



December 31, 2017
1st Sunday after Christmas

St. Mark's is a member of the
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod



Pastor Aaron Nitz
Principal Nathan Bitter
2220 Anne St NW, Bemidji, MN 56601
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Welcome to God's House of Worship!

We consider it a privilege to worship our living Lord with you this morning! If you have any questions regarding our congregation, please talk with the pastor. We look forward to meeting you. Please come again and worship with us very soon!

A few notes:

- The order of worship is found in this folder.
- Restrooms are located in the foyer.
- Our fellowship hall is equipped with a speaker and child-friendly toys.
- Our service lasts about 65 minutes.

What a Miracle!

God Has Revealed His Salvation to Me!

When Joseph and Mary brought the baby Jesus to the temple, no doubt many just passed the peasant couple by as they went about their busy activities. Yet, in love, God revealed His salvation to two people: Simeon and Anna. They recognized the baby Jesus for who He is: The Temple, God living with His people, God's salvation for people. What a miracle that God has also revealed the truth to us! What a miracle that we don't just pass Christmas by saying, "Glad that's over with!" What a miracle that for us Christmas keeps getting better: God's salvation has been revealed to us! What a miracle that God allows us to sing His praises to all who will listen too!

*Personal preparation for Holy Communion can be found
in the front of the hymnal on page 156.*

M: When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem us, who are under the law.

C: He came because I am by nature sinful. I have disobeyed God in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. Even my righteous acts—the good deeds I do—are filthy rags in the sight of God. Surely I deserve God's judgment. Have mercy on me, Lord—I am a sinful human being.

M: "I bring you good news of great joy! To you is born this day a Savior, who is Christ the Lord!" The true God became a human being. The perfect life which you and I could not lead—Jesus lived it perfectly in your place. The death which you and I deserved—Jesus went to the cross in your place. Peace! God's favor rests upon you because Jesus—your God—became your brother.

All sing: **Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

M: Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives transgressions?

C: You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.

M: Again and again You have compassion on us;

C: You tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

M: You humbled Yourself to live like us, as one of us.

C: You saw fit to save us through Your own suffering.

M: Teach us to number our days aright,

C: That we may grow in wisdom and stature before you, O God.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: Almighty God, in mercy you sent your one and only Son to take upon himself our human nature. By his gracious coming deliver us from the corruption of our sin and transform us into the likeness of his glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

M: O come! Let us worship the newborn Savior!

C: Let us shout aloud to the Rock of Our Salvation!

All sing: **No more let sins and sorrows grow
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.**

**He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness
And wonders of his love, And wonders of his love,
And wonders, wonders of his love.**

Be seated

We Listen to God's Word

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 45:20-25 (NIV2011)

What a miracle! Through this Christ-child God accomplishes our salvation.

²⁰ "Gather together and come;
assemble, you fugitives from the nations.

Ignorant are those who carry about idols of wood,
who pray to gods that cannot save.

²¹ Declare what is to be, present it—
let them take counsel together.

Who foretold this long ago,
who declared it from the distant past?

Was it not I, the LORD?

And there is no God apart from me,
a righteous God and a Savior;
there is none but me.

²² "Turn to me and be saved,
all you ends of the earth;
for I am God, and there is no other.

²³ By myself I have sworn,
my mouth has uttered in all integrity
a word that will not be revoked:

Before me every knee will bow;
by me every tongue will swear.

²⁴ They will say of me, "In the LORD alone
are deliverance and strength."

All who have raged against him
will come to him and be put to shame.

²⁵ But all the descendants of Israel
will find deliverance in the LORD
and will make their boast in him.

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 111

Page 106 in the front of the red hymnal

SECOND LESSON

Colossians 3:12-17 (NIV2011)

What a miracle! God allows us in our lives to imitate this Child who dwells in us and with us.

¹²Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

VERSE OF THE DAY

Colossians 3:15a (NIV84)

M: Alleluia. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. Alleluia.

C: *(sung)* **Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! These words are written that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Please stand

GOSPEL

Luke 2:25-40 (NIV2011)

What a miracle! God revealed Himself to Simeon and Anna and He does so to us too.

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹ "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.

³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel."

³³ The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him.

³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. ³⁸ Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

M: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: *(sung)* **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

Be seated

HYMN OF THE DAY

Let All Together Praise Our God
Christian Worship 41

SERMON

Text: Luke 2:25-40

Theme: "To Depart in Peace"

Please stand

CONFESSION OF FAITH: THE SECOND ARTICLE

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

What does this mean?

**I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity,
and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord.**

**He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won
me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with
gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent
suffering and death.**

(continued)

All this He did that I should be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he has risen from death and lives and rules eternally.

This is most certainly true.

Be seated

We Respond to God's Word with Thanks

OFFERING & FRIENDSHIP REGISTERS

The members of St. Mark's have joined together to spread God's message both in this community and around the world. If you are a visitor, please do not feel obligated to participate in the offering. You are our guests, and we thank you for giving us the opportunity to share God's Word with you! Please take a moment to sign our friendship register.

Please stand

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR CHRISTMAS

Minister: Dear Father, we rejoice to hear the good news of great joy that a Savior has been born for us. For fulfilling your prophecies and in the fullness of time sending your Son to be our Savior, we give you our heartfelt thanks and praise.

Congregation: Unto us a child is born! Unto us a Son is given!

M: What a great mystery of our faith this is: that God has become fully human for our salvation! Even though he is the all-powerful Lord of all, he is wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.

C: Help us always believe that this precious child was born as our substitute to be our Savior.

M: In the midst of our joy, we grieve for the many people in our world who do not know that Jesus has come to bring them forgiveness and healing. As the shepherds spread abroad the good news of the birth of the Savior born for all the world, may we also make use of the unique opportunities this holiday presents to tell others of what we have seen and heard concerning the child.

C: Grant that the true peace between God and fallen mankind may comfort all people.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent Prayer

M: As the angels sang out their praise, move us also to sing out our praise to you, today and every day, as the joy of Christmas remains in our hearts.

C: Glory to God in the highest! Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

C: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

The Sacrament

God wants us to regard the Lord's Supper as a precious gift from Him. Accordingly, He has given us some direction as to how this gift is to be properly administered. God instructs us to invite to the Lord's Supper:

- 1) Those who have been instructed in its truths (1 Corinthians 11:27-29) and*
- 2) Those who have had the chance to declare a unity of faith based on the Word (1 Cor. 10:17)*

Because we trust God's judgment regarding these matters, at St. Mark's we practice "Close Communion." This means we ask that only members of St. Mark's—or the church body to which it belongs—partake of the Lord's Supper this morning. If you would like to know how to declare unity with St. Mark's, please speak to the Pastor—we're eager to share this precious gift of unity with you.



If you wish to follow along with the music for the communion liturgy, it begins on page 33 in the front of the hymnal.

Minister: The Lord be with you.

Congregation: *(sung)* **And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: *(sung)* **We lift them up to the Lord.**

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

C: *(sung)* **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: (*sung*) **Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of your glory. You are my God, and I will exalt you. I will give you thanks for you have become my salvation. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of your glory.**

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."

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

C: (*sung*) **Amen.**

O CHRIST, LAMB OF GOD (*Agnus Dei*)

C: (*sung*) **O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us your peace. Amen.**

Be seated

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

Help Us, O Lord, for Now We Enter

Christian Worship 70

(followed by CW 71 and so on as time permits)

Please stand

SONG OF SIMEON (*Nunc Dimittis*)

(music can be found in the front of the hymnal on page 24)

C: *(sung)* **Lord, now you let your servant depart in peace according to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel.**

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: *(sung)* **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: *(sung)* **Amen. Amen. Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Christian Worship 61

WELCOME!

If this is your first time worshipping with St. Mark's, we pray it will be the first of many times! If you have questions, please feel free to speak with Pastor Nitz or one of the members. Materials are available in the entry; take as much as you'd like.



IN OUR PRAYERS

Janet Bitzer (with health concerns)
Sally Carroll (with health concerns)
Kevin Peterson (with health concerns—cancer)
Milo Holderbecker (with health concerns)
The Ricci family
The Stinar family

ATTENDANCE LAST WEEK

Christmas Eve Children's Service: 148
Christmas Eve Candlelight: 111
Christmas Day: 75

YOUR GIFTS OF LOVE FOR JESUS

"Just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving." (2 Corinthians 8:7)

Contributions last week \$9,927
Contributions needed each week \$5,122
Contributions year to date \$262,568
Budget year to date \$253,100
Amount borrowed from savings to meet expenses \$0

SERVING THE LORD AND US

Organists: Jan Barckholtz, Julie Bengtson
Greeters: Jim & Marjorie G.
Ushers for December: J. Mathweg, R. Kuehn, L. Tasa, A. Tasa, B. Matzke, B. Boe
Church cleaning for 1/6: Ekhoﬀ*, Vandermeer, Herman, Pfeiffer

WELS
Marriage Retreat

March 9-11, 2018

Cragun's Resort on Gull Lake
11000 Craguns Dr., Brainerd, MN 56401

Hosted by:

St. Paul's, Litchfield & Immanuel, Willmar
Pastor Panning and Pastor Engel



Email questions to welsmarriageretreat@gmail.com
or call 320-444-7641

Link for making reservations:

https://craguns.formstack.com/forms/wels_march_2018

Deadline for signing up is January 31, 2018.



Announcements

ALTAR GUILD

We are looking for women who would like to serve on the Altar Guild in 2018. If you have never served on the Altar Guild before, don't be shy, sign up with someone who has done it before and they will show you what needs to be done. Please sign up in the narthex.

A MESSAGE FROM THE ELDERS ABOUT THE COMMUNION RAIL

The Elders have been discussing the recent changes of how communion is being distributed at St Mark's. Currently the communion rail has been removed due to a temporary need for room up front for the Children's Christmas Service. It will be reinstalled after the last Sunday of December. The Elders want to take this opportunity to continue giving the bread and wine to communicants while they stand. Pastor will be assisted by two congregational leaders when available. There will be a pause between the distribution of the bread and wine. We will be surveying the communicants in early January for their preferences to help us in our consideration for how we distribute communion in the future. We understand there will be different opinions. Taking the Lord's Supper should be done in a way that one has time to acknowledge and examine one's sins and appreciate the forgiveness God gives us in the Supper before coming to the table. A way to prepare for the Lord's Supper is found in the front of the hymnal on page 156. Your comments are welcome anytime. 2018 Elders are Ken Grob, Darold Krenz, Doug Kranich, and Lou Tasa.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Christian Worship: Service of Word and Sacrament. Contributors: Eggert / Moldenhauer / Schack. © 1993 Northwestern Publishing House. All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-720004.

Announcements

TODAY

There will be NO Bible Class or Sunday School today.

NO NEW YEAR'S EVE WORSHIP

This year we will not have a New Year's Eve Worship service in the evening on December 31st as we have done in the past. We will resume the New Year's Eve service next year. May the Lord richly bless your New Year in Him and His grace!

CONGREGATIONAL LEADERS INSTALLATION

Next Sunday, January 7th, we will have the installation of our Church Council and Boards during the Late Service. If you are on the 2018 Church Council, Board of Elders, Stewardship Board, or Board of Education, please plan on coming to the Late Service next Sunday.

BIBLE CLASS

Starting next Sunday, January 7th, we will be commencing a study during the Adult Bible Study hour on Sunday mornings called "Joyful Generosity." Please plan on coming!

ONLINE CLASS

During the months of January and February Pastor will be taking an online class through Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary on the New Testament book of Hebrews. This will likely lead to an adult Bible class on Hebrews in the future where pastor can share the insights he will gain from the class.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP

Wednesday night fellowship will resume on January 10th. The meal will be served beginning at 5:30 p.m. Singing and Bible study for all ages will follow. Join us!

NEW BIBLE INSTRUCTION CLASS

Pastor will begin a new Bible Instruction Class on Tuesday evenings starting January 9th at 6 pm at St. Mark's. Interested in joining St. Mark's ministry? Come and find out what we believe and teach! A little rusty on your knowledge of God's Word? Come! Know of a friend who needs to hear about their Savior? Invite them and offer to come with them! Want to do some evangelism? Come and get to know some people interested in joining our congregation! What about my children? Child care can be provided at no cost!

FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY

St. Mark's will be hosting another Financial Peace University class. Financial Peace University is Dave Ramsey's step-by-step course that teaches you how to become debt free and in control of your personal finances. This 9-week course will meet on Tuesday evenings at 7 pm beginning January 9th. The cost of the class is \$109. If you are unsure about making the commitment because of the cost, you are welcome to attend the first class for free to see what it is all about. Please sign up in the narthex, and see Kyle Riess if you have any questions.

CAMP CROIX

Camp Croix 2018 Registration will open on January 1st, 2018. Don't miss this opportunity to brighten your child's summer. Children going into 4th - 9th grade are welcome to take part in this wonderful week of God's Word, swimming, sports, games, crafts, mission work, and more. Counselors and staff are also needed! We offer four weeks of summer camp - July 8-14, July 15-21, July 22-28, or July 29-Aug 4. For more information, and to register, go to www.campcroix.org.

THANK YOU!

Katie and I – and our kids – were again humbled and encouraged by all the various gifts from you this Christmas. It's an honor to serve you as pastor; your support of the work is amazing. And then to bless us with such generous gifts is heart-warming, and we appreciate it so much. We pray God's richest blessings upon each of you as we walk together with our Savior into 2018! - Pastor Nitz

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Dec 31 (Sun)... | 8:00 a.m. | Worship with Communion (NO Sunday School or Bible Class) |
| | 10:30 a.m. | Worship with Communion |
| Jan 1-2 (Mon-Tues)... | | NO SCHOOL |
| Jan 2 (Tues)... | 7:30 a.m. | Men's Bible Study @ Country Kitchen |
| Jan 3 (Wed)... | 4:00 p.m. | Confirmation class |
| Jan 4 (Thurs)... | 9:00 a.m. | Moms & Tots |
| | 6:00 p.m. | All board and committee meetings |
| | 7:45 p.m. | Council meeting |
| Jan 6 (Sat)... | 10:00 a.m. | Jesus Cares |
| Jan 7 (Sun)... | 8:00 a.m. | Worship with Communion |
| | 9:15 a.m. | Sunday School & Bible Class |
| | 10:30 a.m. | Worship with Communion (<i>Leaders installed</i>) |

*If you would like to have St. Mark's online calendar synced with your Google calendar, you can choose "Add a friend's calendar" and put in: stmarkbemidji@gmail.com.

CONTACT INFORMATION

| | | |
|--|----------------|--|
| St. Mark's church & school | 444-3939 | |
| Pastor Aaron Nitz | 766-0400 | pastor@stmarksbemidji.org |
| Principal Nathan Bitter | 759-0398 | principal@stmarksbemidji.org |
| Teacher Joy Holderbecker | (715) 308-5067 | joy@stmarksbemidji.org |
| Elder Bob Boe | 243-2888 | |
| Chairman Trevor Holderbecker | 766-7487 | tj@stmarksbemidji.org |
| Website Editor Phil Avery | 497-0223 | web@stmarksbemidji.org |
| Announcements (bulletin or newsletter) | | announce@stmarksbemidji.org |

St. Mark's Mission Statement

We, the members of St. Mark's, are a Christ-centered church family that will **glorify** God, **grow** in His Word, and **go** with it to all.
(1 Corinthians 10:31, 2 Peter 3:18, Matthew 28:18-20)