

St. Mark's Presbyterian Church
First Sunday after Christmas Day - December 31, 2023

Responsive Call to Worship

Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord from the heavens!

Praise God in the heights and the depths!

Praise God, all creatures of earth and sky!

Praise God, young and old, together!

Let us praise the Lord and worship God's holy name!

Hymn 138 While shepherds watched

**1. While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
all seated on the ground,
the angel of the Lord came down,
and glory shone around.**

**2. 'Fear not,' said he, for mighty dread
had seized their troubled mind;
'Glad tidings of great joy I bring
to you, all humankind.**

**3. 'To you, in David's town, this day
is born of David's line
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord,
and this shall be the sign:**

**4. 'The heavenly babe you there shall find
to human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swathing bands,
and in a manger laid.'**

**5. Thus spake the seraph, and forthwith
appeared a shining throng
of angels praising God, who thus
addressed their joyful song:**

**6. 'All glory be to God on high,
and to the earth be peace,
good will henceforth from heaven to earth
begin, and never cease!'**

Hymn 144 **Twos in the moon of wintertime**

1. Twos in the moon of winter-time
when all the birds had fled,
that mighty Gitchi Manitou
sent angel choirs instead;
before their light the stars grew dim,
and wandering hunters heard the hymn:
"Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born,
In excelsis gloria."

2. Within a lodge of broken bark
the tender Babe was found,
a ragged robe of rabbit skin
enwrapped his beauty round;
but, as the hunter braves drew nigh,
The angel song rang loud and high:
"Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born,
In excelsis gloria."

3. The earliest moon of wintertime
is not so round and fair
as was the ring of glory
on the helpless infant there.
The chiefs from far before him knelt
with gifts of fox and beaver pelt.
"Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born,
In excelsis gloria."

4. O children of the forest free,
the kin of Manitou,
the holy child of earth and heaven
is born today for you.
Come kneel before the radiant boy,
who brings you beauty, peace and joy.
"Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born,
In excelsis gloria."

Prayer of Confession (congregation)

God of our lives, we know you are with us through thick and
thin, in times of great joy and at moments of

disappointment. Yet we can feel let down when the joy of Christmas Day has passed. Our hope gets folded away with the gift wrap, our energy for the future feels a bit tattered. Forgive us when our faithfulness flickers like a candle burning down.

- silent confession -

The Lord's Prayer (Debts/Debtors)

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory. For ever and ever. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon *(minister)*

Hymn 146 Angels from the realms of glory

1. Angels from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
ye who sang creation's story,
now proclaim Messiah's birth.

Refrain:

Come and worship, come and worship;
worship Christ, the newborn King.

2. Shepherds in the field abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night:
God with us is now residing;
yonder shines the infant Light.

Refrain:

Come and worship, come and worship;
worship Christ, the newborn King.

3. Sages, leave your contemplations;
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great desire of nations;
ye have seen his natal star.

Refrain:

**Come and worship, come and worship;
worship Christ, the newborn King.**

**4. Saints, before the altar bending,
watching long in hope and fear,
suddenly the Lord, descending,
in his temple shall appear.**

Refrain:

**Come and worship, come and worship;
worship Christ, the newborn King.**

**5. Though an infant now we view him,
he shall fill his Father's throne,
gather all the nations to him;
every knee shall then bow down.**

Refrain:

**Come and worship, come and worship;
worship Christ, the newborn King.**

Responsive Reading Psalm 148 p. 590 NT & Psalms

¹Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord from the heavens!

Praise him from the skies!

²Praise him, all his angels!

Praise him, all the armies of heaven!

³Praise him, sun and moon!

Praise him, all you twinkling stars!

⁴Praise him, skies above!

Praise him, vapors high above the clouds!

⁵Let every created thing give praise to the Lord,
for he issued his command, and they came into being.

⁶He set them in place forever and ever.

His decree will never be revoked.

⁷Praise the Lord from the earth,
you creatures of the ocean depths,

⁸fire and hail, snow and clouds,

wind and weather that obey him,

⁹mountains and all hills,

fruit trees and all cedars,

¹⁰wild animals and all livestock,

small scurrying animals and birds,

¹¹kings of the earth and all people,
rulers and judges of the earth,

¹²**young men and young women,
old men and children.**

¹³Let them all praise the name of the Lord.

For his name is very great;

his glory towers over the earth and heaven!

¹⁴**He has made his people strong,
honoring his faithful ones—
the people of Israel who are close to him.
Praise the Lord!**

New Living Translation (NLT)

Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation

Scripture Lessons

Isaiah 61:10 - 62:3 p. 607 pew Bible

Galatians 4:4 -7 p. 327 NT & Psalms

Luke 2:22 - 40 p. 102 NT & Psalms

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon Not an ordinary baby

Prayers of the People (*minister*)

Hymn 136 The first nowell

**1. The first nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay,
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.**

Refrain:

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell!

Born is the King of Israel.

**2. They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east beyond them far,
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.**

Refrain:

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell!

Born is the King of Israel.

3. And by the light of that same star

three wise men came from country far;
to search for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went.

Refrain:

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell!
Born is the King of Israel.

4. This star drew nigh to the northwest;
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
and there it did both stop and stay
right over the place where Jesus lay.

Refrain:

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell!
Born is the King of Israel.

5. Then entered in those wise men three
full reverently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence
their gold and myrrh and frankincense.

Refrain:

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell!
Born is the King of Israel.

6. Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
that hath made heaven and earth of nought,
and with his blood mankind hath bought.

Refrain:

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell!
Born is the King of Israel.

Offering & Offertory

***Doxology 830 Praise God from whom all blessings flow**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise him all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Prayer of Dedication (congregation)

Good and gracious God, your love overflows in the goodness
we have met even in challenging times. As one year closes

and another begins, help us trust your goodness. Bless these gifts so that they may provide others with the hope we know in Christ Jesus and the love you share with the world through him. Amen.

Hymn 811 Standing at the portal

**1. Standing at the portal
Of the opening year,
Words of comfort meet us,
Hushing every fear;
Spoken through the silence
By our Father's voice,
Tender, strong and faithful,
Making us rejoice.**

Refrain:

**Onward then, and fear not,
Children of the day;
For His Word shall never,
Never pass away.**

**2. For the year before us,
O what rich supplies!
For the poor and needy
Living streams shall rise;
For the sad and sinful
Shall His grace abound;
For the faint and feeble
Perfect strength be found.**

Refrain:

**Onward then, and fear not,
Children of the day;
For His Word shall never,
Never pass away.**

**3. He will never fail us,
He will not forsake;
His eternal cov'nant
He will never break.
Resting on His promise,
What have we to fear?
God is all-sufficient**

For the coming year.

Refrain:

**Onward then, and fear not,
Children of the day;
For His Word shall never,
Never pass away.**

Choral Blessing

**Go now in peace. Never be afraid.
God will be with you each hour of every day.
God will be there, watching from above.
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.**

Three-fold Amen

Piano Postlude