

Philippians 3:13

Focus in this one thing;
Forgetting the past and looking forward
to what lies ahead.

GOD'S PURPOSE IS NOT LIMITED BY YOUR PAST

GOD SPECIALIZES IN
GIVING PEOPLE A FRESH START.



Sunday, December 18, 2022

Fourth Advent Sunday

St. Mark's United Church of Christ

Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz, Pastor

Kathy Jurk, Organist Lori Roelse, Reader

Advent Candle Lighter & Reader: Luke Grunwald, Todd Grunwald

Meditative Music

Bells Ring

Prelude Gathering for Worship:

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Call to Worship:

L: Your word became flesh, and you made your dwelling among us when Jesus was born.

P: You set aside all of the glory and splendor of heaven and chose the most humble way to enter into your kingdom. Beneath the stars, surrounded by hosts of heaven, Love came.

L: You came as an innocent baby whose purpose was to walk this earth in complete love and then to give his life as an atonement for the sins of His children.

P: God with us ~ Emmanuel. God and Love incarnate.

Opening Prayer:

Lord, you sent your gift of pure love to us that first Christmas. Love descended from heaven to be born of a virgin. Love lay in the scratchy hay of a manger in a meager barn in Bethlehem. All your love, God, was robed in the delicate skin of a baby and wrapped in swaddling clothes. This final week of Advent, help us to better understand and know the magnitude of love that was made manifest in Jesus. *Amen.*

The Reading for and Lighting of the Advent Candles:

Reader: On this fourth Sunday of Advent, as we think about the coming of Jesus Christ, we light the candle of love.

(Light the first, second, third and fourth candle.)

Reader: How great is the love the Father has lavished on us! (1 John 3:1)

People: This is how God showed his love.

He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. (1 John 4:9)

Reader: A new command I give to you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. All will know that you are my disciples if you love one another. (John 13:34-35)



St. Mark's Young at Heart:

Hymn of Praise: (#175 *Worship & Rejoice*)

We Light the Advent Candles

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.

Scripture Reading:

Philippians 3:5-14 ESV

Message:

The Gift of An Eraser

Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz

Hymn of Response : (#162 Worship & Rejoice)

like a child

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:

Love Came Down at Christmas

~ The offering is brought to the altar ~

Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving:

Loving God, as we present our tithes and offerings to you this morning for your blessing, we remember the greatest blessing the world has ever received: your precious Son, sent to redeem us, to pay the price for our sins. Thank you for showing us how to give from the heart. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Prayer of the People 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.

Hymn of Sending: (#158 Worship & Rejoice)

Blessed Be the God of Israel

Benediction:

It's only days now Lord. And we will sing and praise and glorify your name through your precious gift to us: Your Son Jesus Christ. May we honor you and serve Christ in the ways we say, Merry Christmas; in the heartfelt hugs we give one another; through our selflessness to those in need. Bless us O Lord, in all that we are, all that we do, and all that we will be. *Amen.*

Postlude:

The First Christmas

Philippians 3:5-14 ESV

...circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.



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