

St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church

4200 Londonderry Road, Harrisburg, PA 17109 717-652-6700

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MINISTERS: Every Member

PASTOR: The Rev. James E. Person, 717-712-8191



Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 21, 2025

P THIS IS THE DAY THE LORD HAS MADE.

C LET US REJOICE & BE GLAD IN IT.

MISSION STATEMENT: Nourished by Word and Sacrament, the mission of the members of St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church is to spread God's Word in Jesus Christ through our thoughts, words, and actions, proclaiming God's good news for all to hear and live.

Please silence all electronic devices.

WELCOME! Please observe Silent Meditation during the Prelude. **Ver ujier para boletín en español**

Voir l'huissier pour le bulletin français

PERSONAL HEARING ASSISTANCE DEVICES ARE AVAILABLE. Please see an usher if you have trouble hearing the service.

CONSIDER THIS

Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, "O come, O come, Emmanuel," a beloved hymn based on the O Antiphons, ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday of Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.

GATHERING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE— *From East to West*

Schumann (arr. Theriot)

Lighting of Advent Wreath—#257 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* Vs 7



Stand **Gospel Acclamation**

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia.
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

8:15 Sermon Lesson—Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the 1st Chapter
C Glory to you O Lord

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,

and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

P The Gospel of the Lord

C Praise to you O Christ

The Ten Commandments

(According to Luther's Small Catechism)

P God promises grace and every good thing to all those who keep God's commandments.

Therefore, we are to love and trust God and gladly act according to God's commands.

C You shall have no other Gods

**You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the
Lord your God**

Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy

Honor your father and your mother

You shall not murder

You shall not commit adultery

You shall not steal

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor

You shall not covet your neighbor's house

**You shall not covet your neighbor's spouse... or anything
that belongs to your neighbor**

P Having been reminded of God's perfect law, we now confess our sins, seek and receive forgiveness by God's grace.

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,
whose home is heaven and earth,
whose salvation is sure.

C Amen.

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

Sit or kneel as able

Silence is kept for reflection.

P Long-expected God,

**C 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.**

P 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.

Glory—Pages 185 & 186 *Congregation Sings Refrains;*
Cantor sings Verses

Stand **Salutation**

P The Lord be with you

C And also with you

Prayer of the Day—Let us pray...

A 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.

C Amen

First Lesson: Isaiah 7:10-16

An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!

A reading from Isaiah

¹⁰ The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ “Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.” ¹³ Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil

and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.”

A The Word of the Lord

C Thanks be to God

Psalm: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

READ RESPONSIVELY BY WHOLE VERSE

¹ Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon 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;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

⁴ **O Lord God of hosts,
how long will your anger fume when your people
pray?**

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;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

¹⁷ **Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,
the one you have made so strong for yourself.**

¹⁸ And so will we never turn away from you;
give us life, that we may call upon your name.

¹⁹ **Restore us, O Lord God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.**

Second Lesson: Romans 1:1-7

Most of the Christians in Rome do not know Paul. In this letter's opening he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to

spread God's gospel. The gospel's content is the promised coming of Christ, and Paul's mission is to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including his Roman audience.

A reading from Romans

¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

⁷ To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

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

A The Word of the Lord

C Thanks be to God

11:00—Stand Gospel Acclamation

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

11:00 Sermon Lesson Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

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P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the 1st Chapter
C Glory to you O Lord

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,

and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

P The Gospel of the Lord
C Praise to You O Christ

11:00 SERMON

Hymn #265 *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came*

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.**

THE PRAYERS

P God of grace,

C Hear our prayer.

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

C Amen

PEACE

We pray for the peace of the Lord for each other.

P May 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

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C And also with you

Sit **OFFERTORY** *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

French Carol (Moultrie)

Stand **OFFERTORY HYMN #253** *He Came Down Vs 4*

- 1 He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;
2 He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light;
3 He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;
4 He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;

he came down that we may have love;
 he came down that we may have light; hal-le - lu - jah for-ev - er - more.
 he came down that we may have peace;
 he came down that we may have joy;

OFFERTORY PRAYER— Let us Pray

A Nourishing God,
you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert.
Through this meal, satisfy our parched places,
that we may rejoice and be for the world
signs of your kingdom come.

C Amen.

Spoken **THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

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 our thanks and praise..

PREFACE

P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy.....we praise your
name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry, full of your glo-ry. Ho -
san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high -
est. Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

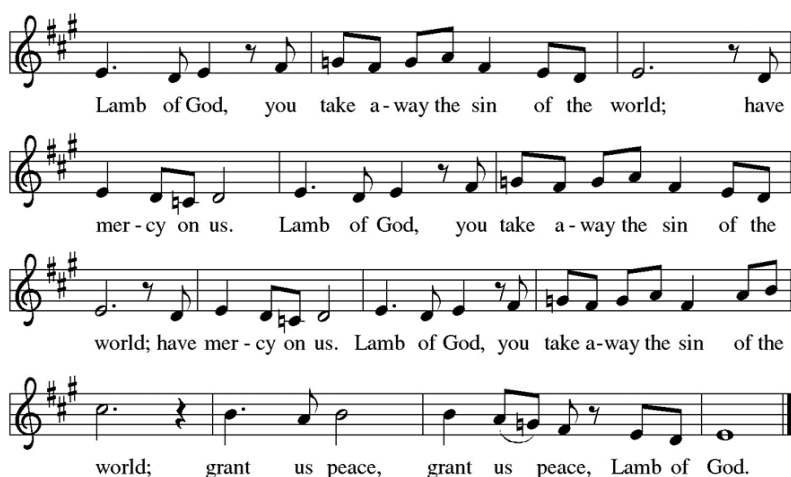
LORD'S PRAYER

Invitation to Communion

P Here is life. God is with us.

Come, receive what God has promised.

LAMB OF GOD



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; grant us peace, grant us peace, Lamb of God.

Communion Distribution

We invite all Christians who believe that Jesus gives his body and blood for the forgiveness of sins to receive the sacrament with us, the communion assistant will distribute the wine from a pouring chalice into a cup you may pick up at the front of the aisle. If you are unable to take either the bread or wine, be assured that the sacrament is complete. Those not receiving communion are invited to come to the rail to receive a blessing. Parents of young children; please direct the pastor as to whether your child usually receives communion or not.

Communion Hymns

#263 *Savior of the Nations, Come*

ACS#902 *Come Now, O God*



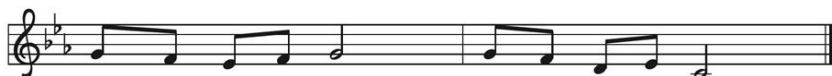
1 Come now, O God, when our love is for - sak - en.
2 Come, when we squan - der the free - dom you gave us.
3 Come, put an end to our self - serv - ing mad - ness.



Come, when our bed - rock of faith has been shak - en.
Come, break the sys - tems of sin that en - slave us.
Come, while the world is en - shroud - ed in sad - ness.



Come, when our deep - est of hopes are mis - tak - en.
Come, though we won - der if you can still save us.
Come, turn the tears of our mourn - ing to glad - ness.



Come, Em - man - u - el.

Come, Em - man - u - el.

Text: David Bjorlin, b. 1984

Music: LOST IN THE NIGHT, Finnish folk tune

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Stand **COMMUNION BLESSING**

POST COMMUNION PRAYER—Let us pray.

A God our host,
at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness.
Send us forth, eager to share the feast,
welcome the stranger,
and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.

C Amen

Blessing

P 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.

C Amen.

Hymn #251 *My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness*

DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Keep awake.

C We will. Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE ~ *Savior of the Nations, Come*

Ambrose of Milan, Luther (arr. Benson)

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**A Special thank you to Lauren Zaccarelli-Hengst for the
beautiful Crown & Chrismons decorating our tree.**

Birthday Celebration for Phyllis Mengel

When: January 2, 2026

Where: Ecumenical Retirement Community

624 Wilhelm Road, Harrisburg, PA 17111

Time: 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm

Please RSVP John Mengel – (717)497-4620

THOSE WHO SERVE TODAY

CO-MINISTERS OF MUSIC - Jenny Sustak & Faith Smeck

YOUTH/FAMILY MINISTER - Kellen Michalowski

ALTAR CARE - Barb Heym; Marian Person

USHERS - Doug Womer, Ed Shadle, Rick Frazier,

Chris Bair, Joe Boslet, Dave Featherman

COMMUNION ASST - Jessica Broome; Shelley Lindner

WORSHIP ASSISTANT—

CANTOR— Madeline Varga

LECTOR - Jenny Sustak; Barb Dudek

FLOWER DELIVERY - Sandy Dinger

COUNCIL PRESIDENT - Dave Stanton

NURSERY SCHL DIR. - Jessica Broome 717-827--8104

SEXTON - Don Young

A SEASON OF GIVING—EMMOR BOSLET

As we approach the holidays, our thoughts turn to giving — cookies to the postman, money to the paperboy, and gifts to friends and family.

Being a financial advisor, it was a busy time for us as well.

Making sure our retired clients who were 70 1/2 (now 72) or older completed their RMD's (required minimum distributions). Today, if they are retired and 72 and older...and have retirement accounts such as IRA's, 401K's or similar, you must start making withdrawals. The money counts as ordinary income and you pay federal income tax on the withdrawn money. The custodian of your retirement accounts is required to notify you of that minimum amount you must withdraw but you can always take out more. But you can avoid paying federal tax on the withdrawn amount if you donate all or part directly to a church or licensed charity. What a wonderful way to tithe with tax free money.

OPPORTUNITIES AT ST. MARK'S THIS WEEK

SUNDAY	12/21	8:15 am Worship 9:45 am St Mark's Minis Sunday School 9:45 am FM Sunday School Fellowship Hall Making Gingerbread Houses 11:00 am Worship 2:00 pm Caroling 5:00 pm LYF Christmas Party 7:00 pm AA 7:00 pm Gamblers Anonymous
MONDAY	12/22	
TUESDAY	12/23	6:30 pm Cub Scouts Fellowship Hall
WEDNESDAY	12/24	12:00 pm Family Service 6:30 pm Traditional Candlelight Service
THURSDAY	12/25	Christmas Day
FRIDAY	12/26	
SATURDAY	12/27	
SUNDAY	12/28	10:30 am Worship 7:00 pm AA 7:00 pm Gamblers Anonymous

**We appreciate members supplying bread for communion,
please try to select bread with a soft crust. Thank you.**

SPREADING CHRISTMAS JOY

Christmas is doing a little extra for someone, and our Christmas project includes the young and the young at heart.

For the young, please consider giving a toy or toys for a child from toddler to age 12. New, UNwrapped toys can be placed in the toy chest in the Narthex.

Our neighbors at Colonial Park Care Center/River's Bend, would appreciate items to enhance their daily living, such as:

*** Personal care items - shampoo, body wash, toothpaste, hand and body lotion for sensitive skin, lip balm, eyeglass cleaning cloths, travel-size packs of tissues**

***Light weight throws or lap blankets, non-slip socks, slippers with non-skid soles, U-shaped neck pillows, stress balls**

***Large print crossword or word search puzzles, calendars with large print, large piece puzzles, large print books, adult coloring books, non-toxic crayons or markers**

Items can be placed in the bin in the Narthex

May the gifts of love, peace, and happiness be yours at Christmas.