



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



Mark 1

December 31, 2023

10:30 Holy Communion

Today we begin a journey through the Gospel of Mark. By Easter we will have read all of it during worship. Mark's gospel has been challenging its readers for almost 2000 years. It is unpredictable, fast paced, and leaves its readers scratching their heads many times. That appears to be Mark's intention. He wants us to realize that God's love is so radical that it cannot ever be confined to conventions. Fasten your seatbelt for a wild ride!

Welcome to worship today!

If you are visiting with us we invite you to sign the Guest Book in the back of the sanctuary.

Large print bulletins are available on the usher's stand.

† GATHERING †

Prelude and Announcements

Gathering Hymn Angels, from the Realms of Glory
For music turn to Hymn 275 in the Red Hymnal

1. **Angels, from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
once you sang creation's story,
now proclaim Messiah's birth:**

Refrain

**Come and worship,
come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.**

2. **Shepherds, in the fields abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night.
God with us is now residing
yonder shines the infant light. *Refrain***

3. **Sages, leave your contemplations,
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great desire of nations,
you have seen his natal star. *Refrain***

4. **All creation, join in praising
God, the Father, Spirit, Son,
Evermore your voices raising
to the eternal Three in One. *Refrain***

Text: James Montgomery, 1771-1854, alt., sts. 1-3; *Salisbury Hymn Book*, 1857, st. 4. Music: Henry T Smart, 1813-1879

Greeting (2 Corinthians 13:13)

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.

Call to Worship

A: Sing to God something brand new!

C: For God has done wonderful things!

A: God has not forgotten to love us all!

C: Even the ends of the earth have heard!

A: Make a joyful noise!

C: Break forth in song!

A: With strings and horns,

C: sing praise to the Holy One!

A: With the roaring seas and everything in it!

C: With all the land and everything in it!

A: The floods clap their hands.

C: The hills sing for joy.

A: Thank God! God is coming to set everything right:

C: Justice for everyone, everything fair.

A: Sing to God something brand new!

C: For God has done wonderful things!

Hymn of Praise O Little Town of Bethlehem
(For music see Hymn 279 in the Red Hymnal)

1. **O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by;
yet in the dark street shineth
the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.**
2. **For Christ is born of Mary,
and, gathered all above
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king,
and peace to all the earth!**
3. **How silently, how silently
the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming;
but, in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.**

**4. O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
oh, come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Immanuel!**

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893, Music: Lewis H. Redner, 1831-1908

Prayer of the Day

A: Let us pray.

Eternal Father, you gave your incarnate Son the holy name of Jesus to be a sign of our salvation. Plant in every heart the love of the Savior in the world. Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

† WORD †

First Reading Mark 1:1-13

B: The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;

³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

“Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.””

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on

him.¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”¹² And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.¹³ He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

After the reading the reader may say: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Scripture Poetry Psalm 98 (*read responsively*)

D: Sing to the Lord a new song,
the Lord of wonderful deeds.

**C: Right hand and holy arm
brought victory to God.**

D: God made that victory known,
revealed justice to nations,
remembered a merciful love
loyal to the house of Israel.

**C: The ends of the earth have seen
the victory of our God.**

D: Shout to the Lord, you earth,
break into song, into praise!

**C: Sing praise to God with a harp,
with a harp and sound of music.**

D: With sound of trumpet and horn,
shout to the Lord, our King.

**C: Let the sea roar with its creatures,
the world and all that live there!**

D: Let rivers clap their hands,
the hills ring out their joy!

**C: The Lord our God comes,
comes to rule the earth,
justly to rule the world,
to govern the peoples aright.**

Second Reading Mark 1:14-31

E: ¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.” ¹⁶As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. ¹⁷And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” ¹⁸And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹As he went a little

farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him. ²¹They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. ²²They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." ²⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" ²⁶And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." ²⁸At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee. ²⁹As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. ³¹He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

After the reading the reader may say: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Third Reading Mark 1:32-45

P: ³²That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. ³³And the whole city was gathered around the door. ³⁴And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. ³⁵In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. ³⁶And Simon and his companions hunted for him. ³⁷When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." ³⁸He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." ³⁹And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

⁴⁰A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, "If you choose, you can make me clean." ⁴¹Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I do choose. Be made clean!" ⁴²Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. ⁴³After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, ⁴⁴saying to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the

priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”⁴⁵ But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.

After the reading the reader may say: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Children's Sermon

Sermon

Hymn of the Day Canticle of the Turning
(For music see Hymn 723 in the Red Hymnal)

1. **My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things
that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,
so from east to west, shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?**

Refrain: **My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn.**

2. **Though I am small, my God, my all,
you work great things in me,
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past
to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame,
and to those who would for you yearn,
you will show your might, put the strong to flight
for the world is about to turn. *Refrain***

3. **From the halls of pow'r to the fortress tow'r,
not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears
ev'ry tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more,**

**for the food they can never earn;
there are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed,
for the world is about to turn. *Refrain***

- 4. Though the nations rage from age to age,
we remember who holds us fast;
God's mercy must deliver us
from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard
is the promise which hold us bound,
till the spear and rod can be crushed by God,
who is turning the world around. *Refrain***

Text: Rory Cooney, b. 1952, based on the Magnificat, text copyright 1990 GIA Publications Inc. Music: Star of Country Down; Irish Traditional.

Nicene Creed

P: Let us confirm our faith with the Nicene Creed

**C: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of
heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally
begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God
from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he
came down from heaven, was incarnate of the virgin Mary and
became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius
Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose
again, in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in
glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no
end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who
proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the
Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the
prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We
acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the
resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Prayer of the Church

**"I Teeter on the Brink of Endings" from *Guerillas of Grace* by Ted
Loder**

Peace

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us share that peace with one another.

The congregation may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

† MEAL †

Special Music

Hymn of Thanksgiving Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful Lord
For music turn to page 35 in the Blue Hymnal

**Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord,
and fill to the brim our cup of blessing.**

**Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown,
that we may be fed with the bread of life.**

**Gather the hopes and dreams of all;
unite them with the prayers we offer now.**

**Grace our table with your presence, Lord,
and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.**

Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray: God of abundance:

C: receive and bless these gifts we have offered.

**Join our hearts with the song of the angels,
and gather us at your table of celebration.**

**Strengthen us to share with all the world
the abundance of your grace upon grace,
poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.**

Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,

through our Savior Jesus the Christ. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join in their unending hymn:

(Isaiah 6:3 - spoken)

**C: Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

P: In the night in which he was handed over our Lord Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying, "Take and eat. This is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

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.

Communion Distribution

Welcome to the Lord's Supper! All who are baptized are invited to receive communion. Please pick up a communion glass as you come forward to the altar. You will receive bread from the communion assistant. (If you need a gluten free wafer please tell the assistant.) The pastor will pour wine into your glass. If you prefer grape juice it is prefilled in the individual glasses. As we commune together everyone is invited to sing the following hymns:

Lamb of God (Page 39 of the Blue Hymnal)

276 *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly (Red Hymnal)*

269 *Once in Royal David's City (Red Hymnal)*

Communion Blessing After all have communed the pastor will say:

P: The body and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen.

Post Communion Prayer

A: Let us pray:

God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

✠ SENDING ✠

Blessing

P: God the Father bless you,
Jesus grant you grace and truth,
and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts,
now and forever.

C: Amen.

Sending Hymn The Bells of Christmas
(For music turn to Hymn 298 in the Red Hymnal)

1. **The bells of Christmas chime once more;
the heav'nly guest is at the door.
He comes to earthly dwellings still
with new year gifts of peace, good will.**
2. **This world, though wide and far outspread,
could scarcely find for you a bed.
Your cradle was a manger stall,
No pearls nor silk nor kingly hall.**
3. **Now let us go with quiet mind,
the swaddled babe with shepherds find,
to gaze on him who gladdens them,
the lovliest flow'r of Jesse's stem.**
4. **Oh, join with me, in gladness sing,**

**to keep our Christmas with our king,
until our song, from loving souls,
like rushing mighty water rolls!**

**5. O patriarchs' Joy, O prophets' Song,
O Dayspring bright, awaited long,
O Son of Man, incarnate Word,
great David's Son, great David's Lord:**

**6. Come, Jesus, glorious heav'nly guest,
and keep your Christmas in our breast;
Then David's harpstrings, hushed so long,
Shall swell our jubilee of song.**

Text: Nikolai F.S. Grundtvig, 1783-1872; tr. Charles Porterfield Krauth, 1823-1883, alt.
Music: Carl C. N. Balle, 1806-1855

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: **God's Work. Our Hands.**

Worship assistants TODAY:

Greeters and Ushers Mary and Greg Zuege
Acolyte Thomas Bullwinkle
Altar Care Linda Thompson
Communion Assistant Greg Zuege
Counters
Coffee Hour

Worship assistants for next Sunday, January 7

Greeters and Ushers John and Linda Thompson
Acolyte Alyssa Young
Altar Care Gary Boisseau
Communion Assistant Sue Kaufmann
Counters
Coffee Hour

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St. John's Lutheran Church
888 County Road 9, Victor, NY 14564
stjohnsvictor.com (585) 924-5192
The Rev. Jonathan Deibler, Pastor
William Shi, Pianist