

**St. Mark's Presbyterian Church
Fourth Sunday of Advent – December 22, 2024**

Responsive Call to Worship

As we prepare for Christ's coming, we remember that Christ modelled love by seeking justice for those on the margins.

We come with a desire to love everyone, even when it's hard.
We light the fourth candle of Advent, a symbol of God's love, which knows no boundaries.

(Light the candle of love)

May the light of this candle inspire us to act towards our neighbours near and far in loving and justice-seeking ways.

Holy One, we love because You first loved us. By the power of your Spirit, commit us to love in action in service of our neighbours. Affirm within us a dedication to show your love to the world, in both word and deed. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Hymn 159 Oh come, all ye faithful

**1. Oh come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant;
oh come ye, oh come ye
to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him,
born the King of angels:**

Refrain

**Oh come, let us adore him;
oh come, let us adore him;
oh come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.**

**2. God of God, Light of light,
born unto Mary, the virgin blest,
very God, begotten, not created:**

Refrain

**Oh come, let us adore him;
oh come, let us adore him;
oh come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.**

3. See how the shepherds,
summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks draw nigh
with holy fear;
we too will thither
bend our joyful footsteps:

Refrain

Oh come, let us adore him;
oh come, let us adore him;
oh come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.

4. Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation;
sing, all ye citizens
of heaven above:
'Glory to God
in the highest!'

Refrain

Oh come, let us adore him;
oh come, let us adore him;
oh come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.

5. Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be
glory given;
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing:

Refrain

Oh come, let us adore him;
oh come, let us adore him;
oh come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.

Prayer of Praise *(minister)*

Hymn 161 What child is this

1. What child is this, who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?

**Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary.**

**2. Why lies he in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through,
the cross be borne for me, for you.
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
the babe, the son of Mary.**

**3. So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
come, peasant, king, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high;
the virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy for Christ is born,
the babe, the son of Mary.**

Prayer of Confession (congregation)

**Merciful God, in your gracious presence we confess our sins
and the sins of this world.**

**Although we have found love in Christ, we are a people
divided against ourselves and against one another. We have
not loved as you love us and we have too often been careless
with our words, our bodies and how we treat others and
your world. We abuse your good gifts of imagination and
freedom, intellect and reason, and have turned them into
bonds of oppression. Lord have mercy upon us. Heal us,
forgive us and set us free to serve you in the world as agents
of your reconciling love in Jesus Christ.**

- 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 141 Good Christians, all rejoice

**1. Good Christians, all rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now give heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today,
ox and ass before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today;
Christ is born today.**

**2. Good Christians, all rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now you hear of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this.
He has opened heaven's door,
and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this;
Christ was born for this.**

**3. Good Christians, all rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now you need not fear the grave:
Jesus Christ was born to save,
calls you one and calls you all
to gain the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save;
Christ was born to save.**

Responsive Reading Psalm 80:1-7 p. 530 NT & Psalms

¹ Please listen, O Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph's descendants like a flock.

O God, enthroned above the cherubim,
display your radiant glory

² to Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh.

Show us your mighty power.

Come to rescue us!

³ Turn us again to yourself, O God.

Make your face shine down upon us.

Only then will we be saved.

⁴ O Lord God of Heaven's Armies,

how long will you be angry with our prayers?

⁵ You have fed us with sorrow

and made us drink tears by the bucketful.

⁶ You have made us the scorn of neighboring nations.

Our enemies treat us as a joke.

⁷ Turn us again to yourself, O God of Heaven's Armies.

Make your face shine down upon us.

Only then will we be saved.

New Living Translation (NLT)

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Scripture Lessons

Micah 2:2-5a p. 756 pew Bible (NIV)

Hebrews 5:5-10 p. 381 New Living Translation

Luke 1:39-55 p. 99 New Living Translation

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon **Loveful? Lovely? Love?**

Prayers of the People *(minister)*

Hymn 149 **Away in a manger**

**1. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

**2. The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.**

3. Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay

close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with you there.

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)

God of life and love, receive our gifts as tokens of our love for you and signs of our willingness to share that love in the world around us. Bless our lives as well as our gifts, so that we may be a blessing to others for the sake of the Christ Child, our Saviour and our friend. Amen.

Hymn 154 Silent night

1. Silent night! holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child,
holy infant so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace;
sleep in heavenly peace.
2. Silent night! holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight:
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing 'Hallelujah,
Christ, the Saviour is born!
Christ, the Saviour is born!'
3. Silent night! holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

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