

**St. Mark's Presbyterian Church**  
**Fourth Sunday in Advent – December 21, 2025**

**Land Acknowledgement**

I want to acknowledge I am leading worship from Treaty 4 Territory  
the traditional homeland of the Cree, Ojibwe, Saulteaux (SOTO),  
Dakota, Nakota, Lakota, and the Métis Nations

**Responsive Call to Worship – Advent Liturgy**

An angel of the Lord declared, "God is with us" – this is the greatest gift of love.

**Yet even at Christmas, love is often measured by gifts and material things.**

But God's love can come through people: a king named David, a prophet named Nathan, and Mary and Joseph. In a baby, God's love was made real among us.

**Can we believe that God's love is revealed through people?  
On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of love,  
a light for our world.**

*The candle of love is lit*

Let us pray together:

**Living God, thank you for your deep and abiding love. May we see ourselves and others through your eyes, as we follow your way of love. Come, Lord Jesus.**

**Hymn 166 Once in royal David's city**

**1. Once in royal David's city  
stood a lowly cattle shed,  
where a mother laid her baby  
in a manger for his bed:  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little child.**

**2. Christ came down to earth from heaven,  
who is God and Lord of all,  
sheltered by a humble stable,  
cradled in a cattle stall:  
with the poor, oppressed and lowly,  
lived on earth our Saviour holy,**

**3. and our eyes at last shall see him,  
through his own redeeming love,**

for that child so dear and gentle  
is our Lord in heaven above,  
and he leads his children on  
to the place where he is gone.

4. Not in that poor lowly stable,  
with the oxen standing by,  
we shall see him, but in heaven,  
set at God's right hand on high;  
there God's children gather round,  
bright like stars, with glory crowned.

### **Prayer of Praise (*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.

### **Prayer of Confession (*congregation*)**

Lord of love, we confess we sometimes find your love  
daunting. You called Joseph to honour his love for Mary,  
even when custom called him to break his engagement. We  
confess custom has a hold on us, too, and challenging  
expectations for love's sake makes us nervous. You call us to  
love our neighbour, but we resist your call if our neighbours  
annoy us. You call us to love our enemies, too, but that  
seems impossible in these contentious times. Forgive us for  
loving only in the safest situations. Dare us to love as Jesus  
loved so he will be born again in us.

- 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 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.**

<sup>1</sup>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

**<sup>2</sup>to Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh.**

**Show us your mighty power.**

**Come to rescue us!**

<sup>3</sup>Turn us again to yourself, O God.  
Make your face shine down upon us.  
Only then will we be saved.

**<sup>4</sup>O Lord God of Heaven's Armies,  
how long will you be angry with our prayers?**

<sup>5</sup>You have fed us with sorrow  
and made us drink tears by the bucketful.

**<sup>6</sup>You have made us the scorn of neighboring nations.  
Our enemies treat us as a joke.**

<sup>7</sup>Turn us again to yourself, O God of Heaven's Armies.  
Make your face shine down upon us.  
Only then will we be saved.

**<sup>17</sup>Strengthen the man you love,  
the son of your choice.**

<sup>18</sup>Then we will never abandon you again.  
Revive us so we can call on your name once more.

**<sup>19</sup>Turn us again to yourself, O Lord God of Heaven's Armies.  
Make your face shine down upon us.  
Only then will we be saved.**

New Living Translation (NLT)

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

## Scripture Lessons

Isaiah 7:10-16                      p. 558 pew Bible

Romans 1:1-7                      p 527 NT & Psalms

Matthew 1:18-25                  p. 4 NT & Psalms

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

***People: Thanks be to God!***

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

**1. Twas 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."**

**1. 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."**

**2. 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."**

**3. 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 Dedication (*congregation*)**

**God, our Love and our Life, receive our gifts as seeds of gratitude for your gift to us in Christ Jesus. Bless these seeds with growth so that love will embrace people who feel lost and alone in this season, and places fearing they will be overlooked among so much need. Be their love and their life, through Christ our Lord. 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**