



**The First Sunday of Christmas  
December 26, 2021**

*Stephen, Deacon and Martyr  
in the 168<sup>th</sup> year of the Parish*

**St. Mark's Lutheran Church**

**142 Market Street, Williamsport, PA 17701**

**[stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org](mailto:stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org)**

**Office (570-323-4619) FAX (570-323-2452)**

**Rev. Brian D. Vasey, Pastor**

*Welcome to St. Mark's Lutheran Church!*

**Our Mission: “To know Christ and to make Christ known”**

**This is Christ's Church. There is a place for you here.**

*We are the church that shares a living, daring confidence in God's grace.*

*Liberated by our faith, we embrace you as a whole person—questions, complexities and all. Join us as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world.*

**Please note the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has provided revised guidelines with regard to mask wearing. Following these guidelines, and the specific recommendations of our bishop (Bishop Collins of the Upper Susquehanna Synod) Church Council strongly recommends that masks be worn, social distancing followed and to speak and sing in very low tones when worshipping at St. Mark's. Thank you!**

*An Order for Holy Eucharist in a Hymn Tune Setting for Christmastide.*

*\*Please stand as you are able.*

**PRELUDE**

*Greensleeves*

Richard Purvis

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCING THE DAY

### **\*BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who sends the word with angels,  
who is made flesh among all peoples,  
and who breathes peace on all the earth.

C **Amen.**

P In Christ, we are bold to name our sin and cry out for peace.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

C **Holy God,**

**we confess our sin before you.**

**We replace compassion with competition.**

**We seek what is mighty while ignoring the meek.**

**We are quick to anger but slow to forgive.**

**We have not put on love in harmony with you.**

**Wrap us in the grace of your powerful Word.**

**Swaddle our hearts with your peace,**

**that all we do, in word or deed,**

**may reflect your love born among us.**

**Amen.**

P I bring you good news of great joy for all people:

God has come among us

in the child born of Mary, Christ the Lord.

† In Christ your sins are forgiven

and you are clothed in peace.

C **Amen.**

**\*HYMN O Little Town of Bethlehem**

**(LBW, "Green" 41)**

**\*GREETING**

**P** Unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given! Alleluia! 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**

**C** **Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy.**

**Upon us.**

**Christ have mercy. Christ have mercy. Christ have mercy.**

**Upon us.**

**God the Father, with the Spirit, gave us Christ  
to love and save us.**

**Lord have mercy upon us. Lord have mercy upon us.**

Tune *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly*

Words *BDV and others, 2017*

**\*HYMN OF PRAISE**

**Angels We Have Heard on High (LBW, "Green" 71)**

**\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** **And also with you.**

**P** Let us pray. Grant us grace, O Lord, that like Stephen we may learn to love even our enemies and seek forgiveness for those who desire our hurt; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C** **Amen.**

THE FIRST LESSON.....2 Chronicles 24:17-22  
17Now after the death of Jehoiada the officials of Judah came and did obeisance to the king; then the king listened to them. 18They abandoned the house of the LORD, the God of their ancestors, and served the sacred poles and the idols. And wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this guilt of theirs. 19Yet he sent prophets among them to bring them back to the LORD; they testified against them, but they would not listen.  
20Then the spirit of God took possession of Zechariah son of the priest Jehoiada; he stood above the people and said to them, "Thus says God: Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, he has also forsaken you." 21But they conspired against him, and by command of the king they stoned him to death in the court of

the house of the LORD. 22King Joash did not remember the kindness that Jehoiada, Zechariah's father, had shown him, but killed his son. As he was dying, he said, "May the LORD see and avenge!"

The word of the Lord

**C Thanks be to God.**

### **PSALM 148**

Hallelujah! Praise the LORD | from the heavens;  
praise God | in the heights.

**Praise the LORD, | all you angels;  
sing praise, all you | hosts of heaven.**

Praise the LORD, | sun and moon;  
sing praise, all you | shining stars.

**Praise the LORD, heav- | en of heavens,  
and you waters a- | bove the heavens.**

Let them praise the name | of the LORD,  
who commanded, and they | were created,

**who made them stand fast forev- | er and ever,  
giving them a law that shall not | pass away.**

Praise the LORD | from the earth,  
you sea monsters | and all deeps;

**fire and hail, | snow and fog,  
tempestuous wind, do- | ing God's will;**

mountains | and all hills,  
fruit trees | and all cedars;

**wild beasts | and all cattle,  
creeping things and | flying birds;**

sovereigns of the earth | and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers | of the world;

**young | men and maidens,**

## **old and | young together.**

Let them praise the name | of the LORD,  
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over | earth and heaven.

**The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all | faithful servants,  
the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. | Hallelujah!**

## **THE SECOND LESSON.....Acts 6:8-7:2a, 51-60**

8Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. 9Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and others of those from Cilicia and Asia, stood up and argued with Stephen. 10But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. 11Then they secretly instigated some men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." 12They stirred up the people as well as the elders and the scribes; then they suddenly confronted him, seized him, and brought him before the council. 13They set up false witnesses who said, "This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law; 14for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed on to us." 15And all who sat in the council looked intently at him, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

1Then the high priest asked him, "Are these things so?" 2And Stephen replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me.

51You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. 52Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers. 53You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it."

54When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. 55But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56Look, he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" 57But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against

him. 58Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died.

The word of the Lord

**C Thanks be to God.**

**\*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**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. (REGENT SQUARE)**

**\*THE GOSPEL.....Matthew 23:34-39**

**P** The holy gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-third chapter

**C Glory to you, O Lord.**

34Therefore I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town, 35so that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. 36Truly I tell you, all this will come upon this generation.

37Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! 38See, your house is left to you, desolate. 39For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

**P** The gospel of the Lord.

**C Come and worship, come and worship,  
Worship Christ, the newborn king. (REGENT SQUARE)**

**SERMON**

**\*HYMN**

**Good King Wenceslas**

Good King Wenceslas looked out  
On the Feast of Stephen  
When the snow lay round about  
Deep and crisp and even  
Brightly shone the moon that night  
Though the frost was cruel  
When a poor man came in sight  
Gathering winter fuel

Hither, page, and stand by me,  
If thou knowst it, telling  
Yonder peasant, who is he?  
Where and what his dwelling?  
Sire, he lives a good league hence,  
Underneath the mountain  
Right against the forest fence  
By Saint Agnes fountain.

Bring me flesh and bring me wine  
Bring me pine logs hither  
Thou and I shall see him dine  
When we bear them thither.  
Page and monarch, forth they went  
Forth they went together  
Through the rude winds wild lament  
And the bitter weather

Sire, the night is darker now  
And the wind blows stronger  
Fails my heart, I know not how  
I can go no longer.  
Mark my footsteps, good my page  
Tread thou in them boldly  
Thou shall find the winters rage  
Freeze thy blood less coldly.

In his masters step he trod  
Where the snow lay dinted  
Heat was in the very sod  
Which the Saint had printed  
Therefore, Christian folk, be sure  
Wealth or rank possessing  
Ye, who now will bless the poor  
Shall yourselves find blessing.

James Morgan / Juliette Pochin

**\*THE NICENE CREED**

**P** Living together in trust and hope, let us affirm our faith.

**C** 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.**

### **THE PRAYERS**

*After each petition: Merciful God/Receive our prayer.*

#### **\*THE PEACE**

**P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C** **And also with you.**

#### **\*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING (sung IN DULCI JUBILO)**

**P** O may the good Lord be with you,

**C** **And may the Lord be with you too.**

**P** Lift your hearts and voice in praise,

**C** **To the Lord our voices raise.**

**P** Christ comes down from God above,

**C** **To share with us the Father's love.**

**P & C** **Christ is born today!**

**Christ is born today!**

**P** It is indeed right, salutary 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.  
In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh  
you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant  
vision of your glory, that beholding the God  
made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom  
we cannot see. 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:

**P & C (sung) Holy, Holy, Holy Lord  
God of power and might adored!  
Heaven and earth reflect your bliss,  
For your Word is in our midst,  
Blessed be the One who comes,  
In God's name, Hosanna.  
Christ is born today!  
Christ is born today!**

**P** 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."

**P & C Christ is born today!  
Christ is born today!**

**\*OUR LORD'S PRAYER**

**P** Let us pray as our Savior Christ has taught us,

**C** **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.**

**\* LAMB OF GOD (stand)**

**Lord Jesus Christ the Lamb of God who takes away the  
sin of the world,**

**Redeemer sweet who brings God's peace,  
the babe, the son of Mary.**

**This, this is the Lamb of God  
who takes away the world's great sin.**

**This, this is the Child mild, the babe, the son of Mary.**

Tune GREENSLEEVES Words Suggested by the Liturgy of St. James

**\*INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

*Persons may come forward to the chancel to receive Holy Communion. This format will be more “continuous” noting the following procedure:*

- *Communicants, masked and observing social distancing, are asked to come forward as directed by ushers by way of the center aisle, take a cup from the tray provided and receive the bread from Pastor Vasey.*
- *Once receiving the bread, communicants will proceed to one of two stations (left or right) to receive wine from the pouring chalice.*
- *After receiving wine, communicants will place the empty cup in the designated tray and return to their pew by way of the side aisles.*

*Please do not kneel at the rail. Kneeling at the rail will return at a time to be determined by pastor and Church Council.*

**P Joy to the world! The Lord is come!**

**Come to the Christmas Feast!**

**C Amen. Thanks be to God!**

**COMMUNION**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**\*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P Let us pray. Lord God, you gave us  
Christ the Son to save us.  
As you sent the One foretold,  
send us now with good news for all people.  
Let the gladness of this feast have no end  
as we share with others the joy that fills us;  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

**\*BLESSING**

P May Christ, who by his incarnation  
has filled us with grace and truth,  
give you peace this Christmas and always.  
Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless you now and forever.

C Amen.

**\*HYMN            Go, Tell It On the Mountain            (LBW, “Green” 70)**

**DISMISSAL**

P Glory to God in the highest!  
Peace to God’s people on earth!  
Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

C **Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE    *Glory to God in the Highest*            G.B. Pergolesi**

+++++

*Portions of this service are reprinted with permission from...*

*Lutheran Book of Worship (copyright, 1978)  
Augsburg-Fortress Publishers (#2562-L).  
Evangelical Lutheran Worship (copyright 2006)  
Augsburg-Fortress Publishers, under license #2562-L.  
sundayandseasons.com (copyright 2019), Augsburg-Fortress. All rights reserved.  
Augsburg-Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SB144818.  
“One License” A-738528.*

+++++

**Prayer List:** Victims of COVID-19 and their families, Liz Ruesskamp,  
Grace Arner, Diane Damaska, Vanessa Morgan, Gary Clark, Doris Brown,

Charles Miller, Jerry Miller, Patricia Alexander, James Zeigler, Diana Zeigler, Richard Ritter, Ashton Ott, Lucille Sider, April Clark, Lenny Sherlinski, Ruth Sherlinski, Gary Cable, Elsie Sechler, Virginia Pulaskie, Bernadette Jones, Susan Kalabacas, Bunny Ditchfield, Judy Fortin, Roy and Gloria Meyer, Mary Lou Doebler, Walt Haussmann, Lou DeSeau and the family of Ray Doebler.

**WORSHIP LEADERS (12/26/2021) 9:30 a.m.**

**Lector** Drew Haussmann

**Communion Assistant** Drew Haussmann

**USHERS:** Dick Miller/Herb Poff

**WELCOME CAROL WALTZ!** Today we welcome Carol Waltz as our guest organist and thank her for sharing her talents with us.

**COVID CONTACT:** Please note that your attendance at worship will be recorded. This serves as a precaution in case contact-tracing due to the pandemic is warranted. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

**CHRISTMAS CLEAN-UP**

As beautiful as St. Mark's Christmas decorations are, the season of Christmas will come to an end. Please come help us "undecorate" the Nave, Narthex and Front Lounge on Saturday, January 8th. We will meet at 10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall ~ with a box of donuts and some coffee to start things off right! All hands are welcome. We look forward to seeing you there!

The New Year 2022 **ALTAR FLOWER SIGN-UP BOOK** will be available starting the first week of January.

**READ ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY?** Faith and Fellowship has temporarily "moved some books" from our church library to the Front Lounge in order to make them more accessible. Stop by the Front Lounge and take a look!

## **OUR STEWARDSHIP (12/19/21)**

|                           |                    |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Regular Offering          | \$ 4,921.00        |
| Plate Offerings           | \$ 5.00            |
| Christmas & Advent        | \$ 285.00          |
| Thanksgiving              | \$ 10.00           |
| Initial Offering          | \$ 5.00            |
| Sunday School Offering    | \$ 10.00           |
| Flower Memorials/Tributes | \$ 90.00           |
| <b>Grand Total</b>        | <b>\$ 5,326.00</b> |

**ALTAR FLOWERS** today are given to the glory of God:

+ In loving memory of William Hill by his wife, Shirley Hill.

+ In loving memory of Cora and Clement Campbell by their grandchildren.

## **COMMEMORATIONS**

### **John, Apostle and Evangelist**

*Monday, December 27, 2021*

The son of Zebedee and brother of James, John was one of the twelve disciples and witness to the transfiguration. Tradition has named him also the writer of the Gospel of John, the three New Testament letters bearing his name, as well as Revelation.

### **The Holy Innocents, Martyrs**

*Tuesday, December 28, 2021*

This day commemorates the young children killed by Herod in Bethlehem in his jealous attempt to murder the baby Jesus, a sobering reminder of the evil that led Christ to be born for our salvation.

### **Name of Jesus**

*Saturday, January 1, 2022*

By Jewish law, every baby boy was circumcised and named on the eighth day of life, so on the eighth day of Christmas the church celebrates this event in Jesus' life. The keeping of the covenant as well as Jesus' name are signs of God's salvation given to us through him.