

“Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.”

Mark 13:26-27

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

First Sunday of Advent – December 3, 2023

420 Beaver St., PO Box 411

Mars, PA 16046-0411

www.stjohnchurchmars.org

Phone: 724-625-1830 email: office@stjohnchurchmars.org

Rev. Katie McNeal, Presiding Minister

Maizy Fisher, Director of Music Ministries

*We are delighted to have you worship with us this morning!
Know that you are welcome here just as you are.*

*If you are looking for a church to call home, why not consider making this one your own? If this is your first time visiting us, please fill out the visitor information card stapled to your bulletin. Everything you need to follow worship can be found in this bulletin. As you are comfortable, please rise when there is an * and join in the congregational responses, noted in **bold**.*

All songs are marked with numbers. The red book in the pew has all the songs. Look for the large number in the upper corner of the page to find the correct song.

*During the time of **Peace**, you are invited to turn to those around you and offer a word of peace. We suggest a handshake and saying, "Peace be with you." You are also welcomed to offer another gesture of peace (wave, fist-bump, smile, etc.). Hand sanitizer is available in each pew.*

*At the time of **Offering**, you are invited to share a gift. You may also offer updates to our ongoing prayer list using the yellow cards in the pews and placing them in the offering plates. Visitor information cards and member attendance cards (attached to the front of the bulletin) may also be placed in the offering plates.*

*At the time of **Holy Communion**, all are welcome to come forward via the center aisle, receive the elements, and return via the side aisles. We begin at the front of the right side, commune all on the right side, then we will invite the left side forward. When you come forward, you may receive the bread from the pastor (gluten free wafers are available), then pre-filled cups with wine or grape juice from the assisting minister. You may consume the elements after receiving them then place the empty cup in the tray held by the acolyte. Those who do not receive Holy Communion are welcome to come forward for a blessing.*

If you need a restroom, restrooms are located on the bottom floor at the far side of the building from the elevator. Restrooms may be accessed either via the stairs in the rear of the sanctuary, the stairs by the Greeting Area, or the elevator.

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to fill out the blue prayer request forms located in each pew. The cards will be collected during our hymn of the day, and prayers will be offered during the prayers of intercession.

PRELUDE and ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

We gather today.

It is time to worship!

We listen for God

It is time to hear!

We receive God's grace.

It is time to be loved!

We leave in peace.

It is time to serve others!

As we wait for Jesus' arrival, Emmanuel, God-with-us, is already here in this time and place.

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

People of God, when we think that we have nowhere left to turn, we can always turn to God.

Whether we feel frozen or are rushing with no time to rest, whether it feels like life is happening to us too quickly or like our lives will never change, God is with us.

For God, there is always time for forgiveness. We trust God, and we confess our sins together.

Holy One, We have not stayed awake.

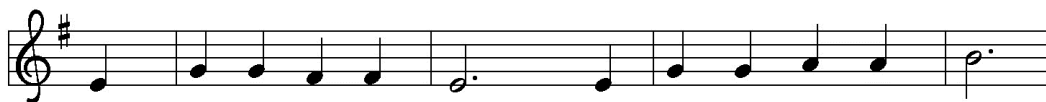
**We have missed you when you appeared in our neighbors, in strangers half a world away,
in the suffering planet.**

**We have wasted the time and the skills that you gave us and assumed we were powerless
to mend the breaches in our world.**

Sometimes, we even gave up on your mercy, justice, and love.

God, is it too late for us?

Speak tenderly to our anxious hearts. Tear open the heavens and heal what we have done.



1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.

2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.

3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.



We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.

Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.

Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

People of God, God's judgment is certain
 and God's forgiveness is lightning fast.
 Hear this good news:
 in the name of Jesus Christ, all your sins are forgiven.
 Forgiveness gives us the courage we need.
 Wherever we wait for God's time to come, we will witness wonders.
Amen.

***GATHERING SONG *Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning* (ACS 949)**



1 Keep your lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your
 2 Dark - er mid - night lies be - fore us, dark - er
 3 Lo, the morn - ing soon is break - ing, lo, the
 4 Keep your lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your



lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your lamps
 mid - night lies be - fore us, dark - er mid - night
 morn - ing soon is break - ing, lo, the morn - ing
 lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your lamps



trimmed and burn - ing, for this work's al - most done.
 lies be - fore us, for this work's al - most done.
 soon is break - ing, for this work's al - most done.
 trimmed and burn - ing, for this work's al - most done.



Refrain
 Chil-dren, don't grow wea - ry; chil-dren, don't grow wea - ry;



chil-dren, don't grow wea - ry, for this work's al-most done.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

We wait for you, O God.
We wait for you to come and save us.
We wait for you to end what hurts us.
As we light another candle on this wreath,
arrive in our hearts, our homes, our world—
even as we still wait.

Light the first candle during the singing of the hymn.

ADVENT SONG *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah* (ELW 240)



1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra-el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.

Let us pray: 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 nor the hour,
You hurry to gather all people to your peace.
Amen.

THE MAGNIFICAT (Luke 1:46-55)

All

1., 3. My soul pro-claims your great-ness, O God, and my
2. You have cast the might - y down from their thrones, and up -
spir - it re - joic - es in you. You have looked with love on your
lift - ed the hum-ble of heart. You have filled the hun - gry with
ser - vant here, and blessed me all my life through.
won-drous things, and left the wealth-y no part.
Great and might - y are you, O Ho - ly One,
Great and might - y are you, O Faith - ful One,
strong is your kind-ness ev - er - more. How you fa - vor the
strong is your jus - tice, strong your love, as you prom-ised to
weak and low-ly one, hum - bling the proud of heart!
Sar - ah and A - bra - ham, kind - ness for - ev - er - more. D.C.

*PRAYER FOR OUTREACH MINISTRY

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to 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. Amen.

Silence for reflection

READING: Isaiah 64:1-9

A reading from Isaiah.

¹O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—
²as 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!
³When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
⁴From 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.
⁵You 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.
⁶We 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.
⁷There 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.
⁸Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
⁹Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,
and do not remember iniquity forever.
Now consider, we are all your people.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Silence for reflection

***GOSPEL READING: Mark 13:24-37**

The holy gospel according to Mark.

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,

²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his 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. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven 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. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It 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. ³⁵Therefore, 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, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

***SONG OF PRAISE**

Hal-le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal -
- le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le -
lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah.

CHILDREN’S SERMON

SERMON

Silence for reflection

***HYMN OF THE DAY** *Each Winter As the Year Grows Older* (ELW 252)

(Blue prayer cards are collected)



1 Each win - ter as the year grows old - er, we each grow old - er,
2 When race and class cry out for trea - son, when si - rens call for
3 Yet I be - lieve be - yond be - liev - ing that life can spring from
4 So e - ven as the sun is turn - ing to jour - ney to the
5 O Child of ec - sta - sy and sor - rows, O Prince of peace and



too. The chill sets in a lit - tle cold - er; the
war, they o - ver - shout the voice of rea - son and
death, that growth can flow - er from our griev - ing, that
north, the liv - ing flame, in se - cret burn - ing, can
pain, bright - en to - day's world by to - mor - row's, re -



ver - i - ties we knew seem shak - en and un - true.
scream till we ig - nore all we held dear be - fore.
we can catch our breath and turn trans - fixed by faith.
kin - dle on the earth and bring God's love to birth.
new our lives a - gain; Lord Je - sus, come and reign!

***APOSTLES' CREED**

Let us confess our faith in the words of the Apostles' 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

As we wait and yearn for God, we pray together for our community, for the church around the world, and for every need.

A brief silence for reflection

Call your church into holy fellowship as we await the restoration of all things. Reenergize your faithful people to live with hope and compassion. Be with those who keep awake at night: nurses working overnight shifts, caregivers of newborns and aging adults, stargazers, those who are anxious, or those who are traveling. Reveal to all that the dark can be a place of calm and comfort filled with your presence. Center us on your promise to come among us and make all things new. Come among us and hear us O God!



Let the nations tremble at your holy presence, that justice and liberation prevail in all corners of the earth. Restore peace to nations in conflict, teach righteousness to corrupt leaders and systems, and bring stability to areas facing uncertain futures. Enrich the spirits of all who feel hopeless, fearful, or despairing. Stay close to those who await healing or relief especially Bob, Geneva, Cherry, Winnie, Henry, Harry, Roy, Ellen, Ruth, Sally, Katie, Debi, those on our prayer list, and all whom we remember in our hearts. Deliver all in any need. Come among us and hear us O God!



You have sent out your angels and gathered your faithful people from every time and place, calling them into one fellowship of saints. Bless the witness of those who dwell in your eternal presence. God, you are always with us. We gather these prayers together, with the prayers on the hearts of this congregation today (*blue prayer cards are read*). God of hosts restore us with your great and everlasting mercy. Come among us and hear us O God!



*EXCHANGE OF PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Let us share Christ's peace with one another.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY HYMN *Come Now, O Prince of Peace* (ELW 247)

**Rise on 3rd verse*



O - so - sǎ o - so - sǎ, pyong - hwa - ŭi - im - gŭm
1 Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one bod - y.
2 Come now, O God of love, make us one bod - y.
3 Come now and set us free, O God, our Sav - ior.
4 Come, Hope of u - ni - ty, make us one bod - y.



u - ri - ga han - mom i - ru - ge ha - so - sǎ.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.

***OFFERING PRAYER**

We give thanks together for all God's gifts as we offer them back to God.

Loving God,

For the time we have, we say:

Thank you.

For the gifts we offer, we say:

Thank you.

For the chance to help others, we say:

Thank you.

For the people whose lives will be better because of these gifts, we say:

Thank you.

For the ways you are changing the world, we say:

Thank you.

We pray in the name of Jesus, who appears wherever people need our help.

Amen.

*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.

God our Creator, the abundance of your goodness overflowed into creation—
earth, sky, water, plants, animals, and human beings
all came to be and you called us good.

Down through the generations,
your goodness continued to flow:
in friendship with humanity, in acts of liberation, in provision for your people.
In all of this, you prepared a way.

And so, with joyful hearts, we join the angels in their song:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san - na in the high - est.



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



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

Finally, when the time was right,
you entered our human existence in Jesus,
who was born humbly,
who spent his life with the unlikely and unloved,
who healed and taught and preached the good news of your way.

On the night when he was betrayed,
he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying,
“Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this in 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 in remembrance of me.”

Whenever we share this bread and cup,
Jesus is here with us, in this moment, in this time and place.
Whenever we share this bread and cup,
God takes us out of time
and joins us with God’s people in every time and place.
Whenever we share this bread and cup,
we proclaim the mystery of faith.
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Send the Spirit of your presence on us now, O God,
so that we too will overflow with goodness.
Strengthen us by this meal,
so that through us,
your presence will flow out
in what we do and say.
In this, we prepare the way for your arrival again,
when you will return to remake all of existence
into your kingdom of perfect mercy, justice, and love.
Amen.

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to 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

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

The time is now! Come and take your place at the table.

Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

Through this meal, we know forgiveness, life, and salvation as the blessings of God's sacramental grace. In response to Jesus' invitation, all are welcome to come forward and experience the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine of communion. Those who do not receive the elements of bread and wine are invited to come forward for a blessing. Grape juice and gluten free wafers are available.

COMMUNION SONG *Lamb of God*



1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;

2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;

3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;

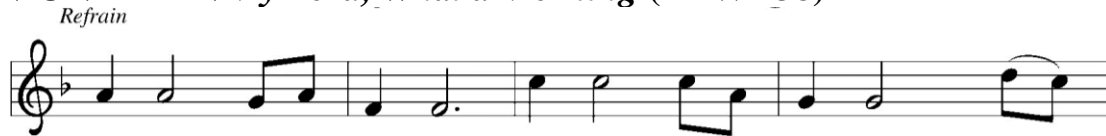


you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.

you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.

e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

COMMUNION HYMN *My Lord, What a Morning* (ELW 438)



My Lord, what a morn-ing; my Lord, what a morn - ing; oh,



my Lord, what a morn-ing, when the stars be - gin to fall.



- 1 You will hear the trum - pet sound,
- 2 You will hear the sin - ner cry, to wake the na-tions un-der - ground,
- 3 You will hear the Chris-tian shout,



look-ing to my God's right hand, when the stars be-gin to fall.

***POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

***BLESSING**

God our Creator, who made the starlit sky, blesses you. God blesses you.

God blesses you.

Jesus our Redeemer, who arrives at just the right time, blesses you. Jesus blesses you.

Jesus blesses you.

The Holy Spirit our Enlivener, who sparks hope for the hopeless, blesses you. The Holy Spirit blesses you.

The Holy Spirit blesses you.

You are blessed in the name of God the Three in One.

Amen.

***SENDING SONG *Soon and Very Soon* (ELW 439)**



1 Soon and ver - y soon
 2 No more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King,
 3 No more dy - in' there,
 4 Soon and ver - y soon



soon and ver - y soon
 no more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King,
 no more dy - in' there,
 soon and ver - y soon



soon and ver - y soon
 no more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King.
 no more dy - in' there,
 soon and ver - y soon



Hal-le - lu - jah, hal-le - lu - jah, we're goin' to see the King!



Hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu -



jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah.

***DISMISSAL**

As you leave this place, remember:
 whether you are waiting for a new beginning
 or just waiting for something to end,
 God is sustaining you.
 Keep alert; trust Emmanuel; seek peace,
 And rejoice, God is with you.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

The flowers on the altar today are from Larry and Amy Werner in memory of their son Charles and in thanks for the Niklewicz Family.

Assisting in worship today:

Assisting Minister: Denise Hager

Acolyte: Emma N

Usher: Dave Knauff

Greeters:

Offering: Luca K and Eva K

Advent Wreath Lighters: Cardinal Family

Attendance Last Week: 56 + 4 zoom

Notes for the day's texts:

Heavy hearts and burdened consciences will relate to Isaiah's confession, "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" (Isa. 64:6). Then, just as the cold nights in the northern hemisphere reach their longest, Mark addresses us with promises that the signs of the coming of the Son of Man will include the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars. Hold on, there is hope!

The promise of Advent is that God is always at work in the world, bringing new beginnings and a new creation to people and powers long bent on destruction. Yet, because we live in the generation that exists between the "already" of Christ's resurrection and the "not yet" of God's full restoration of the creation, we cannot know when that final day will arrive. Instead of becoming preoccupied with the end times, we are counseled to live our lives in a state of preparedness—trusting that our home is God's home and that God is coming once again to dwell with us.

Today's Music

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Magnificat (from Holden Evening Prayer): Text and Music: Marty Haugen, GIA Publications, Inc. © 2016

Each Winter As the Year Grows Older. Text: William Gay, b. 1920, alt., Music: Annabeth Gay, b. 1925. Pilgrim Press/United Church Press.

Come Now, O Prince of Peace. Text: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947; tr. Marion Pope, Music: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947. Geonyong Lee.

My Lord, What a Morning. Text: African American spiritual, Music: African American spiritual. Public Domain.

Soon and Very Soon. Text: Andraé Crouch, b. 1945, Music: Andraé Crouch. Capitol CMG Publishing.

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Next Week's Readings

Isaiah 40:1-11 *Good news of God's coming to a people in exile*
Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 *Righteousness shall prepare a pathway for God*
2 Peter 3:8-15a *Waiting for and hastening the day of God*
Mark 1:1-8 *John appears from the wilderness*