



Sunday, December 31, 2023
St. James and St. Mark's United Church of Christ
Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz, Pastor
Ann Rodewald, Organist
Kathy Jurk, Choir Director
Sandy Perronne, Reader

Meditative Music
Bells Ring
Prelude Gathering for Worship:

Christmas Rhapsody

Call to Worship:

We have welcomed the Christ child and declared the glory of our dear savior's birth.

And we watch and work for God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

We prepare to welcome a new year, thankful for how God has brought us through the past year and eager to discover what the new year might bring.

What wondrous plans does God have in store for us?

We join generations of Simeons and Annas who learned and taught us how to listen, notice, and see divine love at work in the world.

Help us to keep our eyes and ears open for the miracles of your works here on earth.

Come, let us worship God, whose love endures from generation to generation, guiding us from one year to the next.

Come, let us worship as we eagerly await the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and the rise of God's kingdom here on earth as it is heaven. *Amen.*

Prayer:

God of glory, your splendor shines from a manger in Bethlehem, where the Light of the world is humbly born 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.*

Hymn: (#104 STJ) (#189 STM)

Angels from the Realms of Glory

Affirmation of Faith: (Apostles' Creed)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell;

The third day he rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:

I believe in the Holy Spirit; the One Holy Universal Christian Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

Young at Heart:



Hymn: (#118 STJ) (#229 STM)

The First Noel, vs. 1-2, 5-6

Scripture Reading:

Isaiah 61:10-62:3 ESV

*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD;
my soul shall exult in my God,
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its sprouts,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to sprout up before all the nations.
For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet,
until her righteousness goes forth as brightness,
and her salvation as a burning torch.
The nations shall see your righteousness,
and all the kings your glory,
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will give.
You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.*

Message:

Twas the Night Before 2024

Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz

St. Mark's Choral Anthem:

O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright

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 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.

Offering:

Offering, tithes and gifts can be made before or after worship in the offering baskets/plates at the welcome area of the church. St. James is also set up to take on-line offerings through the website (stmstjucc.org).

Offertory Music:

We Three Kings

~ The offering is brought to the altar ~

Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving:

God of hope and joy, the gifts we offer to you pale in comparison to all you have given us this season: wholeness in our woundedness, hope in our despair, peace in our turmoil, forgiveness in our rebellion. You gave us light in our darkness and hope in our discouragement. Help us embrace your extravagant generosity as we give ourselves to others. In our Savior’s holy name, we pray. *Amen.*

Hymn of Sending: (#8 Binder -STJ)(#218 STM)

Go Tell It on the Mountain

Benediction:

Light of life, you came in flesh, born into human pain and joy, and gave us power to be your children. Grant us faith, O Christ, to see your presence among us, so that all of creation may sing new songs of gladness and walk in the way of peace. *Amen.*

Postlude:

In Excelsis Deo

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 today)~

St. Mark’s UCC

1st & 3rd Sundays..... 9:00 a.m.

2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays..... 10:30 a.m.

Services are recorded and available on our church YouTube channel:

St. Mark’s & St. James UCC

Like us on Facebook  Check out our Website: www.stmstjucc.org

Join our prayer team; contact Karen in our Church office: stmstjoffice@gmail.com