



SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

Sunday, December 24, 2023

Christmas Eve 4:00PM

St. Mark's United Church of Christ

Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz, Pastor

Patrick Schultz and Glenn Grunwald, Advent Candle Reader and Lighter
Kathy Jurk, Organist
Raymond Henschel, Trumpet

"Then pealed the bells more loud and deep: "God is not dead, nor doth He sleep; The Wrong shall fail, The Right prevail, With peace on earth, goodwill to men." (Longfellow)

Meditative Music
Bells Ring
Prelude Gathering for Worship:

A Christmas Rhapsody

Call to Worship:

Come, faithful watchers, and behold, your salvation is here!

We greet the Wondrous Light, our Messiah, Christ the Lord.

We have waited and watched, longing for God to show up and save us from the suffering and pain in our world.

We greet the Wondrous Light, the fulfillment of our shocking hope.

We have waited and watched, longing for peace to reign among us, a peace that removes unjust barriers, frees us from sin, and binds us together as neighbors, family, and friends.

We greet the Wondrous Light, the bringer of our just peace.

We have waited and watched, longing for joy that is persistent in the face of the grief, lament, chaos, and oppression that weigh on us day in and day out.

We greet the Wondrous Light, the source of our fierce joy.

We have waited and watched, longing to encounter the love that transforms us, the Love that is now here among us, first as a babe in a manger, then as a teacher, a friend, and our Savior.

We greet the Wondrous Light, Love Incarnate who has come to save us and transform us.

Prayer:

O almighty God, by the birth of your holy child Jesus you gave us a great light to dawn on our darkness. Grant that in his light we may see light. Bestow upon us that most excellent Christmas gift of love to all people, so that the likeness of your Son may be formed in us, and that we may have the ever-brightening hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

♪ **What Child is This (#184)**

The Lighting of the Advent Candles Reading:

God of glory, your splendor shines from a manger in Bethlehem into the darkness of human night. Open our eyes to Christ's presence in the shadows of our world so that we, like him, may become beacons of your justice and defenders of all for whom there is no room. *Amen.*

Light the first, second, third, and fourth Advent Candles

The Lighting of the Christ Candle

Do not be afraid – the light still shines in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it. The light is Jesus Christ – the Son of God. Emmanuel – God with us.

♪ **O Little Town of Bethlehem (#180)**

The Christmas Story and Message

Luke 2:1-20 ESV

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

*"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"*

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

♪ **Angels We Have Heard on High**

(R. Henschel & K. Jurk)

Holy Communion:

Beloved in Christ, in this Advent season let us prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind go to Bethlehem and see this thing which came to pass, and the Babe lying in the manger. But first let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace on earth and goodwill among all God's people. Let us also remember, in God's name, the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed; the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and the unloved, the aged and the little children. These prayers and praises we humbly offer to God and in the words which Christ himself hath taught us, saying and praying boldly:

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, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Holy are you and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. As Mary and Joseph went from Galilee to Bethlehem and there found no room, so Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem and was despised and rejected. As in the poverty of a stable Jesus was born, so, by the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us, gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ; one with each other; and one in ministry to our community and beyond. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father now and forever. **Amen.**

***Ours is an open communion to all faiths or those exploring.
Come and be welcome at the Lord's Supper.***

Offering:

The offering will be made as ushers bring the offering plates to you.

Offertory Music:

Cradle Song

~ The offering is brought to the altar ~

Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving:

Holy Child of Bethlehem, bless these gifts, that they may be the grace of God for a community in need; that they may be the Spirit of peace for a world at war with itself. Bring your peace into our darkness, and flow through our lands with your glorious love. Amen.

Closing Prayer:

The people who walked in the darkness have seen a great light.

Those who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

We are that people. Christ is that light.

For a child has been born for us. God's own Son has been given unto us.

He is called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace through his glorious reign.

Let the trees of the forest shout for joy!

Let heaven and nature sing!

CANDLE LIGHTING: Pastor lights a candle from the Christ Candle; the ushers light their candles from the Pastor's candle. The ushers will light the candle of each worshipper nearest the aisle. Lighted candles should not be tipped, please tip the unlit candle to avoid dripping wax.

♪ **Silent Night** (accompanied by R. Henschel)

#186

Postlude: Fantasia On "Adeste Fideles"



*Poinsettias shared in love
with our church family this Christmas:*

*Dave & Ann Adams, in memory of Ken & Joann Wolf and
Ruth & Leonard Adams.*

Dick & Karen Binversie, for the joy of Christmas.

Alice Broehm & Judy Steinbeck, for the joy of Christmas and family.

Dave & Cindy Call, in memory of our parents.

Pat & Noreen Flook, for the joy of Christmas and family.

Gerty Free, in memory of my husband Eddie and our son Terry.

Jo Ann Grant, for the joy of family and friends.

Jon, Julie, Abby & Cole Herrmann, in memory of Mary Ellen Schnelle.

David, Tammy, Faith & Bradley Grunwald, in memory of Wayne Grunwald.

Marlene Kammann & Family, in memory of Melvin.

Kevin & Betty Kellner, in loving memory of Myron and Beatrice Bosman.

Mike & Janice Marcheske, in memory of our parents.

Margene Reyer, in memory of my parents and my grandnephew Samuel Schlegel.

Chris Schnelle & family, in memory of Joel Schnelle.

Lee & Nancy Sixel, in memory of Keith Sixel.

Lee & Nancy Sixel, in memory of Ralph and Betty Sixel.

Staying Close, Staying Connected

Our Church Celebrations!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY THIS WEEK TO:

December 24th – Jenny Riesterer, Lee Sixel

25th – Raymond Henschel, Noel Wippermann

27th – Ethen Lutzke

28th – Tim Russart

ANNIVERSARY:

December 28th – Mike & Amy Summers



December 27th is the deadline for making a contribution to St. James/St. Mark's UCC to have it recorded for 2023.

INFORMATION FOR THE ANNUAL REPORT is due to Karen:

St. Mark's-Jan. 2nd

St. James-Jan. 9th.

Email to stmstjoffice@gmail.com or drop off a copy at St. Mark's of what you want included.

WE NEED SAFE SANCTUARY HELPERS—an extra adult--to attend the high school youth group meetings. Please consider volunteering, it's a great way to get to know our wonderful HS youth!



SIGN UP FOR USHERING AT ST. MARK'S – either in the church entryway or online at: <https://bit.ly/ussher2024>

TAKE THE POLAR PLUNGE WITH PASTOR PATRICK ~ CARE KITS FOR THE HOMELESS



Pastor Patrick is taking pledges for the *Polar Bear Plunge* in Sheboygan on Jan. 1st, 2024 at 1:00pm. The pledges will be used to reach his goal of making 100 Care Kits for the Homeless. You can pledge big for small as the Spirit leads you, either a flat donation or an incremental donation (ex., *I'll pledge \$2 for every 10 seconds you stay in; \$5 for 30 seconds; \$10 if you stay in the water for 1 min..*)

Sign up sheets are in the back of each church.

For more information contact Pastor Schultz at schultzpw@gmail.com, 920-693-8361, or Facebook messenger

A promotional poster for Culver's Share Night. The background is light blue with white snowflakes and a string of colorful Christmas lights. At the top left, there are blue holly leaves with red berries. A white polar bear is on the left, and a penguin is on the right. A red circular badge says "Valid only at Culver's Hwy. 42!".

HELP SUPPORT OUR 2024
MISSION TEAM AT...

Culver's SHARE NIGHT

Monday, Jan. 15th: 4pm. - 8pm.

Please present our share slip or mention our name (St. Mark's, St. James, & Immanuel U.C.C.) so that a % of all sales will go toward our mission trip to Elliot County, Kentucky.

Valid only at Culver's Hwy. 42!

Share Night Slips

Culver's

A portion of the sales raised from this slip will go to
(St Marks / St James U.C.C/ Immanuel Mission Trip)

Amount: \$ _____

No additional coupons or discounts to be applied. Good only on (January 15th). Valid only at Culver's on 4225 State HWY 42

Feel free to make extra copies and hand them out! ☺

The above sheet is a sample. The one to be turned in has to a full-size sheet. Pick up some on the bulletin board in the entry or on the table next to the elevator.

WELCOME!

To the parents of young children:

Relax! God put the wiggle in children; don't feel you have to suppress those wiggles in God's house.

- ❖ Consider sitting toward the front where it is easier for your little ones to engage.
- ❖ Quietly explain the parts of the service and the actions of the pastors, musicians and leaders.
- ❖ Sing the songs, pray and voice the responses. Children learn behaviors by mimicking you.
- ❖ If you have to leave the Worship Center with your child, feel free to do so, but please come back. As Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me."



Join us at St. James tomorrow at 10am to celebrate Christmas Day. Communion will be served.

COME & JOIN US FOR WORSHIP ON SUNDAYS!

St. James UCC

**1st & 3rd Sundays..... 10:30 a.m.
2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays..... 9:00 a.m.**

~Sunday School meets 9-10am at both churches(none on Dec.31)~

St. Mark's UCC

**1st & 3rd Sundays..... 9:00 a.m.
2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays..... 10:30 a.m.**