



Sunday, January 1, 2023
First Sunday After Christmas
St. Mark's/St. James United Church of Christ
Rev. Kim Henning, Guest Pastor
Kathy Jurk/Randy Sohn, Organist Sandy Perronne, Reader

Our mothers, like our fathers, are to be honored, the Good Book says. But if Jesus is our guide, honoring them doesn't mean either idealizing or idolizing them. It means seeing them both for who they are and for who they are not. It means speaking the truth to them. It means the best way of repaying them for their love is to love God and our neighbor as faithfully and selflessly as at their best our parents have tried to love us.

~ Frederick Buechner

Meditative Music

Bells Ring

Prelude Gathering for Worship:

St. Marks: *The Snow Lay on the Ground*

St. James: *Angels, From the Realms of Glory*

CALL TO WORSHIP:

L: Our gathering is in the holy name of God who has come to us in Jesus of Nazareth. Amen.

Come and be amazed, people of God. See with your eyes and feel with your Hearts the gift of love, a newborn child born in Bethlehem.

P: With uplifted hearts we bow before you, O God.

L: See the Sovereign One who lifts the weak and blesses the tender in heart.

P: Out of the wonder of our faith we worship you, O God.

L: See this one prophesied of old, "The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned."

P: All glory, power, and praise be to you, O God, in whom we live and die.

AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH FOR CHRISTMAS:

(borrowed in part from John Killinger)

We believe in the Spirit of Christmas, for it is none other than the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose birth it celebrates.

We believe in the lights of Christmas, for they remind us of him who is the Light of the world;

We believe in the greenery of Christmas, for it symbolizes the eternal life born and reborn in Jesus Christ;

We believe in giving gifts at Christmas, for it is in keeping with the greatest gift the world has ever known;

We believe in being childlike at Christmas, for Jesus said we must become as children to enter the kingdom of heaven;

And we believe in the angels' song about peace on earth among persons of good will, for when our will is good, as it is at Christmas, we feel a peace and joy in our hearts that is unlike anything else in all the world. It has to be the peace and joy of God! Amen.

HYMN:

St. Mark's (#179 Worship & Rejoice)

Joy to the World
St. James (#120 The Hymnal)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

A prayer like we are about to pray, is a gift of grace from our God. When we come before God in a spirit of repentance we are released from the burden of sin. I invite you to join me as we come humbly before God.

Most Holy God, our lives are so crowded and rushed that even our holy days seem to leave little room for reflection or prayer. Have mercy on our pretentious, scurrying, little lives. We seem to have scant room for the needs of others. Forgive us, Holy Friend, for turning away from those who are not like us. Forgive us for our appearance of self-importance, when pride elevates us above others. You came among us as one for whom there was no room in the inn. Help us, O God, to know our need for repentance and then to remember that you came among us not to be served but to serve. Please put your arms around us and enable us to be still as we silently offer to you those sins that are a burden to our lives.....

A MOMENT FOR QUIET AND REFLECTION.....

ASSURANCE OF PARDON:

My friends, Christ did not come into this world to condemn but to save. Salvation is at the heart of Christmas's 'glad tidings and great joy.' Accept the mercy which God offers you and look back no more. Put right whatever wrongs you can; be merciful as God is merciful; and be on your way rejoicing. The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be always with you.

And also with you.

HYMN:

St. Mark's (#188 Worship & Rejoice)

Angels We Have Heard on High

St. James (#105 The Hymnal)

PSALM 148:

Psalm 148 is located in a portion of the psalter that is devoted to praise, thanksgiving, and adoration to God. Life hardly gets any better than when our thoughts are lifted to the glory of God. Please pray with me.....

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights!

Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!

Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars!

Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created.

He established them for ever and ever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps,

fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!

Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!

Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!

Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth!

Young men and women alike, old and young together!

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.

He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful, for the people of Israel who are close to him. Praise the Lord!

YOUNG AT HEART:



A Real Grinch

HYMN:

St. Mark's (#181 Worship & Rejoice)

Of the Father's Love Begotten

St. James (#13 The Hymnal)

THE NEW TESTAMENT:

Hebrews 2:10-18

THE GOSPEL:

Matthew 2: 13-23

SERMON:

The Forgotten One of Christmas

Rev. Kim Henning

PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE 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:

St. Mark's: *Jesus, Jesus, Rest Your Head*

St. James: *Follow the Brightest Star*

~ The offering is brought to the altar ~

DOXOLOGY:

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise God all creatures here below
Praise God above ye heavenly hosts
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION:

Please pray with me.....

We remember, O God, the unfathomable gift you have given us in Jesus Christ. With jaws dropped and with eyes wide open, we are overwhelmed by your gracious generosity. In ways small and huge, we mean to reflect such a spirit not only in our offering but in the way we choose to live every day of our lives. We bless you through Christ our Lord. Amen.

HYMN:

St. Mark's (#191 Worship & Rejoice)

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

St. James (#107 The Hymnal)

COMMISSION AND BLESSING:

POSTLUDE:

St. Mark's: *Ding, Dong, Merrily on High*

St. James: *The Joy of Christmas*