

St. Mark's Presbyterian Church
Second Sunday of Advent – December 8, 2024

Responsive Call to Worship

In a world too often divided, we gather to embrace the gift of peace.

We come with hearts open to reconciliation and understanding.

We light the second candle of Advent, a symbol of God's peace in a troubled world.

(Light the candle of peace)

May the light of this candle guide us as we seek to fulfill our calling as peacemakers.

Holy One, strengthen us by your Spirit to commit ourselves to standing against injustice in our communities and the world. Affirm within us a dedication to foster your peace. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Hymn 126 On Jordan's bank

- 1. On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh;
awake and hearken, for he brings
glad tidings of the King of kings.**
- 2. Then cleansed be every breast from sin;
make straight the way for God within;
prepare we in our hearts a home
where such a mighty guest may come.**
- 3. For thou art our salvation, Lord,
our refuge and our great reward:
without thy grace, we waste away,
like flowers that wither and decay.**
- 4. To heal the sick, stretch out thine hand,
and bid the fallen sinner stand;
shine forth and let thy light restore
earth's own true loveliness once more.**
- 5. All praise, eternal Son, to thee,
whose advent sets thy people free,
whom, with the Father, we adore,
and Holy Spirit, evermore.**

Prayer of Praise (minister)

Hymn 110 Come, thou long-expected Jesus

- 1. Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.**
- 2. Born thy people to deliver;
born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever;
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.**

Prayer of Confession (congregation)

Merciful God, our baptism proclaims the washing away of our sin and the start of our new life in Christ. But we confess that we still live in sin. We sin against you and one another, in what we do and in what we fail to do. We excuse ourselves and take comfort in familiar habits and traditions.

Forgive us when we mistake such comfort for the peace you offer us in Christ Jesus. Prepare our hearts to embrace new ways of following him.

- 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.**

Hymn 116 Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding

- 1. Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding:
'Christ is nigh,' it seems to say;
'Cast away the dreams of darkness,
O ye children of the day!'**
- 2. Wakened by the solemn warning,
let us all from sleep arise;
Christ, our sun, all ill dispelling,
shines upon the morning skies.**
- 3. Lo! the Lamb, so long expected,
comes with pardon down from heaven
let us haste, with tears of sorrow,
one and all to be forgiven.**
- 4. When our Saviour comes in glory,
though the world be wrapped in fear,
with his mercy he will shield us,
and with words of love draw near.**
- 5. Honour, glory, might and blessing
to the Father and the Son,
with the everlasting Spirit
while eternal ages run.**

Responsive Reading Luke 1:68-79 p. 101 NT & Psalms

⁶⁸ "Praise the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has visited and redeemed his people.

**⁶⁹ He has sent us a mighty Savior
from the royal line of his servant David,**

⁷⁰ just as he promised
through his holy prophets long ago.

**⁷¹ Now we will be saved from our enemies
and from all who hate us.**

⁷² He has been merciful to our ancestors
by remembering his sacred covenant—

**⁷³ the covenant he swore with an oath
to our ancestor Abraham.**

⁷⁴ We have been rescued from our enemies
so we can serve God without fear,

**⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness
for as long as we live.**

⁷⁶ "And you, my little son,
will be called the prophet of the Most High,
because you will prepare the way for the Lord.

**⁷⁷ You will tell his people how to find salvation
through forgiveness of their sins.**

⁷⁸ Because of God's tender mercy,
the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us,
**⁷⁹ to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the
shadow of death,
and to guide us to the path of peace."**

New Living Translation (NLT)

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Foundation

Scripture Lessons

Malachi 3:1-4 p. 779 pew Bible (NIV)

Philippians 1:3-11 p. 340 New Living Translation

Luke 3:1-6 p. 104 New Living Translation

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon Peaceful?

Prayers of the People (*minister*)

Hymn I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

**1. I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
In music sweet the tones repeat,
"There's peace o earth, good will to men."**

**2. I thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along th'unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.**

**3. And in despair I bowed my head:
"There is no peace on earth," I said,
"For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men."**

4. Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:

**“God is not dead, nor does He sleep;
For Christ is here; His Spirit near
Brings peace on earth, good will to men.”**

**5. When men repent and turn from sin
The Prince of Peace then enters in,
And grace imparts within their hearts
His peace on earth, good will to men.**

**6. O souls amid earth’s busy strife,
The Word of God is light and life;
Oh, hear His voice, make Him your choice,
Hail peace on earth, good will to men.**

**7. Then happy, singing on your way,
Your world will change from night to day;
Your heart will feel the message real,
Of peace on earth, good will to men.**

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)

**Mighty and Merciful God, we bring our gifts to you, trusting that
your blessing will multiply their effects in the world. Use them
and us to prepare the way for Christ to enter lives with his
compassion and courage, so that the world will know his peace
and trust his name. Amen.**

Hymn 749 Be still, my soul

**1. Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side;
bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
leave to thy God to order and provide;
in every change God faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul: thy best, thy heavenly Friend
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.**

**2. Be still, my soul: thy God doth undertake
to guide the future wisely, as the past.**

**Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake;
all now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know
the voice that ruled them here on earth below.**

**3. Be still, my soul: when dearest friends depart,
and all is darkened in the vale of tears,
then shalt thou better know God's love, God's heart,
who comes to soothe thy sorrow and thy fears.
Be still, my soul: thy Jesus can repay
from his own fullness all death takes away.**

**4. Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on
when we shall be forever with the Lord,
when disappointment, grief and fear are gone,
sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past,
all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.**

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.**

Benediction

Three-fold Amen

Piano Postlude