forgive us our sins, As we forgive those who sin 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. Amen.*

### **RESPONSIVE SENTENCES ... Romans 11**

M: Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

**C: Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?**

M: Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?

**C: For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.**

### **HYMN**

*Musical Introduction ... Song on page 11*

### **God's Own Son Most Holy**

*Christian Worship New # 321*

*Verse 1 by the Vocalist(s), Congregation joins on the remaining Verses*



1 God's own Son most ho - ly came a ser - vant  
2 Still he comes in preach - ing, truth e - ter - nal  
3 Still he comes pro - vid - ing proof of love a -  
4 Come, then, O Lord Je - sus, from our sins re -



low - ly, came to live a - mong us,  
teach - ing: "Turn a - way from e - vil;  
bid - ing: he whose death has freed us  
lease us. Keep our hearts be - liev - ing



came to suf - fer for us; bore the cross to  
turn to me, my peo - ple. I pro-nounce you  
gives him - self to feed us, thus to us ex -  
that, your grace re - ceiv - ing, we may here con -



save us, hope and free - dom gave us.  
sin - less; trust in my for - give - ness."  
tend - ing peace and joy un - end - ing.  
fess you till in heav'n we bless you.

**M:** O Lord God, our heavenly Father, pour out the Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep us strong in your grace and truth, protect and comfort us in all temptation, and bestow on us your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

**M:** Brothers and sisters go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look on you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

**C: Amen.**



## HYMN

*Musical Introduction*

## Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

*Christian Worship New # 350 (CW # 61)*

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

**Joyful, all ye 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 man 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 man no more may die,  
born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth. *(Refrain)***

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## POSTLUDE

## Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

*Alfred V. Fedak*



# TODAY AT ST. MARK'S

## Serving at Worship

Presiding Minister: Pastor Jonathan Kolander

Musical Accompanist: Lisa Thiesfeldt

Vocalists: Greg Meyer & Jenny Kolander

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Lord's Prayer: Albert Hay Malotte

***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.***

## For Reflection based on Today's Scripture Readings ...

1<sup>st</sup>: What are the multiple events in history which are being noted in this section? Why did God do this lasting legacy privilege for David? Read 1 Kings 6 & 8

2<sup>nd</sup>: What makes the Gospel a mystery? What has God done so that people of all time can come to know His Truth? Read Hebrews 1.

3<sup>rd</sup>: Note the various reactions by Mary as she hears this news. What does the statement “nothing is impossible with God” bring to mind in your life? Read Job 38.

*To connect to our website and the auto giving option:*



## THIS WEEK AT ST. MARK'S

Today		***Christmas Eve***
	9:30 a.m.	Worship Service
	5:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Worship Service
	8:00 p.m.	Carols around the Fire (Outdoor Patio)
Monday		***Christmas Day***
	9:30 a.m.	Christmas Day Worship Service with Holy Communion
Next Sunday		***New Year's Eve***
	8:00 & 10:45	Worship Service with Holy Communion
	9:30 a.m.	Bible Study

<i><b>Birthdays</b></i>		<i><b>Anniversaries</b></i>
Lynda Armes	<i>Dec 26</i>	
Susan Kroner	<i>Dec 27</i>	
Hal Tritch		
	<i>Dec 28</i>	James & Hannah Ripley
Evret Miller	<i>Dec 29</i>	
Vincent Rowe	<i>Dec 30</i>	Chuck & Kathy Edwards
		Babu & Suma Joseph





Founded on the Word. Focused on the Cross.

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St. Mark's Guest Wi-Fi Password: stmarks7869

Pastor: Jonathan Kolander

Principal: Darren Vogt

