

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 21, 2025

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

142 Market Street, Williamsport, PA 17701

stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org

Office (570-323-4619) Fax (570-323-2452)

Rev. Brian D. Vasey, Pastor

bvasey@stmarkswilliamsport.org

Welcome to Saint Mark's!

This is Christ's church. There is a place for you here. Join us as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world.

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



Please note:

Hand sanitizer is available for your use.

Offerings may be received by way of offering plates as you enter or leave.

An Order for Holy Communion; a Veni Emmanuel Setting

A guide to hymnal use: All hymns are printed in the bulletin and when reference is available the LBW, Green Book; WOV, Blue Book

Light print = Pastor/Leader. Bold print = Congregation.

**Please stand as you are able.*

INTRODUCTION TO TODAY'S WORSHIP

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. 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.

PRELUDE

WELCOME/ANNOUNCING THE DAY/ANNOUNCEMENTS

***BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, ✠ and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

All may make the sign of the cross as marked at baptism

In Christ our salvation now draws near.

Alleluia! Come Lord Jesus!

Let us confess our sins before God and one another.

Kneel/Stand. Silence for reflection.

Long-expected Savior,

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.**

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.

***HYMN**

Fling Wide the Door

LBW, "Green," 32

Fling Wide the Door



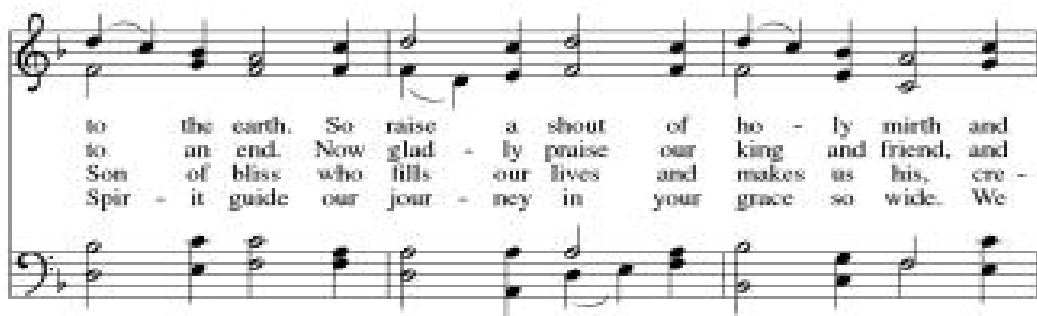
1 Fling wide the door, un - bar the gate; the King of glo - ry
 2 He is the rock of our be - lief, the heart of mer - cy's
 3 Oh, hap - py towns and bless - ed lands that live by their true
 4 Come, Lord, our Sav - ior, Je - sus Christ; our hearts are o - pen



comes in state; the Lord of lords and King of kings, the
 gen - tle self. His king - ly crown is ho - li - ness; his
 king's com - mands. And bless - ed be the hearts he rules, the
 wide in trust. Oh, show us now your love - ly grace, up -



Sav - ior of the world who brings his great sal - va - tion
 sheep - ter is his love - li - ness; he brings our sor - rows
 hum - ble plac - es where he dwells. He is the right - ful
 on our sor - rows shine your face, and let your Ho - ly



to the earth. So raise a shout of ho - ly mirth and
 to an end. Now glad - ly praise our king and friend, and
 Son of bliss who fills our lives and makes us his, cre -
 Spir - it guide our jour - ney in your grace so wide. We



praise our God and Lord, Cre - a - tor, Spir - it, Word.
 wor - ship him with song for sav - ing us from wrong.
 a - tor of the world, our on - ly strength for good.
 praise your ho - ly name, from age to age the same!

*THE GREETING

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

And also with you.

*KYRIE

The musical notation for the Kyrie consists of three staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first staff is divided into two parts: the first part is labeled 'Cantor' and the second part is labeled 'All'. The lyrics are 'Lord, have mer - cy.' The second staff is also divided into two parts: the first part is labeled 'Cantor' and the second part is labeled 'All'. The lyrics are 'Christ, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy,'. The third staff is also divided into two parts: the first part is labeled 'Cantor' and the second part is labeled 'All'. The lyrics are 'Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.'

*LIGHTING OUR ADVENT WREATH (sung)

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel

Shall come to you Oh Israel!

*THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

THE FIRST READING: Isaiah 7:10-16

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.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 80:1-7, 17-19

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;
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 a- | way from you;
give us life, that we may call up- | on your name.

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

THE SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-7

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,

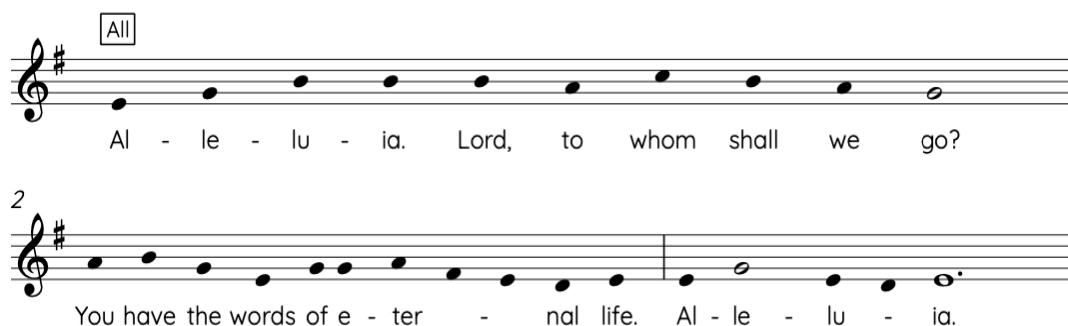
⁷ To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

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

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



***THE GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25**

The holy gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.



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. The gospel of the Lord.



THE SERMON

*HYMN

Joseph Heard the Troubling News No Reference Available

Joseph Heard the Troubling News

TEMPUS ADEST FLORIDUM 7.6.7.6 D (“Gentle Mary Laid Her Child”)

1. Jo - seph heard the troub-ling news: Ma - ry was ex - pect - ing!
2. 'Go take Ma - ry as your wife; Jo - seph, don't you fear it -
3. God of love, we too must face times of doubt and trou - ble.

What should he, a just man, do? He sought God's di - rect - ing.
God has formed a pre - cious life by the Ho - ly Spir - it!
May we know your dai - ly grace, ev - en when we strug - gle.

Jo - seph thought to send her home— leave her, with - out blam - ing;
Ma - ry soon will bear a son; you shall name him Je - sus.
Just as Jo - seph an - swered, 'Yes!' with new de - di - ca - tion,

then an an - gel in a dream spoke of joy pro - claim - ing:
When the pro - phet spoke of him, he said, 'God is with us!'
we re - joice, for we've been blessed by your in - car - na - tion.

***THE NICENE CREED**

With all the people of God, we confess our faith:

**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**

After each petition: Coming Lord/Hear our prayer.

***THE PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

People may greet one another with these or similar words.

ANTHEM *Ave Maria* Arr. Gounod/Bach

***THE 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.

It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and ever-living God. 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 the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

1 **Cantor**
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and God of might.

2 **All**
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and God of might.

3 **Cantor**
Heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.

4
Ho-san - na in the high - est, ho-san-na in the high - est.

5 **All**
Ho-san - na in the high - est, ho-san-na in the high - est.

6 **Cantor**
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

7
Ho-san - na in the high - est, ho-san-na in the high - est.

8 **All**
Ho-san - na in the high - est, ho-san-na in the high - est.

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
 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, 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:
Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

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.
Come, Lord Jesus.

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.
Come, Holy Spirit.

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

***OUR LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord as you have taught us, so now we 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.**

*LAMB OF GOD

The musical score is written on three staves. The first staff is for the Cantor, with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "Je sus, wis - dom and might - y Lord, you take a way the sins___ of the Je - sus, true branch of Jes - se's Tree Key of Dav - id and Day - spring from on high. De sire of na - tions, our Em - man - u - el,". The second staff is for the All congregation, with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It begins with a 1.2.3. measure and the lyrics: "world: have mer - cy on us. Have mer - cy on us.". The third staff is also for the All congregation, with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It begins with a 4. measure and the lyrics: "world: Grant us___ peace. Grant us___ peace.".

*INVITATION TO COMMUNE

Here is Emmanuel, God with us.

Come and receive what God has promised.

Amen. Thanks be to God!

All are welcome at the Lord's Table. Use the center aisle, pick up a small glass on the way. Receive the bread and then proceed to receive the wine by way of a pouring chalice. After communing return to your pew using a side aisle. Those not communing may come forward for a blessing.

Know that the crucified and risen Christ gives himself to you in his supper. If you cannot eat bread, drink only the wine. If you cannot drink wine, eat only the bread.

THE COMMUNION

*AFTER COMMUNION

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

Amen.

*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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.

Amen

***BLESSING**

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.

Amen.

*HYMN

Canticle of the Turning

No Reference Available

Canticle of the Turning



1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
2 Though I am small, my . . . God, my all, you . . .
3 From the halls of pow'r to the for - tress tow'r, not a
4 Though the na - tions rage from . . age to age, we re -



God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
work great . . things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the
stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your
mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -



won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
jus - tice tears ev - 'ry ty - rant . . . from his throne.
liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.



You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to
The hun - gry poor shall . . weep no more, for the
This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the



weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the
food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread, ev - 'ry
prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be



name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.



Refrain
My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.



Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Share the harvest.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

OUR PRAYER LIST

Grace Arner, Vanessa Morgan, Charles Miller, Jerry Miller, Richard Ritter, Ashton Ott, Lucille Sider, Gary Cable, Virginia Pulaskie, Bunny Ditchfield, Ezra Buckman, Sheila Brassard, Kevin Rosini, Kathy Eshelman, Micah, Deb Buckman, Linda Rosini, Walt Haussmann, Kristin Rehm, Ariel, John Tartline, George Poliska, Connie Shaible, John and Terry Holohan, Loretta Hawe, Carol Waltz, and Donna Baker.

COMMEMORATIONS

Stephen, Deacon and Martyr

Friday, December 26, 2025

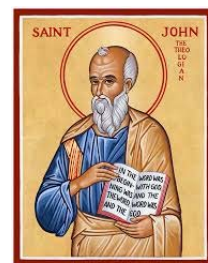
Stephen was a deacon and the first martyr of the church. He was one of those seven upon whom the apostles laid hands after they had been chosen to serve widows and others in need. Later, Stephen's preaching angered the temple authorities, and they ordered him to be put to death by stoning.



John, Apostle and Evangelist

Saturday, December 27, 2025

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.



THIS WEEK AT ST. MARK'S

Today, December 21

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Holy Communion, 8 and 10:30 am

Sunday School, 9:15 am

Monday, December 22	Office Hours, 9 am – 1 pm
Tuesday, December 23	Office Hours, 9 am – 1 pm
Wednesday, December 24	Office Hours, 9 am – 1 pm Holy Communion, 7 pm Holy Communion, 10 pm.
Thursday, December 25	Office Closed, Merry Christmas
Friday, December 26	Office Closed
Saturday, December 27	Office Closed
Sunday, December 28	First Sunday of Christmas Holy Communion, 9:30 am No Sunday School

CHRISTMAS SERVICES:

Wednesday, December 24

7 pm: “A Children's Eucharist”; featuring the message of a Charlie Brown Christmas.

10 pm: “Traditional Candlelight Choral Eucharist”

Sunday, December 28: One Worship Time, 9:30 am; Holy Communion

Sunday, January 4: Holy Communion, 8 and 10:30 am

Sunday School, 9:15 am

Pastor Vasey will be on vacation December 25 – January 3. If you are in need of a pastor during this time, please contact Pastor Carol Johnson, 570-772-6674.

OUR STEWARDSHIP for December 14, 2025

Regular Offering	\$2,667.00
Plate Offerings	20.00
Christmas & Advent	55.00
Heat Envelope Fund	1,500.00
Food Pantry	25.00
Parish Life	30.00
Flower Memorials/Tributes	140.00
Grand Total	\$4,437.00

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the Glory of God; and

In loving memory Alfred & Lois Johns, by Matt and Wanda Fortin & Family; and

In loving memory of Jack & Doris Fortin, by Matt and Wanda Fortin & Family.

WORSHIP LEADERS for December 21, 2025

Lector	8:00 am	Vicki Haussmann
	10:30 am	Ralph Zeigler
Communion Assistants	8:00 am	Drew Haussmann
	10:30 am	Deb B/Mindy W
Ushers	8:00 am	Miller/Poff
	10:30 am	Gary & Shelby Weber
Hospitality	8:00 am	Jackie Kinney
	10:30am	Deb Buckman
Organist		Sam Robinson
Altar Guild (DECEMBER)		Mindy & Mel Wentzel

ANNIVERSARIES

Thomas & Becky Miller Pryor 12/21

BIRTHDAYS

Sarah Young 12/23

KEEP IN MIND:

~When you or a family member are ill, have a crisis of faith, or have a personal concern of which you wish to make the pastor aware, please contact him directly by church office telephone (570-323-4619) email (bvasey@stmarkswilliamsport.org) or his cell phone (272-788-0161). Do not assume the pastor will know of your need any other way.

~ When you or a loved one has a change of address, email, or telephone number, please contact the church office at stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org or 570-323-4619. Please direct your intentions whether or not to share this information with our church family, so that it may be included in the weekly bulletin and/or the “Lion.”



So we are done for this year however, please do not stop thinking about the kits and the items for them! Watch the clearance racks and shelves for items and snap them up. If you do not want to store them at home, you can bring them to the church and put them in the office opposite the middle lounge - you will know which one it is - the messy one with boxes, etc. Baby clothes, towels, etc. can be found on clearance. Deb Buckman



WANT TO EXPLORE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A LUTHERAN CHRISTIAN? Adults wishing to unite with St. Mark's in church membership are invited to contact PASTOR VASEY at 570-323-4619 or email: stmarks@stmarkswilliamsport.org.



Christmas Ornaments

Again this year, our trio of crafters, Cindy Todd, Theresa Furman and Lou Ann Zeigler, have provided the Evangelism and Fellowship Committee with wire ornaments that are on display in the Narthex. We are giving them away at no cost. But to make the joy the ornaments provide stretch even further, we are accepting a modest monetary donation to be given, in the form of grocery gift cards, to Code Blue. Code Blue is an overnight, winter shelter for the homeless at First Church. These gift cards allow for the purchase of food to be used as part of the shelter's outreach.

Urgent Needs At.....

Choosing to participate in our **Reverse Advent Project** is an easy and fun way to provide assistance to the nonprofits listed below. Any help you can give is greatly appreciated as the need is great and growing.

Shepherd of the Streets: Shampoo, toothpaste, bar soap, boxes of tissues and baby wash, wipes and shampoo. Any other hygiene items are also greatly appreciated.

Sojourner Truth Ministries (STM): Needed are brown, large-size lunch bags, cleaning wipes, Lysol spray, and boxes of tissues.

United Churches Food Pantry: Please consider continuing to offer non-perishable food items to be used by the Pantry.

Update: Gifting the Ladies of CM-6

On December 17, Jackie Kinney, Karen Mariano and Becky Pryor traveled to the Selinsgrove Center to entertain and gift the ladies of CM-6. It was a beautiful day matched by the wonderful time we spent with the ladies and their caregivers. We told stories of the Wise Men, baby Jesus and St. Nicholas. We sang songs, rang bells and gifted the ladies and their caregivers. The Evangelism and Fellowship Committee thank the congregation for their many donations of pudding, candy, snacks, slipper socks and body wash. Please know you made a difference.



LET'S GO CAROLING

Please join us for a light lunch followed by caroling after the second service **TODAY**, EVEN IF YOU DIDN'T SIGN UP!

Pancake Breakfast



The newly formed Men's Fellowship Group cordially invites you to attend a Pancake Breakfast on January 4, 2026. Join us in Fellowship Hall at 9:15 (or so) to enjoy a hearty stack of flapjacks and enjoy Christian fellowship as we bring in the new year!

We ask that you please RSVP by December 28th so that we have an accurate count of those attending. You can drop your RSVP in the offering plate any time! Thanks!

Pancake Breakfast RSVP

Name: _____

Number Attending: _____

Please return by: December 28, 2025



**“Is there anyone out there who knows what
Christmas is all about?”**

-Charlie Brown



**St. Mark's Lutheran Church will answer
Charlie Brown's question on Wednesday, December 24 at 7
and 10 pm.**

**All are invited to our Christmas Eve Services as we celebrate Jesus' birthday
and the 60th Anniversary of the broadcast of *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. Join
us as we and the *Peanuts* characters find the true meaning of this wonderful
day!**



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