



the welcome place.

**St. Mark Lutheran Church**  
**Worship Bulletin**  
**Sunday, December 14, 2025**  
**Third Sunday of Advent**

**GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**PELUDE**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ 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.

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 SONG *Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding!* (ELW 246)**

**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.**

## **Lighting the Advent Wreath: Advent 3**

We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath  
that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent.  
As we light the candles on this wreath,  
strengthen our hearts  
as we await the Lord's coming in glory.  
Enlighten us with your grace,  
that we may serve our neighbors in need.  
Grant this through Christ our Lord,  
whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.  
**Amen.**

**ADVENT HYMN *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* - Verse 3 (ELW 257)**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

**Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.**

**Amen.**

### **WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

### **FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:1-10**

A reading from Isaiah.

<sup>1</sup> The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus <sup>2</sup> it shall blossom abundantly  
and rejoice with joy and shouting.  
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.  
They shall see the glory of the LORD,  
the majesty of our God.]]

<sup>3</sup> Strengthen the weak hands  
and make firm the feeble knees.

<sup>4</sup> Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
"Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.”

<sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;  
<sup>6</sup> then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.  
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness  
and streams in the desert;  
<sup>7</sup> the burning sand shall become a pool  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

<sup>8</sup> A highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Holy Way;  
the unclean shall not travel on it,  
but it shall be for God’s people;  
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.  
<sup>9</sup> No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.  
<sup>10</sup> And the ransomed of the LORD shall return  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **PSALM: Psalm 146:5-10**

<sup>5</sup> Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,  
whose hope is in the LORD their God;  
<sup>6</sup> **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;**  
**who keeps promises forever;**  
<sup>7</sup> who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger.  
The LORD sets the captive free.  
<sup>8</sup> **The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;**  
**the LORD loves the righteous.**  
<sup>9</sup> The LORD cares for the stranger;  
the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.  
<sup>10</sup> **The LORD shall reign forever,**  
**your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!**

## **SECOND READING: James 5:7-10**

A reading from James.

<sup>7</sup> Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. <sup>8</sup> You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.

<sup>9</sup> Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! <sup>10</sup> As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 151)**

**Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?**

**You have the words of eternal life.**

**Alleluia.**

## **GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11**

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>2</sup> When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup> and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. <sup>6</sup> And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

<sup>7</sup> As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup> What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. <sup>9</sup> What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup> This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way before you.’

<sup>11</sup> “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 151)**

## **SERMON**

## **HYMN OF THE DAY *Christ, Be Our Light* (ELW 715)**

## **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**

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

God of power and mercy, we praise you for Jesus and his acts of healing and liberation. Lead us to proclaim the good news from generation to generation, that all may place their hope in you.

God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

When lands are parched and dry, bring rain and snow; where wilderness is barren, sow seeds of life. Fill the lands with trees that grow, plants that flower, and creatures that thrive, as nature proclaims the wonder of your works. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

When there is injustice or corruption among nations and leaders, root it out. Turn their attention to inequity and the cries of the poor. Instill a deeper sense of compassion and care in all who govern. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

When bodies weaken and hearts grow fearful, speak your blessing. In uncertain times, remind us of the promise spoken to our ancestors in faith. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

When people are imprisoned or held captive, break the chains and offer release. Strengthen the work of the church in restorative justice, breaking cycles of poverty, and welcoming the immigrant (*especially we pray for Global Refuge and Lutheran Social Services*). God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

As we await your coming, we give thanks for the faithful who have lived and died in faith. May their boldness of faith inspire our witness and work. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

**Amen.**

## **PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

## **MEAL**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

## **MUSICAL OFFERING**

**OFFERING *A Story for All People* (W&P 2)**

## **OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.

**God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord.**

**Amen.**

## **GREAT THANKSGIVING**

### **DIALOGUE (ELW p. 152)**

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.**

### **PREFACE (ELW p. 153)**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,  
through whom you will also make all things new

in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.  
And so, with all the choirs of angels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW p. 153)**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
Lord God of pow'r and might:  
Heav'n and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

**THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE (ELW p. 153)**

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:  
Blessed are you for the birth of creation.  
Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.  
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.  
Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.  
Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.  
Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,  
the Word made flesh.

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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup  
we remember your Word dwelling among us,  
full of grace and truth.  
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.

We look with hope for his coming.

**Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit.

Come among us.

Bless this meal.

May your Word take flesh in us.

Awaken your people.

Fill us with your light.

Bring the gift of peace on earth.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours,

Holy One of Israel,

Word of God incarnate,

Power of the Most High,

one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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**

Here is life. God is with us.

Come, receive what God has promised.

## **COMMUNION**



**COMMUNION SONG (LAMB OF GOD) (ELW p. 154)**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;  
grant us peace, grant us peace.**

**SONG DURING COMMUNION *Here Is Bread* (ELW 483)**

**Amen.**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray.

**God for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**

**Amen.**

**SENDING**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

**BLESSING**

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

**Amen.**

**SENDING SONG *All Earth Is Hopeful: Toda la tierra* (ELW 266)**

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Keep awake.

**Thanks be to God.**

From sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2025

Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

**ASSISTING IN WORSHIP TODAY**

**PREACHER / PRESIDER** .....The Reverend Kevin M.B. Tracey

**MUSICIAN** .....Faith Woodward

**TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT** ..... Edie Beaupre/Tom Petree

**LECTOR** ..... Bonnie Tillman

## CHURCH STAFF

**PASTOR:** The Reverend Kevin M.B. Tracey  
**MUSIC DIRECTOR:** Faith Woodward

**SCHOOL DIRECTOR:** Melisa McDaid  
**PARISH ADMINISTRATOR:** Alice Kaplan

## **THIS WEEK AT ST. MARK**

Today ..... Worship Service ..... 10 AM  
Today ..... Decorate Christmas Trees ..... After Worship  
Tuesday ..... Council Meeting ..... 7 PM  
Wednesday ..... Fall Bible Study ..... 7 PM  
Sunday ..... Worship Service ..... 10 AM

## **Announcements**

Stay after worship today and share the Christmas spirit as we **DECORATE THE CHRISTMAS TREES** in the sanctuary.

Forget to order your **POINSETTIA?** Today is the last day to get in your order form & payment.

Thank you to everyone who brightened up Christmas for a senior at **FAIR ACRES**. Pr. Kevin delivered a trunk load of gifts to them on Monday.

Join us this Wednesday for **BIBLE STUDY** at 7pm. Let Pr. Kevin or the church office know if you'd like to receive the link to participate.

Mark your calendars now for our **ANNUAL MEETING** – Jan. 25<sup>th</sup> after worship. Our annual meeting is a chance for us to reflect on our ministry together and plan for the future. Your voice matters! *Remember, reports were due to Pr. Kevin by December 1. There are still a few reports missing.*

## **ST. MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH**

436 N. Oak Ave, Clifton Heights, PA 190018

*Website:* [www.stmarkcliftonheights.org](http://www.stmarkcliftonheights.org)

*Email:* [office@stmarkcliftonheights.org](mailto:office@stmarkcliftonheights.org)

*Phone:* 610-626-5295