

St. Mark

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Reach, Teach, Rejoice!



*We're delighted you've chosen to worship with us this morning. At St. Mark it's our commitment to you that we faithfully proclaim God's Word so that your faith may grow during your time with us. Our goal is to make disciples of Jesus Christ by proclaiming the good news of what He has done for us. We welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you have.*

- **Ushers and Greeters** are available in the narthex (entryway) to answer any questions you may have and offer you any assistance you may need.
- **Restrooms** are located in the hallway to the north of the sanctuary
- **We love having children** in worship and encourage them to sing and pray along with their parents. **Children's Bulletins and Busy Bags** are available in the entryway for your family to use. If your child becomes a bit restless during the service and you think they could use a break, we have a **Nursery Space** in the church office that you can use. An usher can guide you there.
- **Friendship Cards** are found in the racks of each pew. We ask that during the offering you fill out a card that we may have a record of your visit and get to know you.

**OUR THEME FOR TODAY – A Sola Christmas**

## **St. Mark Lutheran Church and School**

3930 S. 19th Street, Lincoln, NE 68502

[www.stmarklincoln.org](http://www.stmarklincoln.org) School website—[www.stmarkles.org](http://www.stmarkles.org)

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### This Week at St. Mark

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Monday    | - Worship w/Lord's Supper 7:00 PM   |
| Tuesday   | - Pre-Call Meeting for Principal Position 7:00 pm   |
| Wednesday | - Bible Class Lexington Assisted Living Center 3:30 pm<br>- Catechism 5:30 pm<br>- Advent Service 7:00 pm |
| Thursday  | - Bible Class—All Welcome 6:30 am   |
| Friday    | - Snow Removal—Craig Goodrich<br>- Church Cleaning: Sec.1 Vogel Sec. 2 Wilkinson<br>Sec. 3 Wathor         |
| Sunday    | - Christmas Eve 9:30 am<br>- Candle Light Service 6:00 pm   |

## St. Mark News and Notes

Please remember in your prayers...

- **Dwayne & Dorothy Burianek** who celebrate with thanksgiving God's grace of 25 years of marriage
- **Ken Holm**
- **Shirley Zacherson**



### Serving in God's House today...

**Elders:** Tyson Martin, Curt Jamison

**Ushers:** Rainer Gartzke, Dwayne Burianek (E) Rich Beltz, Jeff Schmidt (L)

**Greeters:** Noel & Elfi Lee (E) Ashley Hussman (L)

**Organist:** Cindy Krushenisky

**Birthdays**—Kerry Johnson 12/22, Susan Rehm 12/23

**Anniversary** —Dwayne & Dorothy Burianek 12/19

**Building Addition Fund:** If you would like to give specifically to the new building addition, please write "Building Addition Fund" on the envelope to be sure that the money is allocated correctly. Put the envelope in the offering plate.

**Nebraska Lutheran High School** will present its annual sacred Christmas concert today at 4 pm at the Nebraska Ev. Lutheran High School in Waco. The concert will be followed by a performance of this year's one act play and a meal. Everyone is invited to take a break from the hustle and bustle of the season to enjoy some beautiful music, entertainment, and fellowship as we praise God for sending His Son to be our redeemer.

## A SOLA CHRISTMAS

**HYMN:** CW 34  
joice

Now Sing We, Now Re-

### INVOCATION

**M:** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C:** Amen.

### CALL TO WORSHIP

*Psalm 96, selected verses*

**M:** Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth.

**C:** **Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day.**

**M:** Declare his glory among the nations,

**C:** **his marvelous deeds among all peoples.**

**M:** Ascribe to the LORD, all you families of nations,

**C:** **ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.**

**M:** Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness;

**C:** **tremble before him, all the earth.**

**M:** Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;

**C:** **let the sea resound, and all that is in it.**

**M:** Let all creation rejoice before the LORD, for he comes,

**C:** **he comes to judge the earth.**

**M:** He will judge the world in righteousness

**C:** **and the peoples in his faithfulness.**

## Introduction

**M:** We all know how important a solid foundation is for a building. A building with a weak foundation may stand for a time, but eventually it will topple. Today, we once again hear the account of the birth of Jesus. Why do we set aside time to do this every year? The answer is that this is an important brick in the foundation of our faith. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 3:11, "No one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." As we close out the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, we are reminded how God used Martin Luther to restore to the church the true teachings of Scripture. Luther summarized those teachings in five short statements: By Scripture Alone, By Faith Alone, Through Christ Alone, To God's Glory Alone, and By Grace Alone. These phrases form the foundation of the Lutheran Church, and because they are rooted in Scripture, they form the foundation of the Christian faith.

### **Part One: By Scripture Alone** (*Sola Scriptura*)

**M:** When the earth was new and people lived for hundreds of years, information was passed down from one generation to the next by word of mouth. Many generations were able to talk directly with Adam and Eve about the Garden of Eden, their fall into sin, and God's promise of a Savior. As the first people began dying and the number of generations increased, it became necessary to record God's promises. God tells us through his disciple Peter how this took place:

**C:** **Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:20,21)**

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

**M:** Hear the prayer of your people, O Lord, that the lips which have praised you here may glorify you in the world, that the eyes which have seen the coming of your Son may long for his coming again, and that all who have received in his true body and blood the pledge of your forgiveness may be restored to live a new and holy life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever...

**C:** **Amen.**

## BLESSING

**M:** Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

**C:** **Amen.**

**HYMN:** CW 41 (verses 1-4)

**Let All Together Praise Our God**

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

**M:** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C:** Amen.

## O CHRIST, LAMB OF GOD

*Agnus Dei*



**C:** O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the



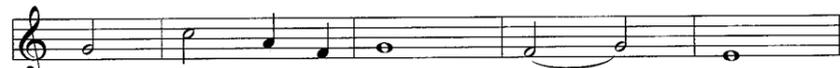
world; have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you



take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.



O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the



world; grant us your peace. A - men.

**M:** So how do we know that the baby whose birth we are celebrating is our Savior? Because Scripture tells us. That news can be found nowhere else but in God's Word. God gave his people prophecies—pictures of coming events—so they would recognize the Messiah when he came.

**C:** **"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." (Genesis 3:15)**

**M:** "The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)

**C:** **"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." (Micah 5:2)**

**M:** "'The days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah. In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety.

**C:** **This is the name by which it will be called: The LORD Our Righteous Savior." (Jeremiah 33:14-16)**

HYMN: CW 35 (verses 1-3)

Of the Father's Love Begotten

## Part Two: By Faith Alone, Through Christ Alone

*(Sola Fide, Solus Christus)*

**M:** In the 11th chapter of the letter to the Hebrews, we find a definition for faith: "Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." When we receive unsettling news, our reaction might be to doubt the truth of this news. Today we see in Mary an example of a strong faith as she reacts to some potentially startling news.

**M:** In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her,

**C:** **“Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”**

**M:** “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail.”

**C:** **“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” (Luke 1:26-38)**

**M:** Mary was chosen by God to give birth to the Savior. Mary was not special in and of herself, but by faith—a gift of the Holy Spirit—she trusted God and his Word. Many people today say they have faith, but too often it is in someone or something that provides no lasting foundation. Scripture tells us that there is only one sure foundation for our faith—Jesus Christ.

**C:** **Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6)**

**M:** The Lord be with you.

**C:** **And also with you.**

**M:** Lift up your hearts.

**C:** **We lift them up to the Lord.**

**M:** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C:** **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

**M:** Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In love he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. When the time had fully come, he sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory for ever and ever.

**HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

*Sanctus*

C: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of your glo - ry.

You are my God, and I will ex - alt you.

I will give you thanks, for you have be - come my sal -

va - tion. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of your glo - ry.

**M:** Mighty God, you provide us with certain hope and redeem us from our sin.

**C:** **Through faith alone we hold to your promises, and through Christ alone we receive salvation.**

**M:** Everlasting Father, you rule the universe, the church, and the hearts of your people.

**C:** **To you alone belongs all glory and praise!**

**M:** Prince of Peace, your love covers us and fills us and moves us.

**C:** **Through grace alone we receive new life and eternal hope.**

**M:** Faithful God, move us to rejoice in our salvation and to share eagerly this Good News with others.

**C:** **Help us to live for you through Scripture alone, by faith alone, in Christ alone, under grace alone, and to your glory alone. Amen.**

#### THE LORD'S PRAYER

**M:** O 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.**

#### THE SACRAMENT

We follow the historic Christian practice of *close communion*. We ask that only members of Saint Mark Lutheran or one of our sister congregations partake of the sacrament. If you are not a member, please speak to the pastor before communing.

**M:** Thousands of years after making the first promise of a Savior, God finally sent the Messiah. Listen again to those familiar words proclaiming Jesus' birth:

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

**C:** **So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.**

**M:** He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

**C:** **While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. (Luke 2:1-7)**

HYMN: CW 68

Away in a Manger

**M:** Matthew, the author of the first book of the Bible's New Testament, records the angel's instructions to Joseph concerning Mary's child:

**C:** **"You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)**

**M:** We have no part in saving ourselves. The Bible tells us we are saved through Christ alone. So we give God alone all the glory in thankfulness for sending his Son to save us. Yes, tonight we see a humble baby in a manger; but the apostle Paul reminds us in his letter to the Philippians of Jesus' honored place:

**C:** **God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11)**

**M:** The angels gave us a good example when they praised God after telling the shepherds the news of Jesus' birth.

There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them,

**C:** **"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."**

**M:** Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." (Luke 2:8-14)

HYMN: CW 61 (verses 1-2)

**Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**

**Part Four: By Grace Alone** (*Sola Gratia*)

**M:** In the next few days many of you will be opening your Christmas gifts. What did you do to earn those gifts? The moment we do something to earn them, they are no longer gifts. Out of love for us, God gave the most precious gift on that first Christmas night—the Savior who lived a perfect life and suffered and died to pay for our sins. Our sinful nature wants nothing to do with God and his precious gift. Despite that fact, God loves us still. God's love is undeserved. That is GRACE! The apostle Paul reminds us:

**C:** **It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8,9)**

**M:** After you have opened your gifts, do you keep quiet about them? Or do you tell all your friends what you have received? When the shepherds saw God's gift to the world, they did not keep the news to themselves. They spread the word so that others could experience God's grace too!

**C:** **When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."**

**M:** So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

**C:** **The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. (Luke 2:15-20)**

HYMN: CW 60

**Silent Night! Holy Night**

**SERMON**

**OFFERING**

**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

**M:** God our Wonderful Counselor, in your Word you reveal to us who you are and what we are.

**C:** **Through your Scriptures alone you show us that you are righteous and we are not. You show us that you are love and that we are forgiven.**