

The First Sunday of Christmas
December 27, 2020
in the 167th Year of the Parish
St. Mark's Lutheran Church
142 Market St., Williamsport, PA (17701)
stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org
Office (570-323-4619) Fax (570-323-2452)
Rev. Brian D. Vasey, Pastor
bvasey@stmarkswilliamsport.org



Our Mission: “To know Christ and to make Christ known.”

PRELUDE

WELCOME/ANNOUNCING THE DAY

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P In the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen**

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

P Most merciful God,

C **we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen**

P Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen

HYMN *Good Christian Friends Rejoice*

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice



- 1 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
- 2 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
- 3 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;



give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
now ye need not fear the grave; Je - sus Christ was born to save!



ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.
He has o - pened heav - en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.



Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866
Music: IN DULCI JUBILO, German carol, 14th cent.

GREETING

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ born among us, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you.

KYRIE

Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy.

Upon us.

Christ have mercy. Christ have mercy. Christ have mercy.

Upon us.

**God the Father, with the Spirit, gave us Christ
to love and save us.**

Lord have mercy upon us. Lord have mercy upon us.

Tune *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly* Words *BDV and others, 2017*

HYMN OF PRAISE



♩ Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his peo - ple on earth.



♩ Lord God, heav - en - ly king, al - might - y God and Fa - ther:



We wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God:



You take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.



You are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther; re - ceive our prayer.



For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

INTRODUCTION TO TODAY'S READINGS

The psalmist calls on the natural world, celestial bodies, fire and earth, creatures, and all humanity, to praise God. The voices of Simeon and 84-year-old Anna join the chorus today, recognizing what God is doing in Jesus. Simeon's song is often sung after communion, for we have seen God's salvation in the assembled community and have held Jesus in our hands in the bread. Then, like the prophet Anna, we tell of Jesus to all who look for the healing of the world.

THE FIRST LESSON.....Isaiah 61:10-62:3

10I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,

my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

11For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

62:1For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation like a burning torch.

2The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will give.

3You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN

Lo How a Rose Is Growing

Lo, How a Rose Is Growing



1 Lo, how a rose is grow - ing, a bloom of fin - est grace;
2 The rose of which I'm sing - ing, I - sa - iah had fore - told.
3 The shep - herds heard the sto - ry the an - gels sang that night:
4 This flow'r, so small and ten - der, with fra - grance fills the air;
5 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt all hu - man woe;



the proph - ets had fore - told it: a branch of Jes - se's race
He came to us through Mar - y who shel - tered him from cold.
how Christ was born of Mar - y; he was the Son of light.
his bright - ness ends the dark - ness that kept the earth in fear.
O Sav - ior, king of glo - ry, who tri - umphed o'er our foe:



would bear one per - fect flow'r here in the cold of
Through God's e - ter - nal will this child to us was
To Beth - le - hem they ran to find him in the
True God and yet true man, he came to save his
bring us at length, we pray, to the bright courts of



win - ter and dark - est mid - night hour.
giv - en at mid - night calm and still.
man - ger as an - gel her - alds sang,
peo - ple from earth's dark night of sin.
heav - en and in - to end - less day.

Text: German, 15th cent.; tr. Gracia Grindal, b. 1943
Music: ES IST EIN ROS. *Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengesäng*, Köln, 1599

Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

THE SECOND LESSON.....Galatians 4:4-7

4When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. 6And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” 7So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

THE GOSPEL.....Luke 2:22-40

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

C Glory to you, O Lord.

22When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Joseph and Mary] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), 24and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

25Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. 26It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. 27Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, 28Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

29“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;

30for my eyes have seen your salvation,

31which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

32a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.”

33And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. 34Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed 35so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

36There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. 38At that moment she

came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

39When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. 40The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

THE SERMON

THE NICENE CREED

P Living together in trust and hope we affirm our faith.

C We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

**With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

THE PEACE

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION: Hear us O God/Your mercy is great

OUR LORD'S PRAYER

**P Let us pray in the words our Savior gave us.
C 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.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE BLESSING

**P The Creator of the stars bless you,
the long-expected Savior fill you with love,
the unexpected Spirit guide your journey,
✠ now and forever.**

C Amen

HYMN

Go Tell It on the Mountain

Go Tell It on the Mountain



Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



- 1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
- 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth
- 3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born;



be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872–1925, stanzas, alt.
Music: GO TELL IT, African American spiritual

*DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Christ is born.

C **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

+++++

Prayer List: Liz Ruesskamp, Richard Albright, Grace Arner, Diane Damaska, Ruth Pile, Vanessa Morgan, Gary Clark, Paul Young, Bob Shaible, Doris Brown, Charles Miller, Jerry Miller, Gladys Knauss, Patricia Alexander, Diane Osbaugh, Joann Zeigler, Richard Ritter, Ashton Ott, Pr. Frank Showers, Lucille Sider, April Clark, Lenny Sherlinski, Gary Cable, Esteban Mazer, Elsie Sechler, Virginia Pulaskie, Cheryl Williams, Bernadette Jones, Gregg, Kay Poliska, Ben Hufnagel, Steve Dewar, Judy Fortin.

LEADING US IN WORSHIP

LECTOR Pam Jensen
CANTOR/SONG LEADER Deb Buckman
ORGANIST Sam Robinson

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Portions of the service reprinted from Lutheran Book of Worship © 1978, Augsburg-Fortress Publishers, under license #2562-L. From sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2019 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SB144818

By action of our Congregational Council, all in-person worship services have been suspended until further notice. Virtual worship by way of video will continue to be offered through our web page and Facebook. Should be in need of pastoral care, please contact our church office. Be well and stay safe!

Lessons and Carols

Our Synod Staff will provide a recorded Service of Lessons and Carols for the Christmas Season. The recording will “drop” on December 26 at 5 pm on the **Synod's YouTube channel and Facebook page and will be available through the Christmas Season.**

Christmas at the Organ; A Concert of Carols

The tenth day of Christmas (Sunday, January 3, 2021) at Covenant Central Presbyterian Church (807 W. Front Street, Williamsport), 3pm. The concert will feature nine members of the American Guild of Organists.

Commemorations this week:

John, Apostle and Evangelist

Sunday, December 27, 2020

The son of Zebedee and brother of James, John was one of the twelve disciples and witness to the transfiguration. Tradition has named him also the writer of the Gospel of John, the three New Testament letters bearing his name, as well as Revelation.

The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

Monday, December 28, 2020

This day commemorates the young children killed by Herod in Bethlehem in his

jealous attempt to murder the baby Jesus, a sobering reminder of the evil that led Christ to be born for our salvation.

Name of Jesus

Friday, January 1, 2021

By Jewish law, every baby boy was circumcised and named on the eighth day of life, so on the eighth day of Christmas the church celebrates this event in Jesus' life. The keeping of the covenant as well as Jesus' name are signs of God's salvation given to us through him.

Johann Konrad Wilhelm Loehe, renewer of the church, died 1872

Saturday, January 2, 2021

A nineteenth-century German Lutheran pastor, Loehe worked to enliven the church with the eucharist at its center, from which would flow evangelism and social ministry. He sent pastors to North America, Australia, New Guinea, Brazil, and the Ukraine.