

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

December 29, 2024

9:30 A.M.

Lessons and Carols

A CHRISTMAS BELL FOR YOU

THE BELL

I KNOW WHO I AM

I am God's child (John 1:12)

I am Christ's friend (John 15:15)

I am united with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17)

I am bought with a price (1 Cor 6:19-20)

I am a saint (set apart for God). (Eph. 1:1)

I am a personal witness of Christ. (Acts 1:8)

I am the salt & light of the earth (Matt 5:13-14)

I am a member of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27)

I am free forever from condemnation (Rom. 8: 1-2)

I am a citizen of Heaven. I am significant (Phil 3 :20)

I am free from any charge against me (Rom. 8:31 -34)

I am a minister of reconciliation for God (2 Cor 5:17-21)

I have access to God through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:18)

I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realms (Eph. 2:6)

I cannot be separated from the love of God (Rom 8:35-39)

I am established, anointed, sealed by God (2 Cor 1:21-22)

I am assured all things work together for good (Rom. 8:28)

I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit (John 15:16)

I may approach God with freedom and confidence (Eph.. 3: 12)

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13)

I am the branch of the true vine, a channel of His life (John 15: 1-5)

I am God's temple (1 Cor. 3: 16). I am complete in Christ (Col. 2: 10)

I am hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3).. I have been justified (Romans 5:1)

I am God's co-worker (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor 6:1). I am God's workmanship (Eph. 2:10)

I am confident that the good works God has begun in me will be perfected.(Phil.1:5)

I have been redeemed and forgiven (Col 1:14). I have been adopted as God's child (Eph 1:5)

I belong to God

Do you know

Who you are?



ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Like us on



9:30 AM.
GATHERING

Ministry Moments of St. Mark's

The Holy Spirit of Our God Prepares Us To Worship

- **Prelude** "Away in a Manger"
- **Lighting of the Advent Wreath**

Today we light all five candles on the Advent wreath. The first candle is the candle of hope. The second candle is the candle of peace. The third candle is the candle of joy. The fourth candle is the candle of love. The central candle is the Christ candle. It is white, reminding us that Jesus is the spotless Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing remains one of the most well-known and theologically filled Christmas carols. This song was written in 1739 by Charles Wesley, brother of John Wesley, who founded the Methodist denomination. Charles still holds fame for writing over 6,000 hymns along with the lyrics of over 2,000 more. Some you may recognize include *Christ the Lord is Risen Today* and *O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing*, among others.

When Charles first wrote this hymn for a Christmas Day service, he arranged the lines of the song differently, had slightly altered lyrics, and wanted the tune to consist of slow, solemn music. A few years later, in 1753, Charles' friend, George Whitfield, changed a few of the words from Wesley's original. In 1840 composer Felix Mendelssohn wrote a cantata in honor of the anniversary of the invention of the Gutenberg press. Several years later, organist Dr. William Cummings put these lyrics and this music together to form what we now know as "Hark the Herald Angel Sing." The first publication of the current version of the song occurred in 1856.

Whether placed at the end of movies such as *Charlie Brown's Christmas* or *It's a Wonderful Life*, or used in a church service or heard on the radio, this Christmas song is certainly a staple at this time of the year. This song reminds us that Jesus, the "newborn King," is "Prince of Peace," "Sun of Righteousness," "Everlasting Lord," "Incarnate Deity," and, best of all, "Emmanuel"—"God with us." It speaks of Jesus coming as the "second Adam" to be born that we may no longer face death! God Himself was veiled in human flesh! [Writing by Monica Hunter]

CHURCH SCHEDULE & ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29TH—FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

9:30 a.m. Lessons & Carols Worship Service

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1, 2025—OFFICE CLOSED

**HAPPY NEW YEAR
NO YOUTH & KIDS MEETINGS**

THURSDAY, JANUARY 2ND

6:00 p.m. Cornhole

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5TH—SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

8:00 a.m. Worship Service with Children's Sermon
9:00 a.m. Coffee Hour
9:15 a.m. Sunday School & Choir
NO Children's Choir Rehearsal
10:30 a.m. Holy Communion Service
10:40 a.m. Noah's Park

Fourth Quarter 2024 Bell Tower Project Update:

As reported in previous church bulletins, the Bell Tower Project has experienced significant delays due to medical issues within the Smith Bell & Clock Company. It was also communicated that a bell company in upstate New York was expected to assist Smith Bell & Clock Company to complete our project. That company has declined to do so. Consequently, Verdin Bells and Clocks of Cincinnati (www.verdin.com) will take on our bell tower project in addition to their existing schedule of projects. We do not yet have a time line leading to a completion date as a contract is still being developed. Thank you for your patience with the unforeseen disruptions and delays to the Bell Tower Project. You will be kept informed on a quarterly basis with the progress of this project. Your next update will be in the first quarter of 2025.

New Year Prayer

God grant us this year a wider view,
So we see others' faults through the eyes of You.
Teach us to judge not with hasty tongue,
Neither the adult . . . nor the young.

Give us patience and grace to endure
And a stronger faith so we feel secure.
Instead of remembering, help us forget
The irritations that caused us to fret.

Freely forgiving for some offense
And finding each day a rich recompense.
In offering a friendly, helping hand
And trying in all ways to understand;

That all of us whoever we are . . .
Are trying to reach an unreachable star.
For the great and small . . . the good and bad,
The young and old . . . the sad and glad

Are asking to day; Is life worth living?
The answer is only in, loving and giving.
For only Love can make man kind
And Kindness of Heart brings Peace of Mind.

By giving love, we can start this year
To lift the clouds of hate and fear.

~author~: Helen Steiner Rice

Luke 2:8-12

⁸ In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

Hymn "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (vs. 1 & 2) # 270

Greeting & Prayer of the Day

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

C: **And also with you!**

P: Let us pray . . . one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

On Christmas Night. The Sussex Carol was first published in 1684 by Bishop Luke Waddinge in a collection entitled A Small Garland of Pious and Godly Songs, Composed by a devout Man, For the Solace of his Friends and neighbors in their afflictions (Ghent, Belgium, 1684). This was his first year serving as the Bishop of Ferns, a small town in the southwestern corner of Ireland. The book was well-received and, since it contained eleven carols, helped established the tradition of carol singing in that part of the country that continues to this day. One of the carols was The Sussex Carol, also known as "On Christmas Night All Christians Sing".

Jumping to the twentieth century, there was a great English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) who had a keen interest in English folk songs. On May 24, 1904 he was wandering through the southern part of England near a small settlement called Monk's Gate asking people to sing songs for him and someone, who he identifies in his notes as Mrs. Verrall, sang this carol for him. Quickly he jotted it down. Since then it has become quite popular and is now known as The Sussex Carol, since it was rediscovered in Sussex County, England even though it was first published in Belgium and first sung in County Wexford, Ireland. (Article by Martin Dicke.)

Luke 2:8

⁸ In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Hymn "On Christmas Night" # 274

The Christmas Creed

**C: I believe in God the Father Almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth,
 who sent His Son as my Savior on Christmas Day.
 I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 born of the Virgin Mary,
 announced by the angels,
 worshipped by the shepherds,
 adored by the Wise Men,
 who lived to suffer, die and rise again,
 to free us from sin, death and the power of the devil.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 who has brought me to faith in the Christ of Christmas
 and by whose continuous work in my heart,
 I am ever led to lay before the feet of Christ
 the treasures of my love and live under Him as my King
 both now and forevermore. Amen**

Prayers of Intercession

P: Let us pray....Lord, in your mercy.

C: Hear our prayer.

Passing of the Peace

The First Noel originated in Cornwall, a county in South West England. The First Noel came about during the 13th or 14th century. Tradition holds that the carol was written for a play, or simply inspired by a play. Either way, it took on a vibrant life of its own beyond the stage. Citizens of Cornwall would sing the carol in streets outside of churches, and the unique and beautiful song would latch onto all who heard it, its melody bringing joy, its lyrics bringing hope.

Isaiah 7:14

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

Hymn "Silent Night" # 281

Doxology Sung by Congregation # 884

Postlude "Angels We Have Heard on High"

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ASSISTING MINISTERS THIS WEEK 9:30 SERVICE

Greeters/Ushers..... Kathy Van Eman
Acolyte Connor Donaldson

THE ALTAR FLOWERS

are given to the Glory of God in memory of Rebecca Manship and Sharon Niswonger by Scott & Nicki Niswonger.

THE PARISH STAFF

Pastor ----- Rev. William C. Haggis II
 Office Administrator----- Mrs. Meisa Coplin
 Organist----- Mrs. Dee Fisher
 Adult Choir Director----- Mrs. Stacie Korte
 Custodian----- Mr. James Ottenweller

Attention New Visitors to St. Mark's: Located in the pews are blue Welcome Cards for our new guests. Please fill out this card and leave it on the pew when you leave the sanctuary. Greeters will be around to collect them after the service. This information is only to keep you informed of activities at St. Mark's and does not leave the office. We hope you will continue to join us for services and we are so glad you came to St. Mark's. We hope to see you again next Sunday.

Offering Envelopes for 2025: The table by the Nursery has the new 2025 offering envelopes available to be picked up anytime. Do not start using these until AFTER December 31st. Giving records are done by box numbers so even if you give online, please pick up your box.

In the winter of 1818 at St. Nicholas' Church at Obendorf, a village near Salzburg, Austria, Joseph Mohr, the assistant to the priest, faced a dilemma. It was just days before Christmas, and the church organ which was so important to providing music for the Christmas services was broken. Since the organ repairman was not a local of the village it would actually be months before the repair could be made, and Christmas would be long past.

His solution to the problem of the broken organ resulted in one of the most popular Christmas carols of all time. In 1816 Mohr had written a simple poem that the villagers could understand expressing the wonder of the birth of Jesus. He asked his friend Franz Gruber who was the organist at St. Nicholas to write music to accompany his poem so that they could sing it together using a guitar to accompany their singing.

They first performed their newly composed Christmas carol at the Christmas Eve midnight service on December 24, 1818. It did not instantly receive the worldwide recognition it has come to know, however. It was not until years later in 1825 when Carl Mauracher was rebuilding the organ at St. Nicholas that a handwritten copy of the words and music was found in the organ loft.

Mauracher was from an area in the mountains of Tyrol which had many traveling folk choirs who performed throughout Europe. He carried the carol back home, and it became a popular song with the choirs as they traveled and spread its popularity wherever they went.

In some versions of the story it is told that mice had eaten the bellows of the organ. Others say that Gruber himself had broken the organ. It is believed that there was frequent flooding of the area that caused rust and mildew to affect the condition of the church organ often making it unplayable. It is actually not known however if the organ was truly broken at Christmastime of 1818. Some say that Mohr simply wanted a new carol for the service and was fond of the guitar as an instrument. Some stories tell that both the poem and the music were hastily written that Christmas Eve. A manuscript for "Silent Night" in Mohr's hand was discovered in 1995 which is dated 1816. In the manuscript Mohr credits the melody used for the carol to Franz Gruber.

Whatever the details of the circumstances, Joseph Mohr's and Franz Gruber's contribution of Christmas music for their village's Christmas Eve midnight mass gave us all the beautiful "Silent Night, Holy Night."

The First Noel was written as a way to express the excitement and wonder of Christmas. Hundreds of years ago, during a time without internet or phones, the people of Cornwall sang it in the streets as a way to spread hope and joy. The world may look very different today, but we still gather to sing the song for the same reasons. The song is a testament to the fact that no matter what the earth looks like, no matter how much time passes, the encouraging story of Jesus will always connect with the hearts that are desperate for Him.

Matthew 2:1-12

¹ In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ² asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ⁶ 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" ⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

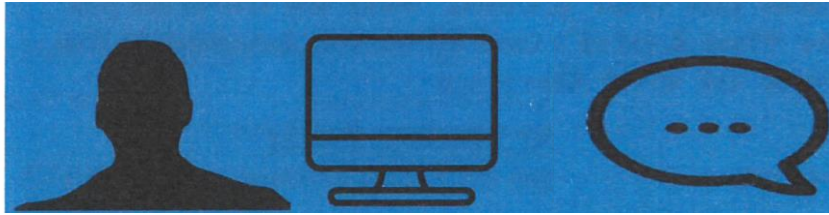
Hymn

"The First Noel"

300

Offertory

3 WAYS TO GIVE



In person

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Prayer of Worshiping God Through Our Giving

P: Let us pray. . . Emmanuel, God with us,

C: as Mary and Joseph were faithful to you being the parents of Jesus, we too in our offering the fruit of our labor put our trust and our lives in your almighty hands. Giving Is An Act Of Faith. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray.

C: 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.

Edmund Hamilton Sears is the author of **It Came Upon The Midnight Clear**. He was born in Sandisfield, Massachusetts, on April 6, 1819, and attended Union College in Schenectady, then Harvard Divinity School. He was ordained in the Unitarian ministry and chose to devote himself to small towns in Massachusetts.

It Came Upon The Midnight Clear is an unusual carol in that there is no mention of Christ, of the newborn Babe, or of the Savior's Mission. Sears, after all, was Unitarian. The author's only focus is the angelic request for peace on earth. It Came Upon The Midnight Clear was written as the clouds of civil strife were darkening the United States, setting the stage for the Civil War.

Edmund Hamilton Sears died in Weston, Massachusetts, on January 16, 1876.

Luke 2:15-20

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Hymn

"It Came Upon The Midnight Clear"

282

SENDING

Blessing

P: May the rough places in your life be made smooth.
May the valleys of despair be filled with comfort.
May the glory of Emmanuel be with you all your days.
And may God almighty,
Father, +Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

Dismissal

P: Go in peace, celebrate the birth of our Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!

There have been many stories of the origins of the Christmas carol "**Silent Night, Holy Night.**" In fact, the carol goes back further than when Christmas cards began. One of the most popularly told one is as follows:

St. Mark's Presents 30 day challenge:

When you want your faith to grow, you start by spending more time with God. There's prayer, there's Bible study and there's worship. We believe today's Christian music encompasses all three! What could your faith habits look like in a month, if you spend 30 minutes listening to Christian music each day? We believe the words in Christian music have the power to heal, to change hearts and relationships, and brings significant encouragement into your life!



St. Mark's Presents
30 Day Challenge

IT TAKES ABOUT A MONTH TO BUILD A HABIT. THE 30 DAY CHALLENGE IS A SIMPLE WAY TO RE-CENTER YOUR FAITH AS YOU START A NEW YEAR!

WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE? TRY LISTENING TO ONLY CHRISTIAN MUSIC FOR 30 DAYS AND SEE WHAT GOD DOES IN YOUR HEART AND YOUR LIFE!

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POP AND HIP-HOP: WWW.NGENRADIO.COM
CHRISTMAS MUSIC: WWW.KSBJ.ORG
POSITIVE AND ENCOURAGING: LISTEN.KLOVE.COM

OPEN POSITION – After 20 years, Monica Campbell is resigning as Children's Choir Director as of 12-31-2024, and we are seeking a replacement. The current schedule for the Children's Choir includes weekly rehearsals from 10:00am-10:25am on Sundays from the week following Rally Day until after their last performance in April or May, a Christmas Play or Concert in December, and an Easter Play (usually one or two Sundays after Easter, depending on when Easter falls). Alternatively, the new director could choose to have the choir sing an anthem monthly throughout the school year. Qualifications include a music background and a love for children. Please text Monica with any questions (419-203-6744). For an application, please contact the church office.

Our sympathy to Frank Hoffman and Lori Hoffman-Foltz and families upon the December 19th passing of their brother Rodger Dale Hoffman.

Congregational Budget Meeting was held on December 22nd immediately following the 9:30 Cantata service. All motions and Church Constitution voted on passed.