

**The Third Sunday of Advent
December 17, 2023**

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

142 Market Street, Williamsport, PA 17701

stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org

Office (570-323-4619) Fax (570-323-2452)

Rev. Brian D. Vasey, Pastor

bvasey@stmarkswilliamsport.org

Welcome to Saint Mark's!

This is Christ's church. There is a place for you here. Join us as we seek, "To know Christ and to make Christ known."



An Order for Holy Communion (Veni Emmanuel Setting)
8 and 10:30 am

Please Note:

Hand sanitizer is available for your use; face masks are optional; offerings may be received by way of baskets as you enter or leave.

A guide to hymnal use: LBW, Green Book; WOV, Blue Book

**Please stand as you are able.*

INTRODUCTION TO TODAY'S WORSHIP

Today with the Baptizer we “Behold the Lamb” who brings grace that turns our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. We receive this grace in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God’s glory.

PRELUDE

WELCOME/ANNOUNCING THE DAY/ANNOUNCEMENTS

***BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

All may make the sign of cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the pastor begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who opens the heavens
and draws near to us with salvation.

Amen.

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance.

Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Kneel/Stand

Everlasting God,

you love justice and you hate wrongdoing.

**We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness
that make us reluctant to work against oppression.**

We are complicit in systems of exploitation.

We choose comfort over courage.

We are careless with creation’s bounty.

Look upon us with mercy.

**Turn our hearts again to you.
Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways
for the sake of our waiting world.**

Amen.

Hear these words of assurance:

God clothes you with garments of salvation
and covers you with robes of righteousness.

In the tender compassion of † Jesus Christ,
your sins are forgiven.

God's covenant is eternal,
and God's blessing rests upon us all.

Amen.

***HYMN Canticle of the Turning BACK PAGE**

***THE GREETING**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the
Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

***KYRIE**

Cantor All
Lord, _____ have mer - cy. Lord, _____ have mer - cy.

3 Cantor All
Christ, _____ have mer - cy, _____ Christ, _____ have mer - cy, _____

5 Cantor All
Lord, _____ have mer - cy. Lord, _____ have mer - cy.

***LIGHTING OUR ADVENT WREATH**

**Lord Jesus is coming and so we prepare,
Our homes and our lives for Messiah so fair.
It's Advent, we're happy, for Jesus is near,
O Come and live in us, our Savior so dear.**

*Words, B. Vasey, 1995
Tune, CRADLE SONG*

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

THE FIRST READING.....Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

1The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
2to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
3to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.
4They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.
8For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,

and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
 9 Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
 and their offspring among the peoples;
 all who see them shall acknowledge
 that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.
 10 I 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.
 11 For 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.

PSALM 126

1 When the LORD restored the for- | tunes of Zion,
 then were we like | those who dream.
 2 **Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with | shouts of joy.**
Then they said among the nations, “The LORD has done great | things for
them.”
 3 The LORD has done great | things for us,
 and we are | glad indeed.
 4 **Restore our for- | tunes, O LORD,**
like the watercourses | of the Negeb.
 5 **Those who | sowed with tears**
will reap with | songs of joy.
 6 **Those who go out weeping, carry- | ing the seed,**
will come again with joy, shoulder- | ing their sheaves.

THE SECOND READING.....1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise the words of prophets, 21 but test everything; hold fast to what is good; 22 abstain from every form of evil.

23 May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

All

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

2
You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

***GOSPEL.....John 1:6-8, 19-28**

The holy gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ according to St. John

All

Glo-ry to you, O _____ Lord.

6There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

19This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” 20He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” 21And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” 22Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” 23He said,

“I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,

‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ ”

as the prophet Isaiah said.

24Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. 25They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?” 26John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, 27the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.” 28This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing. The Gospel of the Lord.

6 All

Praise to you, O _____ Christ.

THE SERMON

***HYMN On Jordan's Banks the Baptist's Cry**

LBW, "Green", 36

***THE NICENE CREED**

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith:

We believe in one God,

the Father, the Almighty,

maker of heaven and earth,

of all there 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**

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

After each petition, “Merciful Lord/Hear Our Prayer”

***THE PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you. *The ministers and congregation greet each other.*

***GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

And also 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 and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new. And so, with your Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

1 **Cantor**

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and God of might.

2 **All**

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and God of might.

3 **Cantor**

Heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.

4

Ho-san - na in the high - est, ho-san-na in the high - est.

5 **All**

Ho-san - na in the high - est, ho-san-na in the high - est.

6 **Cantor**

Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

7

Ho-san - na in the high - est, ho-san-na in the high - est.

8 **All**

Ho-san - na in the high - est, ho-san-na in the high - est.

Holy God, mighty Lord, glorious Father:
Endless is your mercy and eternal your reign.
You have filled all creation with light and life;
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Through Abraham you promised to bless all nations.
You rescued your chosen people who were slaves in Egypt.
Through prophets you renewed your promise;
and at this end of all ages, you sent your Son,

who in words and deeds proclaimed your kingdom
and was obedient to your will,
even to giving his life.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, 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 all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often we eat this bread
and drink from this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Therefore gracious Father we await his coming in power
to share with us the promised feast.

Amen. Come Lord Jesus.

Send now your Holy Spirit,
the spirit of our Lord and of his resurrection,
that we who receive our Lord's body and blood
may live to the praise of your glory
and receive our inheritance with all the saints in light.

Amen. Come Holy Spirit.

Join our prayers with your servants of every time and place,
and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest
until he comes as victorious Lord of all.

Amen.

Cantor

Je - sus, wis - dom and might - y Lord, you take a way the sins___ of the
 Je - sus, true branch of Jes - se's Tree
 Key of Dav - id and Day - spring from on high.
 De sire of na - tions, our Em - man - u - el,

2 | 1.2.3. | All

world: have mer - cy on us. Have mer - cy on us.

3 | 4. | All

world: Grant us___ peace. Grant us___ peace.

***OUR LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord as you have taught us, so now we 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.

*LAMB OF GOD

Cantor

Je sus, wis - dom and might - y Lord, you take a way the sins___ of the
Je - sus, true branch of Jes - se's Tree
Key of Dav - id and Day - spring from on high.
De sire of na - tions, our Em - man - u - el,

2 | 1.2.3. | All |
world: have mer - cy on us. Have mer - cy on us.

3 | 4. | All |
world: Grant us___ peace. Grant us___ peace.

*INVITATION TO COMMUNION *All Are Welcome to Receive.*

Persons may come forward to the chancel to receive Holy Communion. This format will be more “continuous” noting the following procedure:

- *Communicants as directed by ushers are asked to come forward by way of the center aisle, take a cup from the tray provided and receive the bread.*
- *Once receiving the bread, communicants will proceed to one of two stations (left or right) to receive wine from the pouring chalice.*
- *After receiving wine, communicants will place the empty cup in the designated tray and return to their pew by way of the side aisles.*

In this meal righteousness and peace dwell together. Come take your place at the table.

Thanks be to God.

THE COMMUNION

*AFTER COMMUNION

The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

***BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor
and ☩ give you peace.

Amen.

***HYMN All Earth is Hopeful**

WOV, “Blue”, 629

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

***POSTLUDE**

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Prayer List: Victims of COVID-19 and their families, Liz Ruesskamp, Grace Arner, Diane Damaska, Vanessa Morgan, Gary Clark, Charles Miller, Jerry Miller, Patricia Alexander, Richard Ritter, Ashton Ott, Lucille Sider, April Clark, Lenny Sherlinski, Ruth Sherlinski, Gary Cable, Elsie Sechler, Virginia Pulaskie, Susan Kalabacas, Bunny Ditchfield, Judy Fortin, Ezra Buckman, Sheila Brassard, Kevin Rosini, Kathy Eshelman, Micah, Deb Buckman, Linda Rosini, Mike Ford, Walt Haussmann, Kristin Rehm, Yvonne and Gerry Myers. Eileen Montgomery.

**WORSHIP LEADERS
December 17, 2023**



Lector	8:00AM	Candy Dewar
	10:30AM	Linda Rosini
Communion Assistants	8:00AM	Brian Jackson
	10:30AM	Walt Doebler and Gary Weber
Organist		Sam Robinson
Ushers	8:00AM	Herb Poff and Richard Miller
	10:30AM	Matt Fortin, captain Glenn Yaple and Bud Doebler
Altar Guild	December	Wanda Fortin and Mindy Wentzel

OUR STEWARDSHIP December 10, 2023

Regular Offering	\$2,039.00
Plate Offerings	40.00
Christmas and Advent	10.00
Bulletin Sponsor	10.00
Miscellaneous	115.00
World Hunger	50.00
Food Pantry	150.00
Global Mission	50.00
Parish Life	345.00
Christmas Flowers	56.00
Organ Fund	10.00
Flower Memorials / Tributes	30.00
Synod Benevolence	25.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$2,930.00





When you or a family member are ill, have a crisis of faith, or have a personal concern of which you wish to make the pastor aware, please contact him directly by church office telephone (570-323-4619) or email (bvasey@stmarkswilliamsport.org). Do not assume the pastor will know of your need any other way.



When you or a loved one has a change of address, telephone number or email, please contact the church office at 570-323-4619 or stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org. Please direct your intentions whether or not to share this information with our church family

Reverse Advent Calendar

The Faith Formation and Evangelism and Fellowship Committees are once again giving congregation members an alternative to the traditional chocolate Advent calendars. And instead of *receiving* something each day of Advent, we are counting down to Christmas by *giving* something each day of Advent.



This year we would really like to focus our efforts on collecting hygiene products for Wise Options and Liberty House shelters. At any point in time these shelters may be housing up to 80 individuals, and hygiene products for women and children are in high demand. Please take a holiday bag from the Narthex and each day of Advent place a hygiene product in your bag. Soap/body wash, shampoo, shaving cream, toothbrushes, toothpaste, loofahs, deodorant, etc. may be found at any of the “Dollar Stores” and would be perfect donations. Please pray that these small items might be a blessing to those who receive them. Return your filled bag on Christmas Eve or New’s Year Eve. Even sometime in January would be fine! All items will be sorted and delivered to the YWCA. We hope that this Reverse Calendar will be a blessing to your Advent preparations. Thank you for your generosity!

Christmas Greetings



The Evangelism and Fellowship Committee need your help in sending Christmas greetings to the folks on our Special Concern List. Next Sunday, December 17 cards will be available in the Narthex for folks on the Special Concern List. Take a card or two, write a cheery message and mail in time for Christmas. Thank you for any help you can

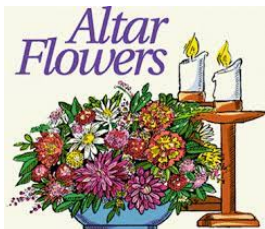
Christmas Ornaments



As you enter the Narthex there is a display of Christmas ornaments, crafted by Lou Ann Zeigler. The Evangelism and Fellowship Committee is giving them away at no cost. But to make the joy the ornaments give stretch further; we are accepting a modest monetary donation. The combined donations will be used to purchase \$10.00 and \$15.00 grocery cards to be given to the United Churches Food Pantry. These gift cards allow families to purchase fresh fruits, meat and dairy products that are not available at the pantry.



READ ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY? Faith Formation has temporarily “moved some books” from our church library to the Front Lounge in order to make them more accessible. Stop by the Front Lounge and take a look!



ALTAR FLOWERS today are given to the glory of God:
+In Memory of Alfred and Lois Johns by Matt and Wanda Fortin and family.
+In Memory of Jack and Doris Fortin by Matt and Wanda Fortin and family.

Family Promise



Thanks to all who helped provide meals this past week. The people were greatly appreciative of all provided.

FABULOUS SPONSORS!

This week's Bulletin Sponsor
Charles and Ann Kuntz



ALTAR FLOWER PRICE INCREASE

Hall's Florist has informed us that as of January 2024 the price will increase for Altar Flowers. Due to increases in the cost of flowers and supplier delivery fees they can no longer make vases at the same price.

The price of Altar Flowers will increase from \$25.00 per vase to \$30.00 per vase and delivery fee will increase to \$5.00 per vase, an increase of \$1.00 per vase. Total cost per vase starting in January 2024 will be \$35.00 per vase.



Monday, December 18, -
 Sunday, December 24, 2023



Monday, December 18	Little Lambs Christmas Program 9:30 and 10:30AM	FH
Tuesday, December 19	Little Lambs Christmas Program 9:30 and 10:30AM	FH
Wednesday, December 20	Mid-Week Advent Service 12:15PM	CH
	<i>We gather for mid-week services in our Chapel, 12:15 pm, Wednesdays in Advent (December 6, December 13, December 20). Our theme this year is, "Wait, Watch and Wonder". Please join us for these times of worship which will heighten our awareness and anticipation for the celebration of Christ's coming in the flesh.</i>	
	Little Lambs Teachers Luncheon	Noon ML
Thursday, December 21	Christmas Flowers Delivered	9AM
Sunday, December 24	Holy Communion	9:30 AM
	Christmas Eve Holy Communion (Kid Friendly)	7PM
	Traditional Holy Communion	10PM

BIRTHDAYS

Ryan Clokey	December 18	Michael Jensen	December 18
Daryl Lewis	December 22	Judith Fortin	December 23
Sarah Young	December 23		

ANNIVERSARIES

Becky Miller and Thomas Pryor December 21

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Please remember to let the administrative assistant know when committee meetings are scheduled, or changed, so it can be included in the bulletin.

If there is anything you would like to include in the "This Week at Our Church" please let the administrative assistant, Joe Baur, know at jbaur@stmarkswilliamsport.org

COMMEMORATIONS

Katharina von Bora Luther, renewer of the church, died 1552



Wednesday, December 20, 2023

Born to an impoverished nobleman, Katie eventually took vows as a nun, but around age twenty-four she and several other nuns who were influenced by the writings of Martin Luther left the convent. She and Martin later married and parented six children.

Canticle of the Turning



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 -



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.



Refrain
 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.