THE FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS December 28, 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; Setting 5 With One Voice

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

As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the "holy innocents" of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.

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

Unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given.

Come, let us adore him. Alleluia

Let us confess our sins before God and one another.

Kneel/Stand. Silence for reflection.

Reconciling God,

we yearn for your presence to transform our grief, pain, and despair.

We confess that we have not always prepared room in our hearts for your love;

we have not always recognized

your presence among us;

we have not always embraced your message of peace.

We cry out, weary with the burden of violence, oppression, and fear.

We confess our failure to make room for those seeking refuge; our participation in violent systems that harm your innocent ones; our reluctance to embody your good news.

Be born in us today

and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation.

Amen.

God's grace flows over us.

+ Christ's presence redeems the whole creation.

Our sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad!

Amen.

***HYMN** We Three Kings of Orient Are

WOV, "Blue," 646

We Three Kings of Orient Are



Text: John Henry Hopkins Jr., 1820-1891, alt.

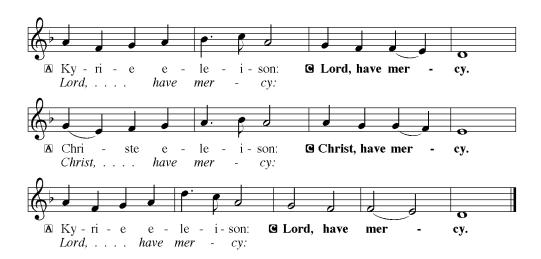
Music: THREE KINGS OF ORIENT, John Henry Hopkins Jr., 1820–1891

*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



*HYMN OF PRAISE





*THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

THE FIRST READING: Isaiah 63:7-9

⁷I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD, because of all that the LORD has done for us and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

⁸ For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not act deceitfully," and he became their savior

⁹ in all their distress.

It was no messenger or angel

but his presence that saved them;

in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 148

- ¹ Hallelujah! Praise the LORD | from the heavens; praise God | in the heights.
- ²Praise the LORD, | all you angels; sing praise, all you | hosts of heaven.
- ³ Praise the LORD, | sun and moon; sing praise, all you | shining stars.
- ⁴ Praise the LORD, heav- | en of heavens, and you waters a- | bove the heavens.
- ⁵ 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.
- ⁷ 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;

10 wild beasts | and all cattle,

creeping things and | flying birds;

¹¹ sovereigns of the earth | and all peoples, princes and all rulers | of the world;

12 young | men and maidens,

old and | young together.

¹³Let them praise the name | of the LORD,

whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over | earth and heaven.

¹⁴The 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 READING: Hebrews 2:10-18

¹⁰ It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹² saying,

"I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."

13 And again,

"I will put my trust in him."

And again,

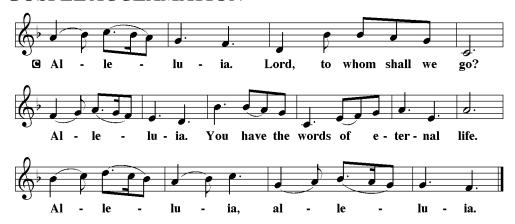
"Here am I and the children whom God has given me."

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



*THE GOSPEL: Matthew 2:13-23

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

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹³ Now after [the magi] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation,

Rachel weeping for her children;

she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had

been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

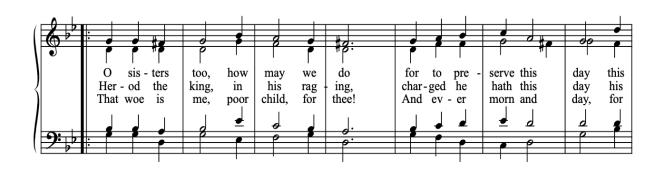
THE SERMON

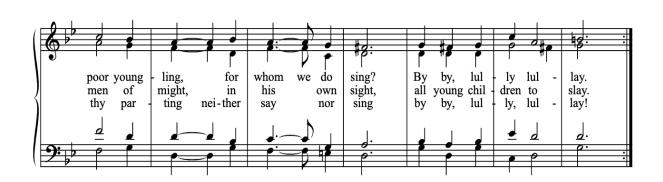
*HYMN

Coventry Carol

No Reference Available







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

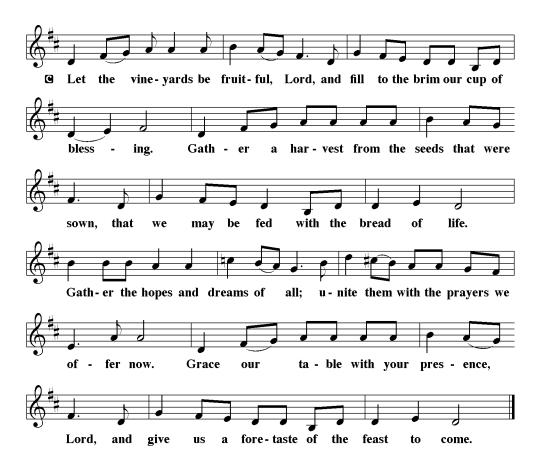
*THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

People may greet one another with these or similar words.

OFFERTORY



*OFFERING PRAYER

God of glory,

great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior.

Amen.

*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

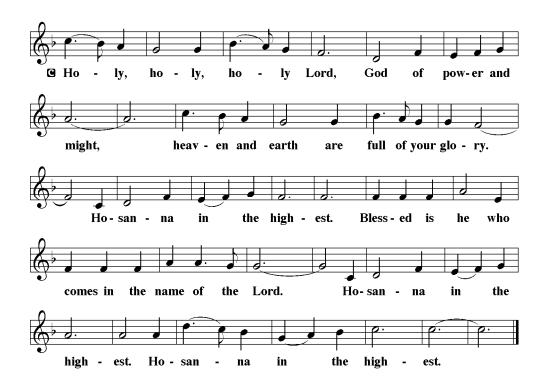
Lift up your hearts.

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, through Jesus Christ our Lord. 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 the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father:

Endless is your mercy and eternal your reign.

You have filled all creation with light and life;

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

We praise you for the grace shown to your people in every age:

The promise to Israel, the rescue from Egypt, the gift of the promised land, the words of the prophets; and the gift of your Son,

who proclaimed the good news in word and deed and was obedient to your will, even to the giving of his life.

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 rejoice in the hope of his coming.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit, that we who share in Christ's body and blood may live to the praise of your glory and receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

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.

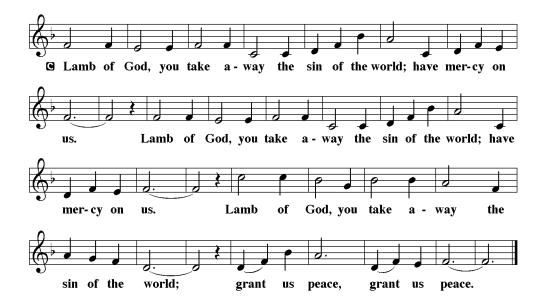
*OUR LORD'S PRAYER

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



*INVITATION TO COMMUNE

In Christ's manger, at Christ's table, come, see what God makes known for you.

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

Incarnate God, you are among us at this table.

May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence.

Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

*BLESSING

The triune God,
glorious Mystery,
holy Incarnate One,
abiding Comforter,

+ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.

Amen.

*HYMN Go, Tell It on the Mountain

LBW, "Green," 70

Go Tell It on the Mountain



Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872-1925, stanzas, alt. Music: GO TELL IT, African American spiritual

*DISMISSAL

Glory to God in the highest!

And peace to God's people on earth!

Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

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 The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

Sunday, December 28, 2025
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

Thursday, January 1, 2026
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.



Johann Konrad Wilhelm Loehe, renewer of the church, died 1872

Friday, January 2, 2026

Loehe was a pastor in nineteenth-century Germany. Loehe's chief concern was that a congregation find its life in the holy communion, and from that source evangelism and social ministries would flow. He sent pastors to North America, Australia, New Guinea, Brazil, and Ukraine.



THANK YOU TO OUR PREACHER AND PIANIST: Ray Huff preaches and presides today while Pastor Vasey is away. Thank you Ray! Megan Cartwright is our pianist today while our organist is away. Thank you Megan!

Pastor Vasey is on vacation through January 3. If you are in need of a pastor during this time, please contact Pastor Carol Johnson, 570-772-6674.

Dear Church Family,

Thank you so very much for the kind words, well-wishes, cards and gifts during this season of Christmas. Much appreciated indeed! I look forward to working with you in 2026.

Yours in Christ, Pastor Vasey.

THIS WEEK AT ST. MARK'S

Today, December 28 First Sunday of Christmas

Holy Communion, 9:30 am

Monday, December 29 Office Closed

Tuesday, December 30 Office Hours, 9 am - 1 pm

Wednesday, December 31 Office Hours, 9 am - 1 pm

Thursday, January 1 Office Closed, New Year's Day

Friday, January 2 Office Hours, 9 am - 1 pm

Saturday, January 3 Office Closed

Sunday, January 4 Second Sunday of Christmas

Holy Communion, 8 and 10:30 am

Sunday School, 9:15 am

OUR STEWARDSHIP for December 21, 2025

Regular Offering	\$3,747.00
Plate Offerings	10.00
Christmas & Advent	125.00
World Hunger	50.00
Food Pantry	50.00
Global Mission	50.00
Christmas Flowers	9.00
Flower Memorials/Tribute	es 35.00
Synod Benevolence	100.00
Selinsgrove Christmas Par	rty 25.00
Grand Total	\$4,201.00

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the Glory of God; and

In loving memory of Cora & Clement Campbell, by their grandchildren; and In loving memory of Shirley & Robert Miller, by her children and grandchildren; and

In loving memory of my husband, William Hill, by Shirley Hill.

WORSHIP LEADERS for December 28, 2025

Lector	9:30 am	Theresa Furman
Communion Assistants	9:30 am	Matt & Wanda Fortin

Ushers 9:30 am The Gairs

Pianist Megan Cartwright
Altar Guild (DECEMBER) Mindy & Mel Wentzel

BIRTHDAYS

Helen Schramm	12/28
Cindy Huff	12/31
Shelby Weber	1/1

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 in 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.

<u>Urgent Needs At.....</u>

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

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

<u>United Churches Food Pantry:</u> 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.

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 today, December 28th so that we have an accurate count of those attending. You can drop your RSVP in the offering plate. Thanks!

Pancake Breakfast RSVP	

Name:	 	
Number Attending:		

Please return by: Today, December 28, 2025

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