



Saturday December 16, 2023 (5:00pm)

Sunday December 17, 2023 (9:00am)

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

324 S. Sanborn Ave.

Jefferson, WI 53549

920-674-2370

st.marks.jefferson@sbcglobal.net

Rev. Christopher Raiford

Our Vision for St. Mark's:

Our church is a vibrant family of Christians committed to growing the love of Christ by welcoming and inspiring ALL people, through worship, fellowship, service and outreach.

Welcome to St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Welcome to St Mark's! We often become enamored with eloquent and influential speakers who promise wealth and ease. But Malachi said that the true messenger of God would be another Elijah. He would speak God's Word and prepare people for God's judgment. He would turn fathers' hearts to their children and children's hearts to their fathers. Through the Word comes real change in our faith-born outlook. Through the Word comes humility that longs to serve God as we wait for the 2nd Advent of Jesus.

Prayer before Worship

Heavenly Father, forgive me all my sins, grant me to serve You rightly, and keep me on the path of salvation. Guide me to recognize in all humility that all good gifts come from You and help me to put my talents to work for You. Help me to share Your Word and assist others in their need. Help me to recognize those good deeds You have prepared in advance for me to do. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Here at St Mark's, we celebrate Holy Communion in all of our worship services. We offer the Lord's Supper to all who are baptized and truly believe that the Lord's body and blood are present in, with, and under the bread and wine. We encourage you to come to the Lord's table, for in His body given on the cross and in His blood poured out for the sins of the world, He offers forgiveness and life everlasting to all who believe. Young children who have yet to be confirmed are welcome to come forward and receive a blessing. For those who prefer, white grape juice is provided. If you are unable to come to the altar, please let the usher know, and the Pastor will bring communion to you in your pew.

May God bless your worship with us this morning!

We pray you find Jesus,

For in Him you have...

Peace with God Purpose for Living A New Family of Faith Eternal Life

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

PRELUDE: “Immanuel, Immanuel” - Ceaseless Praise, (Sun.)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

P: We light three Advent candles remembering Jesus, the Light of the world. He came to defeat the prince of darkness.

C: We remember Jesus who came in answer to his people’s prayers. John proclaimed him the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

P: We hear his call to see the light.

C: We light three Advent candles as a sign of our trust and confidence.

P: Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.

C: Through your Word and Spirit may our souls be blessed.

The Shepherd’s Candle, (typifying the act of sharing Christ) the third of the Advent candles is lit.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P: God invites us to come into His presence and worship Him with humble and penitent hearts. Therefore, let us acknowledge our sinfulness and ask Him to forgive us.

C: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful, and that I have disobeyed You in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve Your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me a sinner.

P: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given His only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, † and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

OPENING HYMN: “The First Noel” (Red #300)

**The first Noel 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
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel**

**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
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel**

**And by the light of that same star
Three wise men came from country far
To seek for a king was their intent
And to follow the star wherever it went
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel**

APOSTLIC GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

C: And also, with you.

Hymn of Praise: “Hark The Herald Angels Sing” (Red #270)

**Hark the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn king
Peace on earth and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled
Joyful all you nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
With angelic hosts proclaim
Christ is born in Bethlehem
Hark the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn king**

**Hail the heaven born Prince of peace
Hail the Sun of righteousness
Light and life to all he brings
Risen with healing in his wings
Mild he lays his glory by
Born that we no more may die
Born to raise each child of earth
Born to give us second birth
Hark the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn king**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Hear our prayers, Lord Jesus Christ, and come with the good news of Your mighty deliverance. Drive the darkness from our hearts and fill us with Your light; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC: *“Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne”* - Ceaseless Praise (Sun.)

THE WORD OF GOD

1st Lesson : Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

¹ The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, ² to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, ³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor. ⁴ They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

⁸ “For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery and iniquity. In my faithfulness I will reward them and make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹ Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the LORD has blessed.” ¹⁰ I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹ For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 126

L: When the Lord brought back the captives to Zion, we were like men who dreamed.

C: Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy.

L: Then it was said among the nations, “The Lord has done great things for them.”

C: The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.

L: Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the Negev.

C: Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy.

L: He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow,

C: will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.

2nd Lesson: 1Thessalonians 5:16-24

¹⁶ Be joyful always; ¹⁷ pray continually; ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹ Do not put out the Spirit’s fire; ²⁰ do not treat prophecies with contempt. ²¹ Test everything. Hold on to the good. ²² Avoid every kind of evil. ²³ May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: : “Sing We Now Of Christmas”

**Sing we now of Christmas
Noel sing we here
Hear our grateful praises
To the Babe so dear
Sing we Noel
The King is born Noel
Sing we now of Christmas
Sing we now Noel**

**Angels called to shepherds
Leave your flocks at rest
Journey forth to Bethlehem
Find the lambkin blest
Sing we Noel
The King is born Noel
Sing we now of Christmas
Sing we now Noel**

**In Bethlehem they found them
Joseph and Mary mild
Seated by the manger
Watching the holy Child
Sing we Noel
The King is born Noel
Sing we now of Christmas
Sing we now Noel**

P: The Holy Gospel according to St John, the 1st chapter.

C: Glory to You O Lord.

Gospel Lesson : John 1:6-8, 19-28

⁶ There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light....¹⁹ Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. ²⁰ He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Christ." ²¹ They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." ²² Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³ John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'" ²⁴ Now some Pharisees who had been sent ²⁵ questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" ²⁶ "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. ²⁷ He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." ²⁸ This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

P: This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

C: Praise to You O Christ.

HYMN OF THE DAY: "Angels From The Realms Of Glory" (Red #275)

**Angels from the realms of glory
Wing your flight o'er all the earth
Once you sang creation's story
Now proclaim Messiah's birth
Come and worship
Come and worship
Worship Christ the newborn king**

**All creation join in praising
God the Father, Spirit, Son
Evermore your voices raising
To the eternal Three in One
Come and worship
Come and worship
Worship Christ the newborn King**

Prayer of the Church

P: Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

P: Almighty God, You sent John the Baptist to proclaim the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Grant that we who prepare to celebrate the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ may die to sin and rise to new life, that we may treasure up and ponder in our hearts the Christ announced by Your forerunner. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: You sent John to proclaim the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Richly and daily forgive our sins and the sins of all believers. Gather and preserve Your Holy Christian Church by Your voice, and send us faithful preachers who will not deny but confess Your truth. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: Heavenly Father, be the source of strength and comfort in every home. Bless the children of our families, that every darkness would be lightened by Your Son's gracious visitation. Preserve them from dangers to body and soul, guide them by Your Word in wise paths, and keep them firm in the faith until life's end. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: Righteous Lord, You rule over all things in heaven and on earth. Until that day when Your Son comes in glory to usher in His kingdom, give wisdom and insight to our president, members of congress, our supreme court justices, and all who make, judge, and administer our laws. Raise up voices in our government that will speak out for the unborn, protect the defenseless, and promote justice. Bless and protect all who serve us in our armed forces, law enforcement, and our first responders. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: Creator of all, many in our midst have been afflicted with pain, sickness, trials and difficulties. Be merciful to those who are close to us, especially all who are listed on our prayer list and all whose names are carried in our hearts, that they may be granted health or strength to endure their afflictions. Help us all to see that when Christ returns in glory, our bodies will be incorruptible and immortal when He makes all things new. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: Heavenly Father, we have sinned against heaven and against You and are not worthy to be called Your sons and daughters. No matter how hard we try to live a life completely worthy of You, we nevertheless fall daily into sin. We come pleading only the merits of Your Son Jesus whom You sent to bleed and die for us. In Your Word You have promised perfect righteousness to all who trust in His name. Father, help us remember Your love and mercy in the Holy Supper we are about to receive. As we receive the bread and wine, fill us with the joy of believing that we also receive Christ' true body and blood as the pledge of Your forgiveness. As we depart in peace from this supper, strengthened in our faith and refreshed in our spirits, help us to avoid all sin in our lives. Rather give us grace to serve You with total, loving obedience as Your true sons and daughters. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: O Lord, heavenly Father, we gratefully remember the sufferings and death of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, for our salvation. Rejoicing in His victorious resurrection from the dead, we draw strength from His ascension before You, where He ever stands for us as our own High Priest. Gather us together from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers, as we also offer the prayer You have taught us, Our Father...

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

Please Be Seated

GATHERING OF THE OFFERING

One way the members of St Mark's show their love for their Savior is by sharing with him a generous portion of the blessings they have received. However, our guests should not feel obligated to give. We want everyone to give out of love for Jesus and what he has done for us, and not "reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Please Stand

OFFERTORY HYMN: *“We give Thee but Thine Own”*

**We give thee but Thine own
Whate'er the gift may be
All that we have is Thine alone
A trust O Lord from Thee**

**And we believe thy Word
Though dim our faith may be
Whate'er we do for thine O Lord
We do it unto Thee**

Offering Prayer

P: Heavenly Father, we bring our offerings to Your altar, asking You to make our bodies the temples of the Holy Spirit. We need His grace to dedicate ourselves wholly to Your service and to please You in everything we do. As faithful stewards may we always use our bodies and minds, as well as our time, abilities, prayers, and earthly goods, in behalf of the kingdom of Your dear Son, in whose name we bring this offering and prayer.

C: Amen

THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: **It is good and right so to do.**

P: Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In love He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Through His holy prophets, He promised a King to bring light to those living in darkness and in the shadow of death. Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ. To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory forever and ever.

C: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might Heav'n and earth are full of your glory Hosanna in the highest, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

P: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, Take and eat; this is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.

He then took the cup and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, Drink from it all of you; this cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of Me.

O Christ, the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us and grant us Your peace.

C: **Amen**

Please Be Seated

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

**COMMUNION HYMN: “What Feast Of Love” (Red #487)
(melody: “What Child Is This)**

**What feast of love is offered here
What banquet come down from heaven
What food of everlasting life
What gracious gift is given
This, this is Christ the king
The bread come down from heaven
Oh taste and see and sing
How sweet the manna given**

CORPORATE BLESSING

P: My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ – May this body which has been given for you and this blood which has been shed for you, strengthen and preserve you in the true faith until life everlasting. You can depart from the Lord’s table in joy and at peace with God, † your sins are forgiven.

C: Amen

THANKSGIVING

P: O give thanks to the Lord for He is good; His mercy endures forever.

C: Amen

P: Let us pray: Dear Lord Jesus, at Your gracious invitation we have partaken of the heavenly feast which You have prepared for Your followers. How greatly You have honored us by receiving us as Your guests. How richly You have blessed us with the great treasure of forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Keep us ever mindful of the great love which moved You to suffer and die and shed Your precious blood for us. Let this blessed sacrament serve to strengthen our faith, to deepen our love for You and each other, and to increase our patience in all affliction. And let this communion here below produce a yearning in us for the blessed supper with You in heaven. Hear us for Your name’s sake, for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

BENEDICTION

P: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor †and give you peace

C: Amen

CLOSING HYMN: : “*Good Christian Friends Rejoice*” (Red #288)

**Good Christian friends rejoice
With heart and soul and voice
Give ye 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**

**Good Christian friends rejoice
With heart and soul and voice
Now ye hear of endless bliss
Jesus Christ was born for this
He has opened heaven’s door
And we are blest forevermore
Christ was born to save
Christ was born to save**

P: Go in peace and serve the Lord!

C: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

*******Announcements, Care, Concerns*******
In Our Prayers This Week

Please continue to keep Owen Copsey, Louise Carter, Pat Stuessi, Randy & Carol Rogers, Shirley Heitz, Wendi Raiford, Brenda Volland, Adela Koch, Sue Van Den Einde, Sarah Ley, Leo Koebler, Don & Jane Parlow, Kathy Lehman, Ron Kreklow, in your prayers for healing and comfort.

St Mark's Advent & Christmas Worship Schedule

Dec 20th Midweek Advent Soup Supper @ 6pm, Worship @ 7pm

Dec 23 Worship Service -@5pm

Dec 24th Christmas Eve- Sun @ 9am

Dec 24th Christmas Eve Candlelight Service @ 3pm

Dec 25th Christmas Day worship @ 9am

Come Worship with Us As We Celebrate the Reason for the Season

GriefShare Program Offered to Community

Community members who have experienced the death of a family member or friend are invited to register for a GriefShare program being held at St Mark's Lutheran Church Jefferson. This nondenominational program features Christ-centered, biblical teaching that focuses on grief topics associated with the death of a loved one. Just a few of the subjects covered during the 13-week program include: Is This Normal, Loneliness and Sadness, Fearful and Overwhelmed. You may attend any or all of the seminars. The DVD seminar features nationally respected grief experts and real-life stories of people, followed by a small group discussion about what was seen on the DVD. Many grieving people find they are only beginning the work of healing when friends or family have returned to their daily life routines. Past participants have related how helpful the information and follow-up discussions were to them. Your bereavement experience may be recent or not so recent. You will find encouragement, comfort, and help in grieving the death of a spouse, child, parent, sibling, other family member, or friend. No matter what the cause of your loved one's death, this is an opportunity to be around people who understand what you are feeling. You will learn how to recognize the symptoms of being stuck in grief and that you do not need to live in bondage as a slave to certain emotions. You will learn valuable information about facing your new normal in life and renewing your hope for the future. Each participant will receive a workbook as well as other grief related materials throughout the sessions.

GriefShare will be held beginning Sunday, January 7 at 2pm in The Little Angels Room of St Mark's Lutheran Church 324 South Sanborn Avenue in Jefferson. To register or for questions, call Bob DeWolfe at 920-674-6184 or you can register on line at griefshare.org/findagroup. There is no fee for this 13 week seminar.

Advent Worship & Soup Supper

The season of Advent begins December 3, 2023. On Wednesday evenings at 6:00pm St Mark's will be serving a Soup & Sandwich Supper followed by an Advent Worship Service. Our theme for the Advent Services: **Ageless Advent Questions**

Dec 20, 2023

For Me?

Isaiah 62:1-12 & Luke 2:8-16

Sunday School News

There will be no Sunday School on Sunday Dec. 17. Sunday School will resume on Jan.7

Breakfast at Epiphany's

Breakfast at Epiphany will Jan. 7 at 10:15. All are invited for King Cake in the Fellowship Hall.

Maybe you will be will be our King for the day!

Giving Manger

During December In front of the church altar is a Giving Manager. Visit the manger with the holy family any-time you are in church.

The question to ask yourself is "What can I bring him?"

1. My heart- give your life and follow Jesus. Meditate on this life decision.
2. Offering- money can be placed in the star basket and will be used to train up/educate young children in Small World Montessori Preschool
3. Prayer- have your own conversation with God for he is your best friend. Write a prayer on a notecard and we will place it by the Sunday School hand cross downstairs. Feel free to use the devotional books on display.
4. Acts of Kindness- serve God by serving others in need. Make a commitment to help someone every day.

Return each week to the Giving Manger and you will discover the true reason for the season that goes on each and every day. God is Love

Manna Monday

Volunteers are needed for Manna Monday meal in fellowship hall on December 18th. If you can help in the morning with meal prep talk to Gail Nevins. If you can help with serving at 5:00pm text/call Kathy Dorn 920-253-8627

100 year anniversary booklets & ornaments

The 100 year anniversary booklets and ornaments are in the church office if you would like one please stop in the office or call the church office at 920-674-2370. The ornaments are \$10 and the booklets are free.

Bible Study

*Tuesday morning 8 am at 4 Sister's Restaurant in Jefferson

*Thursday morning 9am—Fellowship Hall—Angels and Demons

*Sunday Morning after worship in Fellowship Hall—Families of the Bible

Staff/Administrative

Pastor	Christopher Raiford	570-238-2858
Office Administrator	Erin Henry	920-674-2370
Council President	Patty Heckart	712-490-7394
Small World Director	Bonnie Scholl– Rhode	920-542-0841
Music Director/Organist	Carroll Stevens	920-674-5263
Custodian	Cindy Howard	920-650-6045

This Week's Worship Helpers

	5:00pm	9:00am
Readers	Jan Simmons	Sandy Eckhardt
Usher	Tyler Madison	David Wiegand
Communion Helper	Dale Gaugert Wendi Raiford	Sandy Eckhardt Rita Bussian

Upcoming Events

Mon. Dec. 18	Manna Monday 5:00pm-6:00pm
Tues. Dec. 19	Quilters -9am Men's Bible Study 8am Dartball 7pm
Wed. Dec. 20	Soup Supper 6pm Confirmation Class 6pm-7pm Advent Worship 7pm Choir practice
Thurs. Dec. 21	Bible Study– 9 am
Fri. Dec. 22	
Sat. Dec. 23	Worship 5-pm
Sun. Dec. 24	Worship service –9am Christmas Candlelight Service-3pm

Wish List Needed Given

Boiler	\$45,000	\$2,855.00
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Last Weeks Attendance

Saturday	91
Sunday	59

Last Week Offering

Advent	\$240
Offering	\$2709.00
Boiler	\$500.00
Giving Manager	\$100.00
Memorials	\$400.00
Total	\$3949.00

Please connect with St Mark's on Facebook and Instagram. "Like" and "Share" to help spread the word about what is happening at St Mark's [instagram.com/stmarkslutheranjeffersonwi](https://www.instagram.com/stmarkslutheranjeffersonwi) and [facebook.com/stmarksjefferson](https://www.facebook.com/stmarksjefferson)