ST. MARK EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF MECHANICSBURG
NOVEMBER 29, 2026
HOLY COMMUNION
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES
8:30 am - Sanctuary & Zoom Worship Service
9:45 am - Sunday Church School
9:45 am – Sunday School
10:20 am – Youth Ensemble

Rev. Marleen Griffith-Stull, Pastor
Pastor's Cell Phone: 878-295-2173
Pastor's Email: revmarleen@stmarkmburg.com

Karen Fisher, Office Manager
Karen's Cell Phone: 717-580-7507
Church Office: 717-766-4482
Office Email: kfisher@stmarkmburg.com
Office Hours: 10:00 AM-1:00 PM – Monday through Thursday

Denise Hirn, Director of Youth Ensemble
Denise's Cell Phone: 717-802-1064
Email: denisehirn@hotmail.com

Brad Hull, Director of Music
Brad's Cell Phone: 202-738-2795
Email: bradleyjhull@gmail.com

www.stmarkmburg.com

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St Mark Lutheran Church Mechanicsburg

The Advent Wreath

One of the best-known customs for the season is the Advent wreath. The wreath and winter candle-lighting amid growing darkness strengthen some of the Advent images found in the Bible. The unbroken circle of greens is an image of everlasting life, a victory wreath, the crown of Christ, or the wheel of time itself. Christians use the wreath as a sign that Christ reaches into our time to lead us to the light of everlasting life. The four candles mark the progress of the four weeks of Advent and the growth of light. Sometimes the wreath is embellished with natural dried flowers or fruit. Its evergreen branches lead the household and the congregation to the evergreen Christmas tree. In many homes, the family gathers for prayers around the wreath.

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DISCLAIMER FOR RECORDING SERVICES
We are blessed to be able to record our worship services. By entering and by your presence here, you consent to be filmed and/or otherwise recorded for our congregation and on YouTube. Our cameras are generally directed at the front of the sanctuary.

GUESTS:
"Getting to Know You—Getting to Know All About You." Please complete a "Welcome to St. Mark Church" card found in the pew and place it in the offering plate at the time of the offering. Thank you!

INTRODUCTION TO TODAY
Stir up your power and come! The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS
Andrew, Apostle
Monday, November 30, 2026
The first of the disciples to be called by Jesus, Andrew quickly began to bring others to the Savior, including Simon Peter. The Bible also shows him leading some Greeks to meet Jesus, and he brought forward the boy with five loaves and two fish, with which Jesus fed thousands.

PRELUDE
Wachet Auf arr. W. Wold

GATHERING
P We hear the voice of one crying out in the wilderness;
C prepare the way of the Lord!

***BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**
All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

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 Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

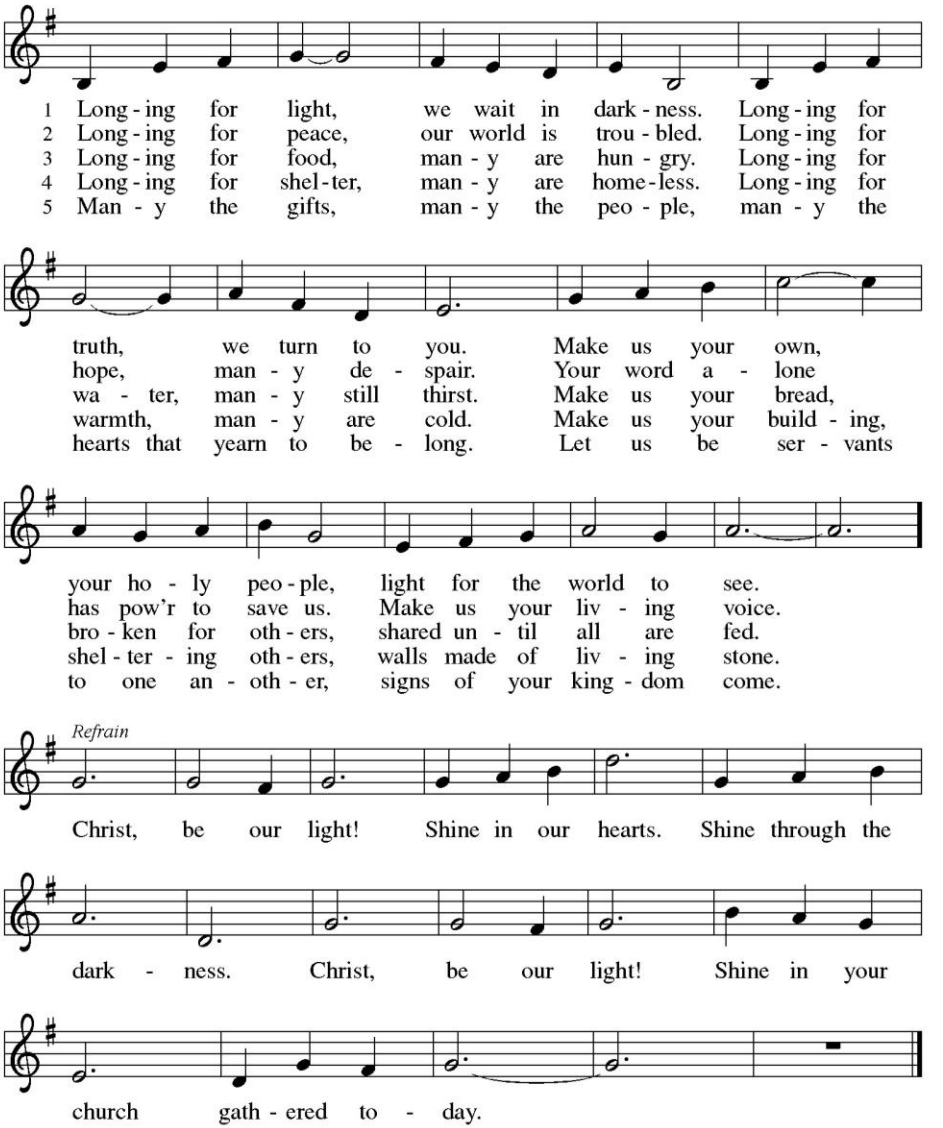
(Silence for reflection. Please kneel or be seated.)

P Most merciful God,
C we confess that we are captive 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 In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God 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.

*The asterisk in the margins of the bulletin indicates please stand as able.

***GATHERING HYMN** Christ, Be Our Light



Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957
Music: CHRIST, BE OUR LIGHT, Bernadette Farrell
Text and music © 1993 Bernadette Farrell.Published by OCP Publications, 5536 NE Hassalo, Portland, OR 97213.
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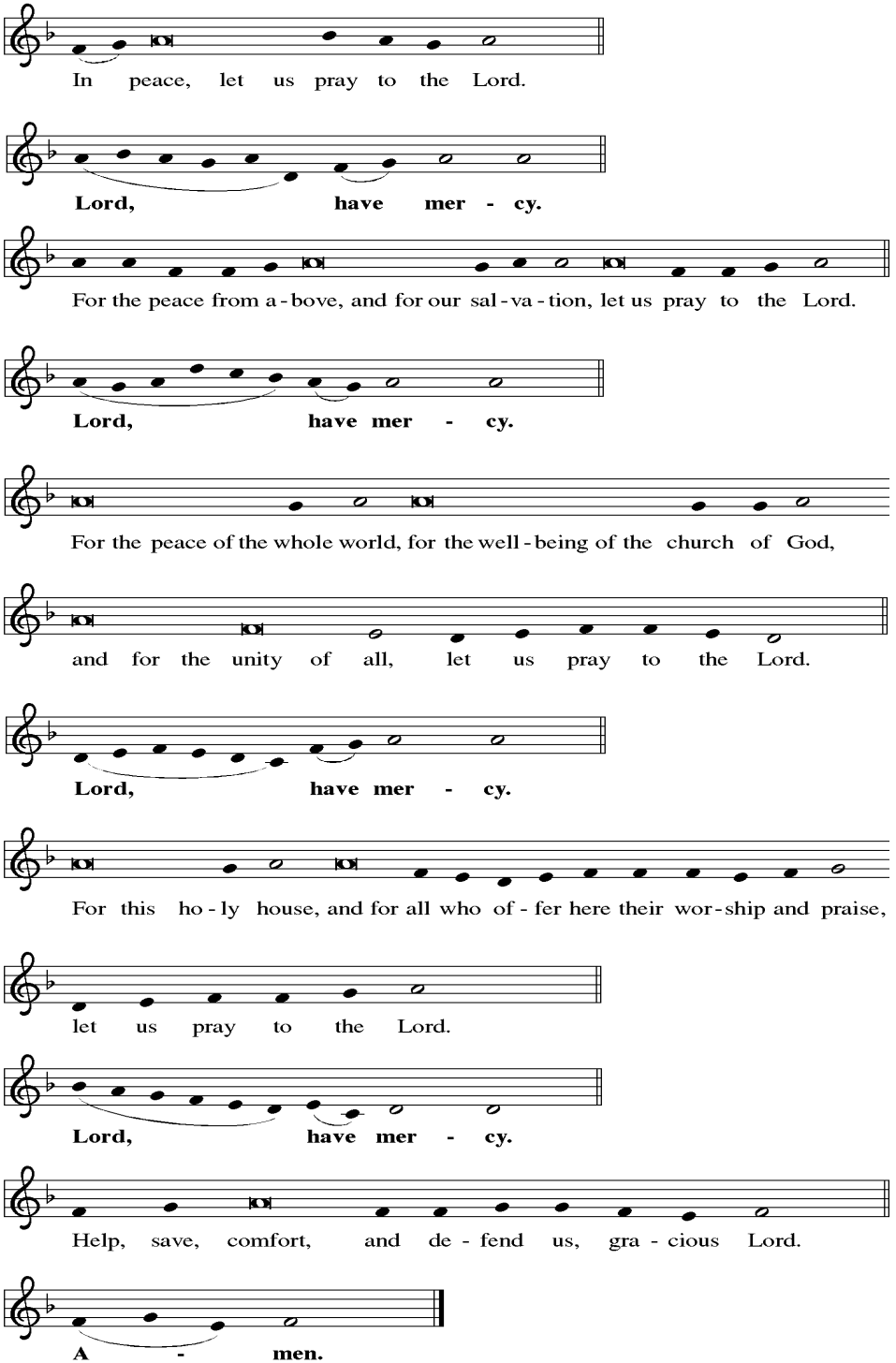
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***GREETING**

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

C And also with you.

*KYRIE


In peace, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mer - cy.
For the peace from a - bove, and for our sal - va - tion, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mer - cy.
For the peace of the whole world, for the well - being of the church of God,
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mer - cy.
For this ho - ly house, and for all who of - fer here their wor - ship and praise,
let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mer - cy.
Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.
A - men.

***ADVENT WREATH BLESSING**

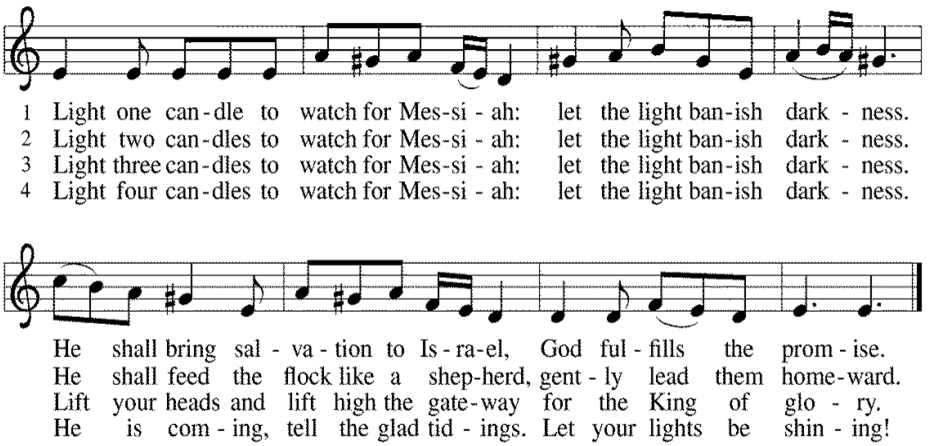
R Praise to you, O God, our salvation who is near. You hold us in our waiting and keep us awake to the world. You show up in our lives at unexpected times. Bless us as we light this candle to keep vigil for your arrival. We trust that even though we do not know the day or the hour, you hurry to gather all people to your peace.

C Amen.

***HYMN OF PRAISE**

(The first candle is lit while the first verse is sung.)

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah



Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954
Music: TIF IN VELDELE, Yiddish folk tune
Text © 1984 Fortress Press, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P The Lord be with you,

C and also with you.

P Let us pray.
Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection save us from the threatening dangers of our sins and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

ANTHEM
An Invitation to Advent

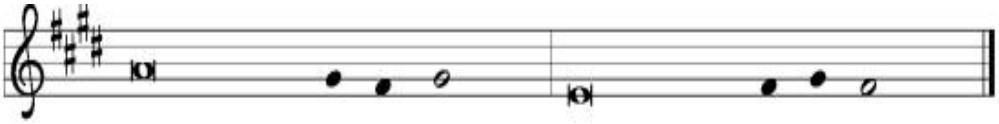
FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 64:1-9
This lament comes from a people who have had their hopes shattered. The visions of a rebuilt Jerusalem and a renewed people of God, spoken of in Isaiah 40–55, have not been realized. Instead, the people experience ruin, conflict, and famine. This lament calls God to account—to be the God who has brought deliverance in the past.

A reading from Isaiah.

[1] O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—
[2] as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
[3] When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down; the mountains quaked at your presence.
[4] From ages past no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for him.
[5] You meet those who gladly do right,
those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned;
because you hid yourself we transgressed.
[6] We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
[7] There is no one who calls on your name
or attempts to take hold of you,
for you have hidden your face from us
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.
[8] Yet, O Lord, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
[9] Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord,
and do not remember iniquity forever.
Now consider, we are all your people.

R The word of the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

PSALM 80:1-7, 16-18
*(Please sing the Psalm responsively; choir, the regular print; congregation, the **bold print**.)*



[1] Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph | like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned up- | on the cherubim.

[2] **In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, | and Manasseh,**
stir up your strength and | come to help us.

[3] Restore us, O | God of hosts;
show the light of your countenance, and we | shall be saved.

[4] **O LORD | God of hosts,**
how long will you be angered despite the prayers | of your people?

[5] You have fed them with the | bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of | tears to drink.

[6] **You have made us the derision | of our neighbors,**
and our enemies laugh | us to scorn.

[7] Restore us, O | God of hosts;
show the light of your countenance, and we | shall be saved.

[16] **Let your hand be upon the man of | your right hand,**
the son of man you have made so strong | for yourself.

[17] And so will we never turn a- | way from you;
give us life, that we may call up- | on your name.

[18] **Restore us, O LORD | God of hosts;**
show the light of your countenance, and we | shall be saved.

SECOND LESSON: 1st Corinthians 1:3-9
As the Christians in Corinth await the advent of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has already enriched them through spiritual gifts and will continue to strengthen them until the coming day of the Lord.

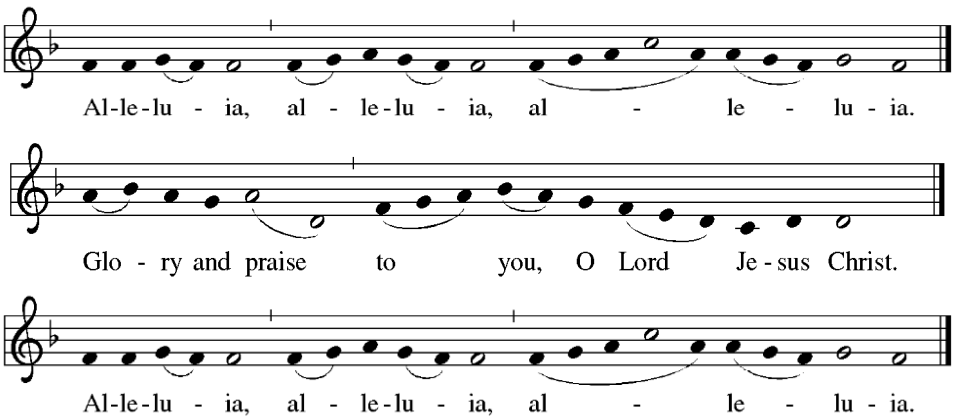
R A reading from 1st Corinthians.

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God
that has been given you in Christ Jesus, 5 for in every way you have been
enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— 6 just as the
testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— 7 so that you are
not lacking in any gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus
Christ. 8 He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be
blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, by whom
you were called into the partnership of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

R The word of the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



***GOSPEL: Mark 13:24-37**
Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark the 13th chapter.
C Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] [24] “In those days, after that suffering,
the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light,
[25] and the stars will be falling from heaven,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.
[26] “Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. [27] Then he will send out the angels and gather the elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

[28] “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. [29] So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. [30] Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. [31] Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

[32] “But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father. [33] Beware, keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come. [34] It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch.
[35] Therefore, keep awake, for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening or at midnight or at cockcrow or at dawn, [36] or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. [37] And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

P The Gospel of the Lord.
C Praise to you, O Christ.

MESSAGE FOR YOUTH

NOISY SUNDAY

SERMON

***NICENE CREED**

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.

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

A In hope and expectation, we bring to God our prayers for the church, the world, and all in need.

A God in your mercy,
C receive our prayer.

P We entrust these and the prayers of our hearts to you, most holy God, in the name of Christ Jesus our Savior.
C Amen.

***PEACE**

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C And also with you.

P Let us greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY
From Heaven Above D. Schack

***THE OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness

My soul proclaims your greatness, Lord;
I sing my Savior's praise!
You looked upon my lowliness,
and I am full of grace.
Now ev'ry land and ev'ry age
this blessing shall proclaim—
great wonders you have done for me,
and holy is your name.

Text: *With One Voice*, 1995, based on the Magnificat
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***OFFERTORY PRAYER**

A Let us pray.

A 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.

C Amen.

***PREFACE**

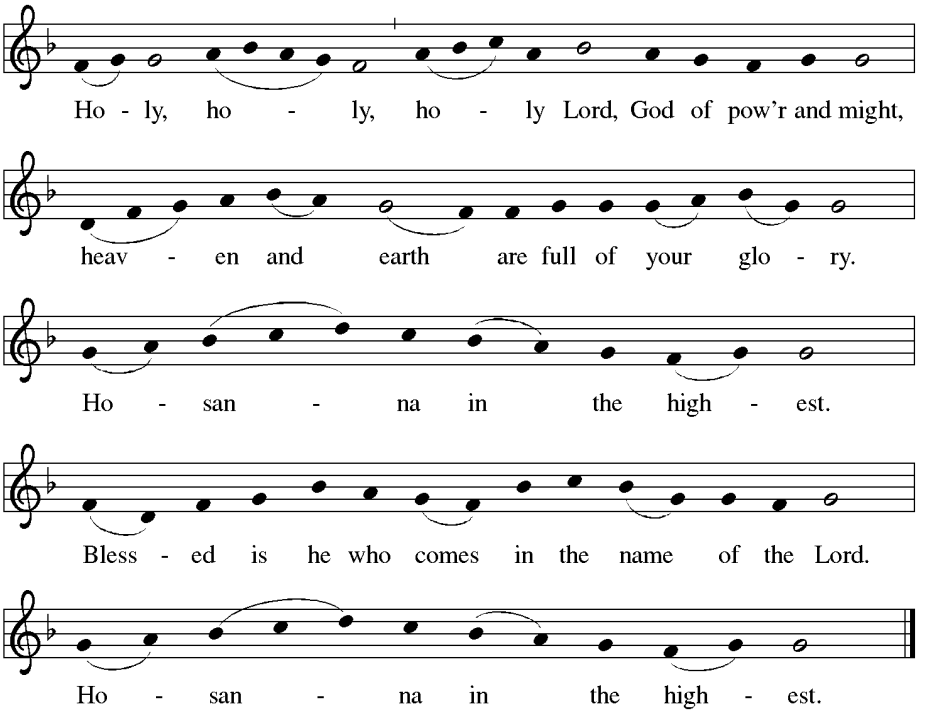
P The Lord be with you.
C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.
C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C It is right to give him thanks and praise.

P 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:

***SANCTUS**



***EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**

P 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:

C **Christ has died.**
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

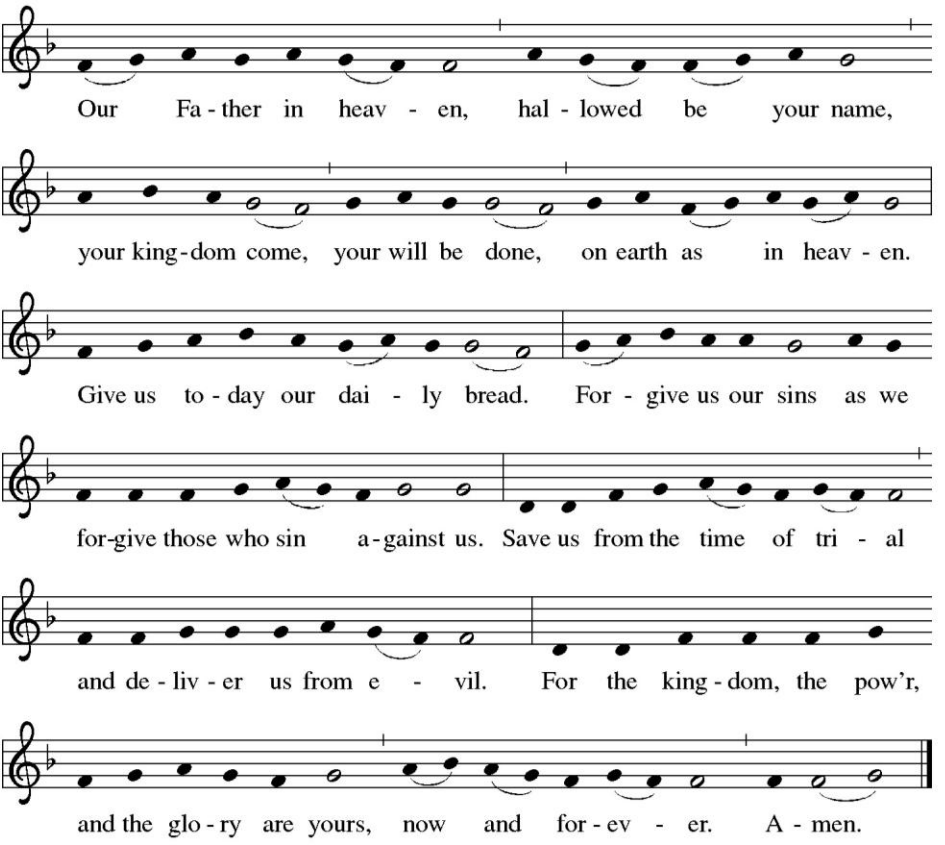
P With this bread and cup
we remember your Word dwelling among us,
full of grace and truth.
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.
We look with hope for his coming.
C **Come, Lord Jesus.**

P 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.
C **Come, Holy Spirit.**

P All praise and glory are yours,
Holy One of Israel,
Word of God incarnate,
Power of the Most High,
one God, now and forever.

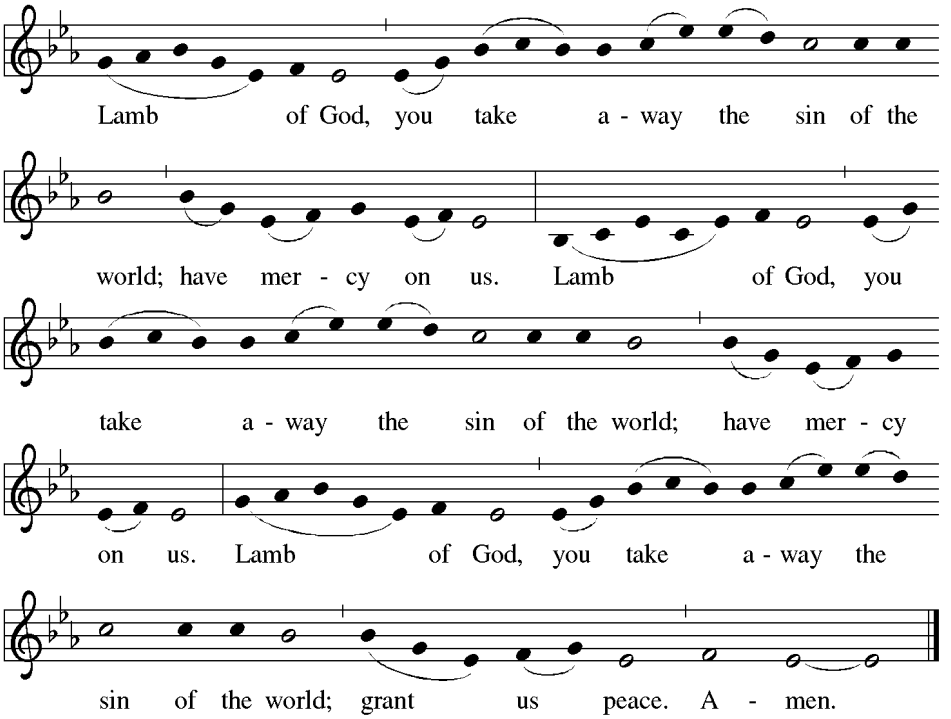
C Amen.

***THE LORD'S PRAYER**



COMMUNION

P Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.



COMMUNION

All baptized, communing Christians are welcome to partake of the Holy Sacrament. We have gluten-free bread available and white grape juice (in addition to our traditional homemade bread and red wine) for those who need or prefer those. Simply let the pastor or assisting minister know if you prefer something other than bread and wine. Remember that we are promised that Christ is truly present in, with, and under each element.

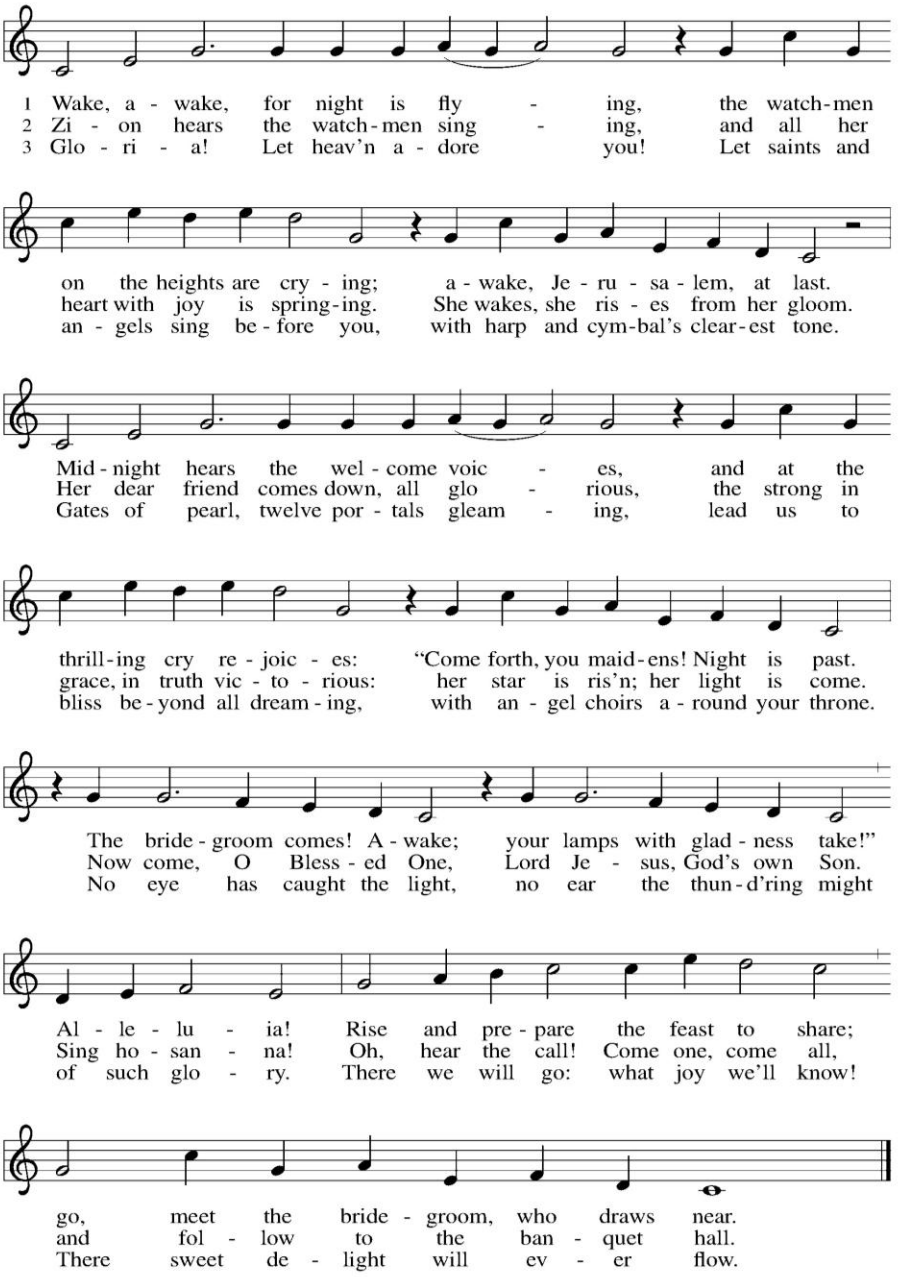
P The body of Christ, given for you.
C Amen.

A The blood of Christ, shed for you.
C Amen.

PLEASE SING THE FOLLOWING HYMNS DURING THE DISTRIBUTION

-HYMN OF THE DAY-

Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying

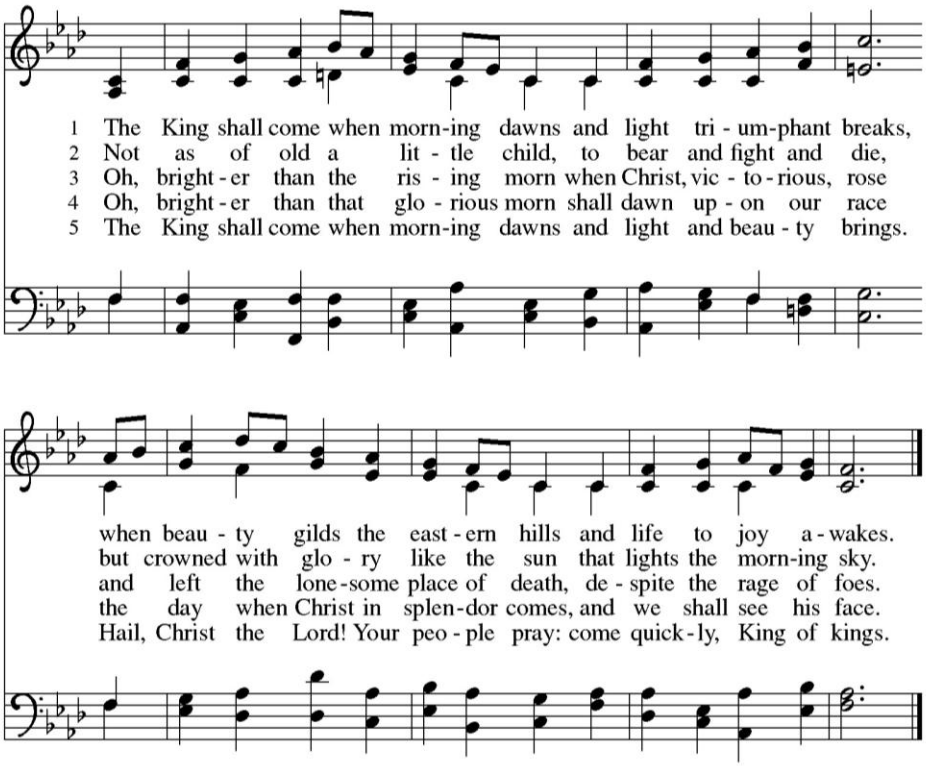


Text: Philipp Nicolai, 1556–1608; tr. composite
Music: WACHET AUF, Philipp Nicolai
Text © 1999 Augsburg Fortress

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-COMMUNION-

The King Shall Come



Text: John Brownlie, 1859-1925
Music: CONSOLATION, A. Davisson, *Kentucky Harmony*, 1816; arr. Theodore A. Beck, 1929-2003
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(Please stand as you are able.)

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

C Amen.

***POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

A Let us pray.

A 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.

C Amen.

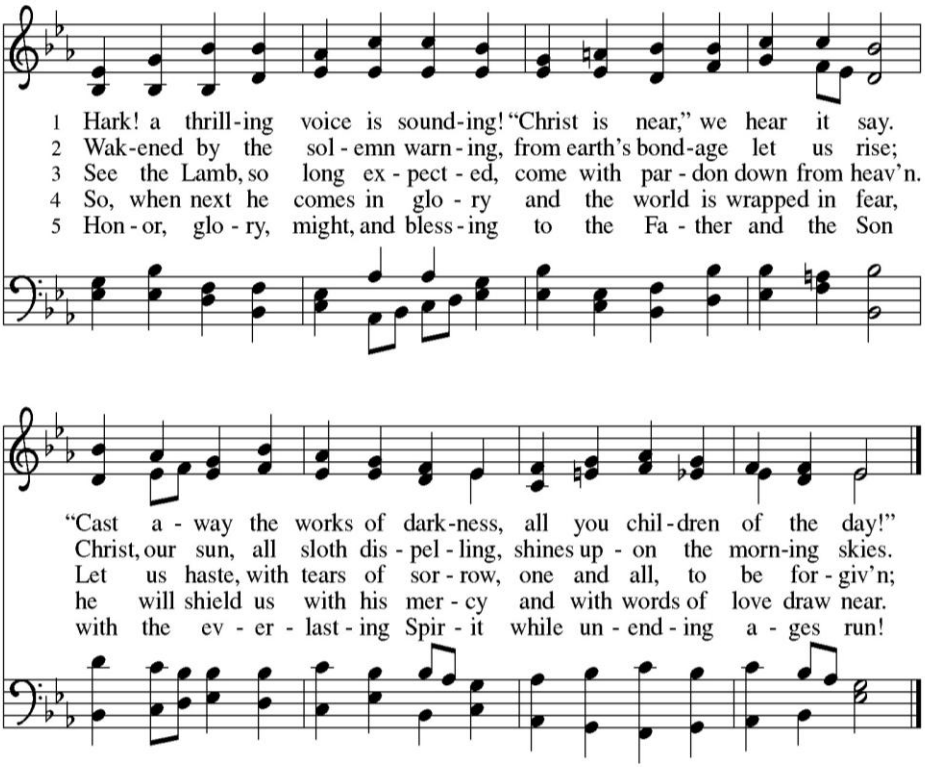
***BLESSING**

P The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN**

Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding!



Text: Latin hymn, 1632; tr. Edward Caswall, 1814-1878
Music: MERTON, William H. Monk, 1823-1889

***DISMISSAL**

A Go in peace. Bring good news to the brokenhearted.

C Thanks be to God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***POSTLUDE**

Partita on "People Look East" arr. J. Bertolozzi



Altar greens sponsored to the Glory of God by the Altar Guild.

TODAY'S ASSISTANTS

Assisting Minister:	Kevin Amos
Lay Reader:	Karen Heath
Acolyte:	Caroline Stull
Ushers:	Connie Kuntz, Shannon Weaver
Altar Guild:	Barb Lehman, Susan Fissel, Connie Kuntz
ZOOM Operator:	TBA
Council Money Duty:	Barb Yost, Amy Gimbel

Ushers are needed for the 4:00 pm and 9:30 pm Christmas Eve services. Please contact Shannon Weaver at 717-691-1618 if you are available. THANK YOU!!

THIS WEEK AT ST. MARK

Sunday, November 29	**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT** **GETTING READY SUNDAY** **NOISY SUNDAY**
8:30 am	**Worship Service—Communion**
9:45 am	**GETTING READY ACTIVITIES**
10:20 am	**Youth Ensemble**
12:00 Noon	**Iglesia Dios Con Nosotros**

(Continued next page)

Monday, November 30	
2:45 pm	**Violin Lessons**
7:00 pm	**German Club**
Tuesday, December 1	
Wednesday, December 2	
11:00 am	**Bible Study**
6:00 pm	**St. Stephen Advent Svc. & Dinner**
6:00 pm	**Bell Choir**
7:00 pm	**Adult Vocal Choir**
Thursday, December 3	
2:45 pm	**Violin Lessons**
7:00 pm	**Iglesia Dios Con Nosotros**
Friday, December 4	
2:30 pm	**Violin Lessons**
4:00 pm	**Iglesia Dios Con Nosotros**
	Decorating for private party
Saturday, December 5	
9:00 am	**Decorating the church**
12:00 Noon	**Iglesia Dios Con Nosotros**
	(private event)
Sunday, December 6	**SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
8:30 am	**Worship Service—Communion**
9:45 am	**Sunday Church School**
9:45 am	**Sunday School**
10:20 am	**Youth Ensemble**
12:00 Noon	**Iglesia Dios Con Nosotros**
LESSONS:	**DECEMBER 6, 2026**
FIRST LESSON	**Isaiah 40:1-11**
PSALM	**Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13**
SECOND LESSON	**2nd Peter 3:8-15a**
GOSPEL	**Mark 1:1-8**

-ANNOUNCEMENTS-

ADVENT DEVOTIONS
Pamphlets for Advent devotions are located on the table in the Narthex. Please take one and one for a friend.

REMINDER—TODAY IS GETTING READY SUNDAY
Join us during the Sunday School hour for Advent crafts and packing cookie bags.

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS EXPRESS
Our Christmas Blessings Express tree is located at the back entrance of St. Mark. W**e are collecting unwrapped gifts through TODAY, November 29.**

MIDWEEK ADVENT WORSHIP AT ST. STEPHEN
Advent is a busy time for everyone. We have many things to do to get ready for Christmas, but we never want to miss the more important preparation for the coming of Christ. **Join us on Wednesdays at St. Stephen Lutheran Church, 30 W. Main St., News Kingstown,** to prepare for Christ's coming. **We will gather for worship at 6:00 pm with a light soup supper after worship**. This year we will continue our tradition of using Holden Evening Prayer as our liturgy. Our topic is Preparing in Christ's Presence. On **December 2**, we will ponder how we can "Do Less" as we prepare for Christmas. On **December 9**, we will "Experience Wonder" as we share some pictures of the wonder of God's works. On **December 16,** we will "Hold onto Hope" in the midst of the world's troubles.

We can use your help. Look for the wonder of God's works then take a picture of the wonder you find. Share your picture and one sentence about how this wonder inspires awe in God's works. Then send it to me via email so that we can all see your pictures when we worship together. Please email me at revmarleen@stmarkmburg.com by December 1 to have your picture included. See you as we prepare together for the Advent of our Lord!
Pastor Marleen Griffith-Stull

PRAYER LIST

The Prayer List will be cleared at the end of December. If you would like someone to remain on the list, please email Karen in the church office at kfisher@stmarkmburg.com.

DECORATING THE CHURCH
On **Saturday, December 5,** we will be getting our church ready for Christmas. Many hands make light work. Please mark this date on your calendars and plan now to **join us starting at 9:00 am** to trim the trees, hang the wreaths, and set up the Nativity. We chose December 5 in hopes that it will be a less hectic time for folks to come to help.

Please note, we want to keep the first few weeks in December focused on Advent, so while the trees are up, we will not be lighting them until Christmas Eve. The lighting of the trees will symbolize the welcoming of Baby Jesus.

ANGEL STORY INTERGENERATIONAL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
Gather in Fellowship Hall after service on December 20 to hear the *"Angel Story,"* make your own angel tree topper/centerpiece, enjoy refreshments, and maybe sing a carol or two. Come join the fun!

PLANNING AHEAD—CHRISTMAS EVE

SPECIAL MUSIC FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON
As we begin planning for the season of Advent, we also recognize that Christmas celebrations are fast approaching. We are seeking musicians of all kinds to add their talents for Christmas Eve. **There are two opportunities: 3:45 pm – 4:00 pm for the early service and 9:00 pm to 9:30 pm for the evening service.** Good news! You can volunteer for both. A simple musical offering of 2 to 3 minutes would be wonderful. Do you feel called to explore this possibility? Or perhaps you could reach out to a friend or family member that is musically inclined? Please plan ahead to ensure that we all can foster an atmosphere of peace, hope, and expectancy for Advent focusing on the spiritual meaning of the season by contacting Brad at bradleyjhull@gmail.com by **December 6.** In this way, we can direct our thoughts and spirits toward the season by having enough time to be well rehearsed. Additionally, should you be interested in joining the vocal choir to sing at our Christmas Eve service, rehearsals are on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm. Please come and join us.



LIGHTING OF THE LUMINARIES
The lighting of the luminaries will begin at **3:15 pm on Christmas Eve, December 24.** The sponsorship form is located near the back of the newsletter and in bulletins.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:

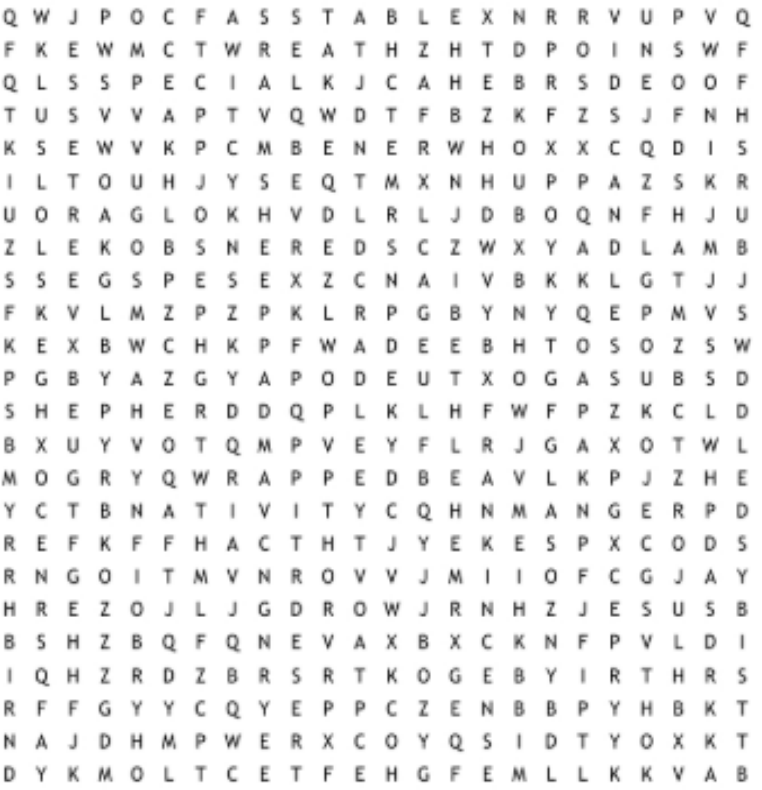


4:00 PM CANDLELIGHT SERVICE
There will be an early Christmas Eve service at 4:00 pm following the lighting of the luminaries (special music at 3:45 pm.)

9:30 PM CANDLELIGHT SERVICE
There will be a Christmas Eve candlelight service starting at 9:30 pm with special music beginning at 9:00 pm.

St. Mark will not hold services on Christmas Day. Please watch the bulletins and December newsletter for a list of churches that will conduct worship on Christmas Day.

Advent word search



frankincense	jesse tree	bethlehem	shepherd
Nativity	special	swddled	wrapped
candles	desert	cradle	joseph
stable	Wreath	Manger	sheep
myrrh	jesus	lamb	

POINSETTIAS FOR CHRISTMAS



If you would like to sponsor a poinsettia(s) to be placed in the chancel for Christmas or donate money to Mechanicsburg Area Meals on Wheels, please complete the form below. The cost of each poinsettia is **$13.00** for a red poinsettia in a 6" pot that will have at least four blooms. **The deadline for ordering is Sunday, December 6. Separate checks** should be made to St. Mark Lutheran Church and be sure to put **Altar Guild on the memo line**. Please place your check with your order in the offering plate.

PLEASE BE SURE TO CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX

☐ **POINSETTIA** ☐ **MEALS ON WHEELS**

☐ **In honor of** _____

☐ In **memory of** _____

☐ **To the Glory of God**

~~~~~~

Presented by _____

☐ **Deliver to Shut-in**

☐ **Will pick up after worship service on Christmas.**

_____**Total number of Poinsettias ordered**

Amount of Check _____
~~~~~~



November 29	Getting Ready Sunday—Advent Crafts and Packing Cookies
December 2, 9, 16	Advent Svc. at St. Stephen
December 5	Decorate the church
December 21	Angel Story Intergenerational Christmas Program
December 24	Lighting of the Luminaries
December 24	Christmas Eve Services
January 6, 2027	Epiphany, Waffle Wednesday, Chicken & Waffles
February 10	Ash Wednesday
March 25	Seder Meal
March 28	Easter

SPONSOR A LUMINARY FOR CHRISTMAS EVE
DECEMBER 24, 2026



We are offering you the opportunity to sponsor a luminary for $5.00. Every dollar collected will be donated to Mechanicsburg Area Meals on Wheels.

We will place your name on the luminary bag(s) along with the information you provide below.

We will begin the lighting of the luminaries at 3:15 pm on Christmas Eve. You are welcome to join us and light the luminaries that you sponsor, or we will light them for you. Worship services will be held at 4:00 pm (special music starting at 3:45 pm) and 9:30 pm (special music starting at 9:00 pm).

PLEASE BE SURE TO CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOXES

Total number of luminaries sponsored _____

☐ **I will come and help light luminaries at 3:15 pm.**

☐ **In honor of _____**

☐ **In memory of _____**

☐ **To the Glory of God**

Sponsored by _____

Check amount _____

Please make checks payable to *St. Mark Lutheran Church* and note "*luminary sponsor*" on the memo line no later than December 6.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

KEEPING ALERT

Our Advent season begins this year with the Gospel of Mark and the warning words of Jesus: “Beware, keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come” (Mark 13:33). This may seem confusing. Isn’t Advent meant to prepare us for Christmas? Isn’t the anticipation we are to feel related to the celebration of Christ’s birth? Yes—and also to his second coming.

In today’s reading, Jesus urges his disciples, and us, to keep alert for the coming of the Son of Man, by which we understand that he means his own return. But Jesus shares that even he and the angels do not know the time of this event; only God the Father knows. Still, the promise is there: Jesus will come again. And when Jesus comes, we are to be awake and ready.

As the body of Christ, before we receive holy communion, we declare, “Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.” Christ was born, died, rose from the grave, and promised to return. We do not pretend to know the “when” of his return, but we trust that it will happen. We just don’t talk about it much. Very few of us would say we are ready.

In our busy world, with so many distractions and too few hours in the day, we often go to bed in exhaustion and wake up again fatigued. Parents of children, caregivers of others, teachers, pastors, laborers of all kinds—our daily tasks and lists are never-ending, and each day rolls into another, especially the busy days before Christmas. These are the days when Mark’s words ring true. As exhausted as we may be at times by simply living, we are always called to “keep awake” (Mark 13:35, 37), seeking Jesus. Even in chaos or mundane tasks or work, we are to keep alert and ready. Mark proclaims the real joy of Christmas: Jesus will come again. In Advent, we can dwell in this space and appreciate the season more deeply

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