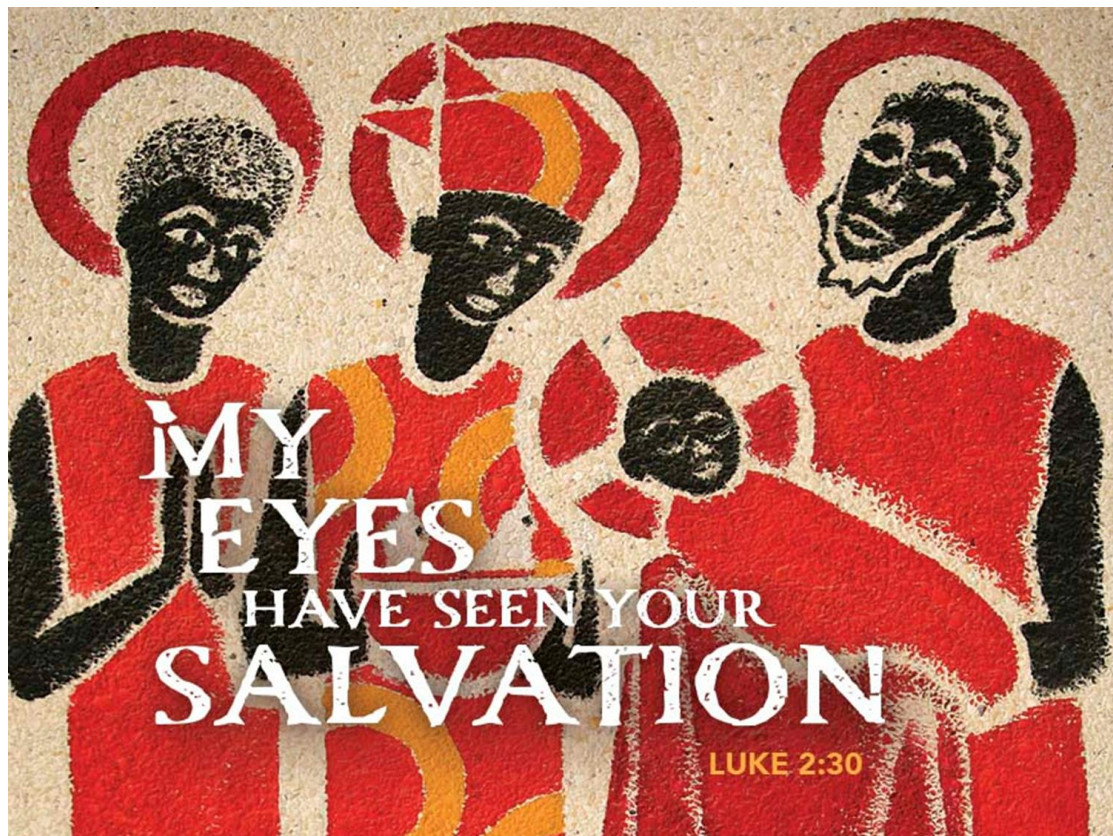


# FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS



December 31, 2023 ~ 10:00am

**ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**HAGERSTOWN, MD**

# St. Mark's Lutheran Church

601 Washington Avenue, Hagerstown, MD 21740

Pastor Brian McClinton, Senior Pastor

Telephone: 301-733-7550 Website: stmarkslc.org

*+ Congregation Please Stand if Able*

**PRELUDE - "Coventry Carol"**

**C. Davis**

## **WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **+ CALL TO WORSHIP**

Praise be to God who has given God's light to us.

**Honor and praise to God for God's most precious gift.**

The darkness that enveloped the people,

**Has been pierced by the Light.**

Let us rejoice in God's blessed goodness!

**Let us continually praise God with great joy and thanksgiving.**

### **+ GATHERING HYMN - "Joy to the World"**

**ELW 267**

- 1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her king;  
let ev'ry heart prepare him room  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature  
sing.
- 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills,  
and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
- 3 No more let sin and sorrow grow  
nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found,  
far as, far as the curse is found.
- 4 He rules the world with truth and  
grace  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.

## **+ OPENING PRAYER**

Lord of mercy and joy, You have given to us the blessing of your Son Jesus who will make known your presence, forgiveness, and love to each one of us. be with us this day and keep our hearts and minds open to receive your love and peace. Enable each of us to be people of joy and hope as we encounter others. We ask this in Jesus' Name. **AMEN**

## **FIRST LESSON - Isaiah 61:10—62:3**

*To the people who returned to Jerusalem after the exile, the prophet proclaims that God's salvation will fully come to pass. Jerusalem will become a shining light to the nations and righteousness and praise will spring up as surely as the earth puts forth vegetation.*

<sup>10</sup>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.

<sup>11</sup>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.

<sup>62:1</sup>For 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.

<sup>2</sup>The 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.

<sup>3</sup>You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,  
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.  
Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN - "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"**

**ELW 272**

- 1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming  
from tender stem hath sprung!  
Of Jesse's lineage coming  
as seers of old have sung,  
it came, a flow'r so bright,  
amid the cold of winter,  
when half-spent was the night.
- 2 Isaiah had foretold it,  
the rose I have in mind;  
with Mary we behold it,  
the virgin mother kind.  
To show God's love aright,  
she bore to us a Savior,  
when half-spent was the night.
- 3 This flow'r, whose fragrance tender  
with sweetness fills the air,  
dispels with glorious splendor  
the darkness everywhere.  
True man, yet very God,  
from sin and death he saves us  
and lightens ev'ry load.
- 4 O Savior, child of Mary,  
who felt our human woe;  
O Savior, king of glory,  
who dost our weakness know:  
bring us at length, we pray,  
to the bright courts of heaven  
and into endless day.

**PSALM 148**

- <sup>1</sup>Praise the LORD!  
Praise the LORD from the heavens;  
praise him in the heights!
- <sup>2</sup>Praise him, all his angels;  
praise him, all his host!
- <sup>3</sup>Praise him, sun and moon;  
praise him, all you shining stars!
- <sup>4</sup>Praise him, you highest heavens,  
and you waters above the heavens!
- <sup>5</sup>Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
for he commanded and they were  
created.
- <sup>6</sup>He established them forever and ever;  
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be  
passed.
- <sup>7</sup>Praise the LORD from the earth,  
you sea monsters and all deeps,  
<sup>8</sup>fire and hail, snow and frost,
- <sup>9</sup>Mountains and all hills,  
fruit trees and all cedars!
- <sup>10</sup>Wild animals and all cattle,  
creeping things and flying birds!
- <sup>11</sup>Kings of the earth and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers of the earth!
- <sup>12</sup>Young men and women alike,  
old and young together!
- <sup>13</sup>Let them praise the name of the  
LORD,  
for his name alone is exalted;  
his glory is above earth and heaven.
- <sup>14</sup>He has raised up a horn for his  
people,  
praise for all his faithful,  
for the people of Israel who are close to  
him.  
Praise the LORD!

## **HYMN - "Angels From the Realms of Glory"**

**ELW 275**

- 1 Angels, from the realms of glory,  
wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
once you sang creation's story,  
now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
Come and worship, come and  
worship,  
worship Christ, the newborn king.
- 2 Shepherds, in the fields abiding,  
watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing,  
yonder shines the infant light.

Come and worship, come and  
worship,  
worship Christ, the newborn king.

- 4 All creation, join in praising  
God, the Father, Spirit, Son,  
evermore your voices raising  
to the eternal Three in One.  
Come and worship, come and  
worship,  
worship Christ, the newborn king.

## **SECOND LESSON - Galatians 4:4-7**

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

## **HYMN - "Love Has Come"**

**ELW 292**

- 1 Love has come a light in the darkness!  
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem  
skies.  
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;  
hear how their song of joy arises:  
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!  
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.
- 2 Love is born! Come, share in the  
wonder.  
Love is God now asleep in the hay.  
See the glow in the eyes of his mother;  
what is the name her heart is saying?

Love! Love! Love is the name she  
whispers;  
Love! Love! Jesus, Immanuel.

- 3 Love has come and never will leave  
us!  
Love is life everlasting and free.  
Love is Jesus within and among us.  
Love is the peace our hearts are  
seeking.  
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas;  
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

**+ GOSPEL - Luke 2:22-40**

<sup>22</sup>When 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 <sup>23</sup>(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), <sup>24</sup>and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

<sup>25</sup>Now 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. <sup>26</sup>It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. <sup>27</sup>Guided 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, <sup>28</sup>Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

<sup>29</sup>“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; <sup>30</sup>for my eyes have seen your salvation, <sup>31</sup>which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, <sup>32</sup>a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

<sup>33</sup>And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. <sup>34</sup>Then 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 <sup>35</sup>so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

<sup>36</sup>There 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, <sup>37</sup>then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. <sup>38</sup>At 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.

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

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**+HYMN - “Away in a Manger”**

**ELW 277**

- 1 Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;  
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

- 2 The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky  
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.
- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay  
close by me forever and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in your tender care  
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

**+ HYMN OF THE DAY - "Good Christian Friends Rejoice"**

**ELW 288**

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Good Christian friends, rejoice<br/>with heart and soul and voice;<br/>give ye heed to what we say:<br/>Jesus Christ is born today;<br/>ox and ass before him bow,<br/>and he is in the manger now.<br/>Christ is born today!<br/>Christ is born today!</li> <li>2 Good Christian friends, rejoice<br/>with heart and soul and voice;<br/>now ye hear of endless bliss:<br/>Jesus Christ was born for this!</li> </ol> | <p>He has opened heaven's door,<br/>and we are blest forevermore.<br/>Christ was born for this!<br/>Christ was born for this!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 Good Christian friends, rejoice<br/>with heart and soul and voice;<br/>now ye need not fear the grave;<br/>Jesus Christ was born to save!<br/>Calls you one and calls you all<br/>to gain the everlasting hall.<br/>Christ was born to save!<br/>Christ was born to save!</li> </ol> |
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**+ APOSTLES CREED**

God has made us his people through our baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**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 into hell. 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.**

**OFFERING**

**MUSIC OFFERING - "Carol of the Birds"**

**C. Davis**

**+OFFERING PRAYER**

God of hope and joy, the gifts we offer to you pale when our minds try to grasp all we have been given in this season; wholeness in our woundedness, hope in our despair, peace in our turmoil, forgiveness in our rebellion. You have given us light in our darkness and hope in our discouragement. Help us to embrace your extravagant generosity as we give ourselves to others. In Jesus' holy name, we pray. **AMEN**

**+PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH**

*Response:* Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

**+THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**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.**

**+CLOSING HYMN - "Go Tell it on the Mountain"**

**ELW 290**

*Refrain*

Go tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and ev'rywhere;  
go tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born!

2 The shepherds feared and trembled  
when, lo, above the earth  
rang out the angel chorus  
that hailed our Savior's birth.

*Refrain*

1 While shepherds kept their watching  
o'er silent flocks by night,  
behold, throughout the heavens  
there shone a holy light. *Refrain*

3 Down in a lonely manger  
the humble Christ was born;  
and God sent us salvation  
that blessed Christmas morn.

*Refrain*

**+BLESSING**

We have given the Great Light, which has come into the world. This light of peace and hope, joy and love, shines on us, in us, and through us, to all whom we meet. Go now in peace, and let the light of God's great love go with you. **Thanks be to God!**

**POSTLUDE - "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"**

**D. Cherwien**