

St. John's Lutheran Church (LCMS)  
8948 N 1900 Ave Geneseo, IL 61254  
309-949-2516

April 25, 2021

St. Mark, Evangelist

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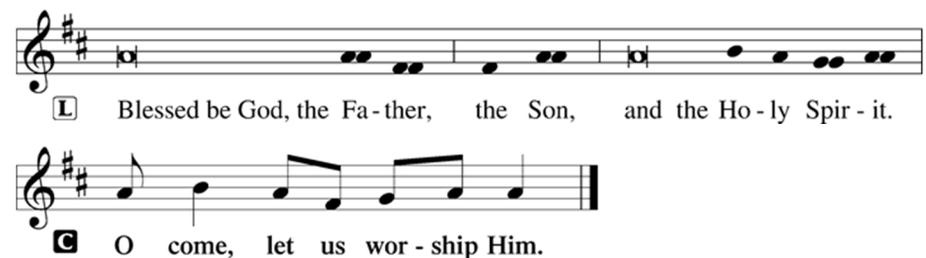
*The order of worship is based upon the Office of Matins, Lutheran Service Book p. 219.*

Stand



**L** O Lord, o - pen my lips,  
**C** and my mouth will de - clare Your praise.  
**L** Make haste, O God, to de - liv - er me;  
**C** make haste to help me, O Lord.  
**C** Glo - ry be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spir - it;  
as it was in the be - gin - ning, is now, and will be for - ev - er. A - men.  
Praise to You, O Christ. Al - le - lu - ia.

**Psalmody**



**L** Blessed be God, the Fa - ther, the Son, and the Ho - ly Spir - it.  
**C** O come, let us wor - ship Him.

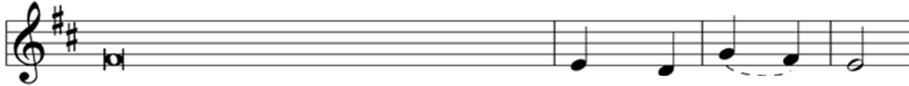


**THE FESTIVAL OF ST. MARK**

Venite



**C** 1 O come, let us sing . . . . . to the Lord,  
 2 For the Lord is a . . . . . great God  
 3 The sea is His, for He . . . . . made it,  
 5 Glory be to the Father and . . . . . to the Son



1 let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our sal - va - tion.  
 2 and a great . . . . . king a - bove all gods.  
 3 and His hand . . . . . formed the dry land.  
 5 and to the . . . . . Ho - ly Spir - it;



1 Let us come into His presence with thanks - giv - ing,  
 2 The deep places of the earth are . . . . . in His hand;  
 3 O come, let us worship and . . . . . bow down,  
 4 For He . . . . . is our God,  
 5 as it was in the be - gin - ning,



1 let us make a joyful noise to . . . . . Him with songs of praise.  
 2 the strength of the hills is . . . . . His al - so.  
 3 let us kneel before the . . . . . Lord, our mak - er.  
 4 and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.  
 5 is now, and will be for - ev - er. A - men.



**L** The Lord is risen in - deed. Al - le - lu - ia.



**C** O come, let us wor - ship Him.

Psalm 146

<sup>1</sup>Praise the LORD!  
 Praise the LORD, O my soul!

<sup>2</sup>I will praise the LORD as long as I live;  
 I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

<sup>3</sup>Put not your trust in princes,  
 in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.

<sup>4</sup>When his breath departs he returns to the earth;  
 on that very day his plans perish.

<sup>5</sup>Blessèd is he whose help is the God of Jacob,  
 whose hope is in the LORD his God,

<sup>6</sup>who made heaven and earth,  
 the sea, and all that is in them,  
 who keeps faith forever;

<sup>7</sup>who executes justice for the oppressed,  
 who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free; <sup>8</sup>the LORD opens the eyes of  
 the blind. The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;  
 the LORD loves the righteous.

<sup>9</sup>The LORD watches over the sojourners;  
 he upholds the widow and the fatherless,  
 but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD will reign forever,  
 your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the LORD!

Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
 and to the Holy Spirit;  
 as it was in the beginning,  
 is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Office Hymn: 836 O God of Light



1 O God of light, Your Word, a lamp un - fail - ing,  
 2 From days of old, through blind and will - ful a - ges,  
 3 Un - dimmed by time, those words are still re - veal - ing  
 4 To all the world Your sum - mons You are send - ing,



Shall pierce the dark - ness of our earth - bound way  
 Though we re - belled, You gent - ly sought a - gain  
 To sin - ful hearts Your jus - tice and Your grace;  
 Through all the earth, to ev - 'ry land and race,

And show Your grace, Your plan for us un - veil - ing,  
 And spoke through saints, a - pos - tles, proph - ets, sa - ges,  
 And quest - ing spir - its, long - ing for Your heal - ing,  
 That myr - iad tongues, in one great an - them blend - ing,

And guide our foot - steps to the per - fect day.  
 Who wrote with ea - ger or re - luc - tant pen.  
 See Your com - pas - sion in the Sav - ior's face.  
 May praise and cel - e - brate Your gift of grace.

## Readings

### Old Testament Reading

*Isaiah 52:7-10*

<sup>7</sup>How beautiful upon the mountains  
 are the feet of him who brings good news,  
 who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,  
 who publishes salvation,  
 who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”  
<sup>8</sup>The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice;  
 together they sing for joy;  
 for eye to eye they see  
 the return of the Lord to Zion.  
<sup>9</sup>Break forth together into singing,  
 you waste places of Jerusalem,  
 for the Lord has comforted his people;  
 he has redeemed Jerusalem.  
<sup>10</sup>The Lord has bared his holy arm  
 before the eyes of all the nations,  
 and all the ends of the earth shall see  
 the salvation of our God.

**P** O Lord, have mercy on us.  
**G** Thanks be to God.

### Epistle

*2 Timothy 4:5-18*

<sup>5</sup>As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work  
 of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.  
<sup>6</sup>For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time  
 of my departure has come. <sup>7</sup>I have fought the good fight, I have finished  
 the race, I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup>Henceforth there is laid up for me the  
 crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award  
 to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his  
 appearing.

<sup>9</sup>Do your best to come to me soon. <sup>10</sup>For Demas, in love with this pre-  
 sent world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone  
 to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. <sup>11</sup>Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and  
 bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. <sup>12</sup>Tychicus I  
 have sent to Ephesus. <sup>13</sup>When you come, bring the cloak that I left with  
 Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments. <sup>14</sup>Alexan-  
 der the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him accord-  
 ing to his deeds. <sup>15</sup>Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our  
 message. <sup>16</sup>At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all des-  
 erted me. May it not be charged against them! <sup>17</sup>But the Lord stood by  
 me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully  
 proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the  
 lion’s mouth. <sup>18</sup>The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring  
 me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and  
 ever. Amen.

**P** O Lord, have mercy on us.  
**G** Thanks be to God.

*Stand*

### Holy Gospel

*Mark 16:14-20*

<sup>14</sup>Afterward [Jesus] appeared to the eleven themselves as they were  
 reclining at table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of  
 heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen.  
<sup>15</sup>And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel  
 to the whole creation. <sup>16</sup>Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved,  
 but whoever does not believe will be condemned. <sup>17</sup>And these signs will  
 accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons;  
 they will speak in new tongues; <sup>18</sup>they will pick up serpents with their  
 hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they  
 will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

<sup>19</sup>So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up  
 into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. <sup>20</sup>And they went out  
 and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and con-  
 firmed the message by accompanying signs.

**P** O Lord, have mercy on us.  
**G** Thanks be to God.

### Responsory (Easter)

**L** 1 Sing to the Lord and bless His name, proclaim His salvation from day to day.  
 2 Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that sleep.  
 3 Glory be to the  
 Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spir - it.

*Refrain*

Give to the Lord all glo - ry and strength, give Him the  
hon - or due His name. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

**Sermon**

**Canticle**

**Te Deum**

1 We praise You, O God; we acknowledge You to be the Lord.  
2 Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of . . . . . Sab - a - oth;  
3 The noble army of martyrs . . . . . praise You.

1 All the earth now worships You, the Fa-ther ev - er - last - ing.  
2 heaven and earth are full of the majes - ty of Your glo - ry.  
3 The holy Church throughout all the world does ac - knowl-edge You:

1 To You all angels cry aloud, the heavens and all the pow'rs there-in.  
2 The glorious company of the apostles . . . . . praise You.  
3 The Father of an infinite majesty; Your adorable, true, and on - ly Son;  
4 You are the king of glory, . . . . . O Christ;

1 To You cherubim and seraphim con - tin - ual - ly do cry:  
2 The goodly fellowship of the . . . . . proph - ets praise You.  
3 also the Holy . . . . . Ghost, the Com - fort - er.  
4 You are the everlasting Son . . . . . of the Fa - ther.

*Canticle continues on next page.*

5 When You took upon Yourself to de - liv - er man,  
6 You sit at the right . . . . . hand of God

5 You humbled Yourself to be born of a vir - gin.  
6 in the glory . . . . . of the Fa - ther.

5 When You had overcome the . . . . . sharpness of death,  
6 We believe that . . . . . You will come

5 You opened the kingdom of heaven to all be - liev - ers.  
6 to . . . . . be our judge.

7 We therefore pray You to help Your . . . . . ser - vants,  
8 O Lord, save Your people and bless Your . . . her - i - tage.  
9 Grant, O Lord, to keep us this day with - out sin.

7 whom You have redeem - ed with Your pre - cious blood.  
8 Govern them and lift . . . . . them up for - ev - er.  
9 O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy up - on us.

7 Make them to be numbered . . . . . with Your saints  
8 Day by day we . . . . . magni - fy You.  
9 O Lord, let Your mercy be upon us, as our trust is in You.

7 in glory . . . . . ev - er - last - ing.  
8 And we worship Your name for - ever and ev - er.  
9 O Lord, in You have I trusted; let me never be con - found - ed.

## Prayer

### Kyrie



**C** Lord, have mer-cy; Christ, have mer-cy; Lord, have mer-cy.

### Lord's Prayer

**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.

### Collects



**P** The Lord be with you.



**C** And with your spir - it.

### Collect of the Day

**P** Almighty God, You have enriched Your Church with the proclamation of the Gospel through the evangelist Mark. Grant that we may firmly believe these glad tidings and daily walk according to Your Word; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

### Prayer of the Church

**P** ...one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

### Collect for Grace

**P** O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, You have safely brought us to the beginning of this day. Defend us in the same with Your mighty power and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger, but that all our doings, being ordered by Your governance, may be righteous in Your sight; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

### Benedicamus



**L** Let us bless the Lord.



**C** Thanks be to God.

### Benediction



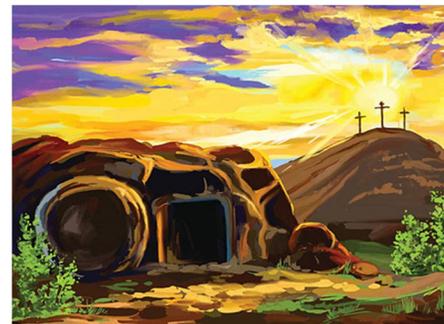
**P** The grace of our Lord Je - sus Christ and the love of God



and the communion of the Holy Spir - it be with you all.



**C** A - men.



## Closing Hymn: 478 The Day of Resurrection



1 The day of res - ur - rec - tion! Earth, tell it out a - broad,  
2 Let hearts be purged of e - vil That we may see a - right  
3 Now let the heav'ns be joy - ful, Let earth its song be - gin,  
△ 4 All praise to God the Fa - ther, All praise to God the Son,



The pass - o - ver of glad - ness, The pass - o - ver of God.  
The Lord in rays e - ter - nal Of res - ur - rec - tion light  
Let all the world keep tri - umph And all that is there - in.  
All praise to God the Spir - it, E - ter - nal Three in One!



From death to life e - ter - nal, From sin's do - min - ion free,  
And, lis - t'ning to His ac - cents, May hear, so calm and plain,  
Let all things, seen and un - seen, Their notes of glad - ness blend;  
Let all the ran - somed num - ber Fall down be - fore the throne



Our Christ has brought us o - ver With hymns of vic - to - ry.  
His own "All hail!" and, hear - ing, May raise the vic - tor strain.  
For Christ the Lord has ris - en, Our joy that has no end!  
And hon - or, pow'r, and glo - ry As - cribe to God a - lone!

### Acknowledgements

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## ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH-LCMS

churchoffice@stjohnsgeneseo.org

Website: www.stjohnsgeneseo.org

https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo

https://www.facebook.comSt.JohnGLY

### HEARING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

Rev. Timothy Nerud

Pastor

309-949-2516 (Office)

309-949-2517 (Home)

612-940-8138 (Cell)

### +In God's Grace—In God's Service+

Elder: Aaron Raschke

Videographer: Joel Werling

Ushers: Larry Hock, Larry Kane

Organist: John Neumann

Today's Readings: Old Testament: Isaiah 52:7-10

Epistle: 2 Timothy 4:5-18

Holy Gospel: Mark 16:14-20

**WE PRAY:** Gracious Lord, Shepherd of our lives and Guardian of our souls, who has set us all to shepherding each other, give us time, determination and opportunity to share with others the kind of love and care that You constantly give to us; who with the Father and the Holy Spirit are one God with dominion over us forever. Amen.

### WELCOME TO ALL!

We are anxious to share with you the Christ-centered ministry at St. John's. Our Liturgy follows closely the pattern of Word and Lord's Supper handed down from the ancient Church. It is our hope that you will make the Church's life of prayer your own. If you have difficulty following our order of service, please ask someone sitting near you for assistance. We pray that you will receive rich spiritual blessings from your presence here. May the peace and power of our risen Christ be yours always.

**IF YOU DESIRE** a visit or call from Pastor Nerud, please contact the church office (309-949-2516).

### OFFICE HOURS

Terri's hours (Monday—Friday) 8 am—12 pm

Pastor's hours (Monday, Pastor's day off)

(Tuesday) 9 am—12 pm

(Thursday) 9 am—12 pm & 1 pm—4 pm

(Wednesday & Friday) please call ahead.

**LIVE STREAMED SERVICES** are available on St. John's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo/> and posted on Monday on the church website: [www.stjohnsgeneseo.org](http://www.stjohnsgeneseo.org) found under the 'Sermon' tab and

### ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY

Sunday school—13 Adult Bible Class—15 Worship—60

### OFFERING

Offering last week	\$2,245.75
Weekly Budget needed	\$3,967.56

### THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

Today	8:45 am	SS/Adult w/Youth Bible Study
	10:00 am	Divine Worship
	11:00 am	Quarterly Voters' Assembly
Tuesday	6:30 pm	SS Teachers' meeting
Wednesday	5:00 pm	Confirmation
Next Sunday	8:45 am	SS/Adult w/Youth Bible Study
	10:00 am	Divine Worship/Communion

*One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and seek him in his temple.*  
*Psalm 27:4*

**JOHN 10:14** – “**I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.**” What does it mean to know the Lord? It starts with being known by the Lord. He claims us as His own and calls us by name. Then, once we are His, we learn to know Him. In knowing Him, we learn to imitate Him. That is how the Christian life of good works and generosity grows from the Lord's grace.

**PLEASE CHECK** the attendance sheet for you and your family members, marking each one attending the worship service. Thank you for your help.

**SPECIAL OFFERING**—You still have the opportunity to give toward “Here I Stand”. Offering plate is in the Narthex for your donations to Synod. Today is the last day to give.

**QUARTERLY VOTERS' ASSEMBLY** will be held directly after the worship service this morning. Please stay and participate in the workings of St. John's.

**CALL DAY SERVICES** at Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne is Monday, April 26, 2021 at 7 pm EDT and will be streamed online through Facebook and the seminary's Daily Chapel page. Andrew Hill, our adopted student, will be assigned his vicarage.

**LWML INGATHERING**—The congregation is invited to help LWML gather items for 'Personal Care Kits' which will be sent to Lutheran World Relief. Items can be brought to the church anytime during the month of May. A box will be available for your donations. Items we are collecting: light-weight bath-size towels (between 20"x40" & 52"x27") dark colors recommended, 2 or 3

bath size bars of soap in original wrapping, adult-size toothbrush in original wrapper, sturdy comb, and nail clippers. Your help is greatly appreciated. Monetary gifts are also acceptable and will be used to purchase item.

**ALTAR FLOWERS**—Please consider providing flowers for a worship service. Simply sign the flower chart found on the bulletin board next to the rest rooms. Use the yellow envelopes on the chart for your \$20 donation. Write the date for flowers and special event/memory and place in offering plate. The rest is done for you. We many available Sundays.

*Minutes of the April council meeting are available by the mailboxes.*

**CENTRAL ILLINOIS District Scholarship Sunday is May 2<sup>nd</sup>**. Gifts will be used to support our CID students who are attending an LCMS seminary or university to become a pastor, teacher or other called church worker. Please plan to make a generous gift now or on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Gifts may be designated “CID Scholarship Fund” to be used for the 2021-2022 school year or be designated “CID Scholarship Endowment Fund” to provide gifts every year for this ongoing need. Checks may be given through your church or sent to the Central Illinois District -LCMS, 1850 N. Grand Avenue West, Springfield, IL 62702-1626. Since the need for called workers is so great, we also ask you to encourage those who are qualified to serve to consider pursuing a called church-worker vocation.

If you are considering a major gift, or would like to include scholarships for CID seminarians or church worker students in your estate planning or through a life insurance policy or IRA, please contact CID Planned Gift Counselor, Rev. Charles Olander, at (217) 416-8842 or [c-olander@msn.com](mailto:c-olander@msn.com) for assistance. Thank you.

### PRAYER MINISTRY

*Remember how God works to strengthen the faith of His people as you pray:*  
**MISSION**—*Pray for all members of the military who were disabled during their duty, that our heavenly Father would mercifully guide, aid and strengthen all those with physical disabilities, enabling them to find fulfillment in their lives and encouragement for all their endeavors.*

**ST. JOHN'S—Mr. & Mrs. John Wickwire**—We offer before You our common request for the well-being of Your church throughout the world that it may be so guided and governed by Your good Spirit that all who profess themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth and hold the faith in unity of spirit in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Specifically, we pray for John and Nancy ask your blessing on them.

**ST. JOHN'S FAMILY**—O Lord, You are the great Physician of soul and body. We pray that You would show mercy to Your servants:

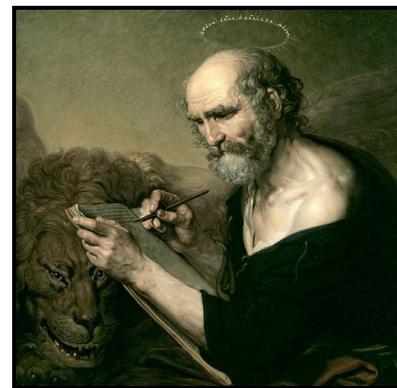
<b>Drew Schillinger</b>	<b>Jim Rahn</b>	<b>Carolyn Wildermuth</b>
<b>Arlyn Helke</b>	<b>Lois Esterlein</b>	<b>Lynne Johnson</b>
<b>Derek Helke</b>	<b>Lillian Hock</b>	<b>Jim Dahl</b>
<b>Carolyn Werner</b>	<b>Betty Firch</b>	<b>John Erdman</b>

**Paula Chapa**                      **Linda Aper**                      **Karna Hollatz**  
**Andrew Hill, Sarah, John, Daniel** (2019/2020 Seminary Student)  
**Don Eggers** (son of a friend of Marilyn Woods)  
**Mike Miller** (friend of Bob & Sherry Wechsler)  
**Jodi Martins** (daughter of Gary & Darla Johns)  
**Jon & Anita Clausing** (missionaries in Kenya)  
**Marilyn Potts** (wife of Cal Potts, former St John Laborer For Christ)  
**Pam Bennett** (friend of Dan/Roselyn Maeltzer)  
**Karen Wright** (wife of Pastor Gary Wright)  
**Virginia Miller** (mother of Jamie Werling)  
**Kelly Wechsler** (cousin of Bob Wechsler)  
**Kathleen VanDeRostyne** (friend of Bob & Sherry Wechsler)  
**Joseph Baamonde** (Friend of Paula Mooney)  
**Clinton Kane Family** (son of Sandy Kane)  
**Jim Neumann** (father-in-law of Brad Gehn's son)  
**Harley Hepner** (cousin of Sarah Hock)  
**Delores Gonion** (mother of Michele Barry)  
**Glenn McAdam** (friend of Bob & Sherry Wechsler)  
**Justin Fowler** ( son of Kathy & Kurt Gehn)  
**Lonnie Anderson** (employee of Brad Gehn)  
**Laurie Sanford** (sister of Jan Dahl)

**MILITARY**—We pray for those serving in our military and their families:  
**Mandy & Richard Davila** (daughter & son-in-law of Dale & Linda Aper)  
**Luke & Nicole Thompson** (son & daughter-in-law of John & Kindra Thompson)  
**Ken Willeford** (husband of Alicia Willeford)  
**Karl Flynn** (son of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Flynn)  
**Zachary & Tiffany Gardner** (nephew & wife of Bob & Lois Esterlein)  
**Casey Powers Jr.** (step son of Lisa Powers)

### LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

“Death is the one thing no Christian has to do on his or her own. Jesus has already been through suffering and death before us. He knows the way through death and the way back to life, too. Our friends and family cannot go with us—but Jesus can. He will never let go of our hands. And He will bring us back to life with Him because He has promised, and He will never lie.” *Dr. Kari Vo, Lutheran Hour Ministries – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutherans-forlife.org*



Mark was an Evangelist—one of the four men who wrote the Gospels found in the New Testament. He was not one of the original Apostles, but was a member of the first Christian community.

Mark, also known as John (Acts 12:12), was a cousin to Barnabas (Colossian 4:10) He set out with St. Paul and Barnabas on their First Missionary Journey to spread the Good News about Jesus, but he departed fairly early on. This led to a rift between Paul and Barnabas and John. Later, however, during his first imprisonment in Rome, Paul mentions Mark working with him again (Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24). During his second Roman imprisonment, which led to his martyrdom, Paul specifically requests for Mark to come, mentioning how helpful he is in Paul's ministry (2 Timothy 4:11).

While in Rome to see Paul, Mark and Peter would have been reunited as well. In his writings, St. Peter refers to Mark as his “son.” Peter may have used this term to show his love for Mark, or he may have used it because he was the one who brought Mark to faith and baptized him. Peter was then the primary source for Mark's Gospel of which he approved.

After the deaths of Peter and Paul in Rome under Emperor Nero, Mark came to Egypt and founded a church there, becoming bishop of Alexandria, an important center of trade and power during ancient times. He died there sometime between the years 68-74 AD as a martyr for his belief in Jesus.

Mark's Gospel is a lasting treasure for all believers. He wrote his Gospel to help people know that Jesus was the Son of God who suffered and died to save us from sin and death. When we read Mark's Gospel, we learn that to be a follower of Jesus, we, too, must be willing to make sacrifices, to “take up our cross and follow” (Mark 8:34) Jesus as he asks us to do.

The symbol for Mark is a lion with wings. That is because Mark's Gospel highlights Jesus' power and activity, emphasizing the strong deeds of “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” (Revelation 5:5). As lions are the kings of the jungle, Mark's Gospel tells us about Jesus' royalty as God's Son, a kingship we share in through our Baptism. As we celebrate Saint Mark's feast day, his Gospel and Christian example remind us to share the Good News about Jesus with others.

St. Mark, Evangelist

April 25, 2021

Texts: Isaiah 52:7-10 (Old Testament); 2 Timothy 4:5-18 (Epistle); Mark 16:14-20 (Gospel)

### **“St. Mark, Evangelist and Example”**

Grace, mercy, and peace, be yours from God our Father through faith in Jesus, our risen Lord.

Today on the church calendar we celebrate St. Mark, Evangelist. The name is well known to us by the Gospel he has written, which is why he is called an “Evangelist,” for he wrote an *Evangel*, a Gospel. But beyond the fact that he wrote the second Gospel in our Bible, what else can we say about him?

To begin, Mark was a Jew.<sup>i</sup> In fact, while he has come to be known by the name Mark, a Roman name, to the Church, he was also called John, which would have been his given Jewish name.<sup>ii</sup> His mother was named Mary, and he lived in her house in Jerusalem. Interestingly, it is in connection with this house that Mark is mentioned by name for the first time in the Bible, as it was to Mary’s house that the Apostle Peter came after the angel freed him from prison, the very house where the servant girl Rhoda, overwhelmed with joy at hearing Peter’s voice, left him at the gate and no one would believe her that he was actually there at first!<sup>iii</sup>

Curiously, a little later tradition claimed that this house was actually the house with the upper room in which Jesus celebrated His final Passover with the apostles and instituted the Lord’s Supper.<sup>iv</sup> While this is uncertain, it would explain that otherwise strange addition that is found only in Mark’s Gospel, about a young man wearing only a linen cloth who followed Jesus and the apostles out to Gethsemane and who, after Jesus was arrested, was almost seized as well but slipped out of his cloth and fled naked.<sup>v</sup> In other words, that young man might well have been Mark himself who, living in the home where the Last Supper was celebrated, snuck out quietly to follow this Teacher and His disciples whom everyone was speaking about.

Mark becomes a more important figure a little later on. Around 43 AD a great famine hit Judea and the disciples in Antioch sent Barnabas and Saul (Paul) to Jerusalem with their relief gifts.<sup>vi</sup> After they returned to Antioch, bringing Mark with them, for he was Barnabas’ cousin, the Lord separates for Himself Barnabas and Saul to go forth on what we now refer to as the First Missionary Journey and they take Mark along with them as an assistant.<sup>vii</sup> But we soon find a sad example of that Biblical truth that Christians remain sinners in this life.

Upon arriving at the city of Perga in Pamphylia, Mark left and returned to Jerusalem.<sup>viii</sup> The Bible does not say why he left, but it becomes clear that Paul did not think it was a valid reason. For after their returning to Antioch and preparing for the Second Missionary Journey about three years later, Barnabas wanted to bring Mark along but Paul did not think it wise since Mark had withdrawn from them and did not do the work he was taken along to do. This disagreement became so sharp, that Barnabas and Paul separated, going their own ways, with Barnabas taking Mark with him back to Cyprus while Paul and Silas went to Syria and Cilicia.<sup>ix</sup>

After this point, no further mention is made of Mark in the book of Acts as it primarily focuses on Paul's journeys. If that was the last thing said, it would be tragic indeed. Yet, about ten years later, around 59 AD, during his first Roman imprisonment, Paul writes to the Colossian Christians and to Philemon that Mark is with him, referring to Mark as both a fellow worker for the kingdom of God as well as a great comfort to him.<sup>x</sup> And again, another 8 years later in 67 AD, during his second Roman imprisonment with his martyrdom approaching, Paul writes to Timothy what we heard in today's Epistle, that Timothy should bring Mark with him to Rome saying of Mark, "he is very useful to me for ministry."<sup>xi</sup>

What else can we say of Mark? We know that he was with Peter in Rome at the time he wrote 1 Peter, and in that letter Peter greets the churches in Asia Minor from Mark, indicating that they knew him.<sup>xii</sup> Therefore, perhaps traveling with Barnabas, he did travel to the very places that he failed to do earlier on. In addition, Peter calls Mark his son, certainly a term of affection, but this may also point to Peter being the one through whom Mark came to faith, thus his spiritual son. This makes sense again when we remember what we heard early on, that Mark's mom was a believer, that Christians met there, Peter was well-known to them, and Mark probably heard him preach and teach numerous times.

Mark's connection to Peter was shown to be close when we recognize that the Holy Spirit used Peter as a primary source for his Gospel. While sources conflict as to whether Peter was still alive when Mark wrote his Gospel, or if it was soon after his martyrdom, early tradition is clear that Mark was a faithful interpreter of Peter, recording his preaching and teaching in an organized fashion, that is, in *The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark*.

Finally, we ask what happened to Mark? Sometime during his journeys, whether with Barnabas, others, or on his own, Mark went to Egypt and was instrumental in the Church's beginning or at least early years in the great city of Alexandria. After placing Anianus as bishop in Alexandria, Mark left. After the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul in Rome, something which Mark was likely around to observe, he then headed back to Alexandria. After ministering again for a time, Mark was then arrested, tied to horses, and dragged through the streets until he died. And so the color today is red, because he who once deserted Paul and Barnabas proved that, in the end, he would not desert his Savior, making the ultimate confession, giving the greatest witness, dying for his faith in Christ Jesus, his God, Lord, and Savior.

Some might wonder why we would commemorate a day like today and put so much focus on "mere" history. First of all, it is good to remember that there is no such thing as "mere" history. Time is God's creation, history being under His providential rule. More, it reminds us that our faith is not based upon "once upon a time in a faraway land" nonsense, as such is no base at all! There is no mythology here, but real people in real time. Even more, these people are *our* people, our brothers and sisters in Christ, a part of the body of Christ, members of the same one holy Christian and apostolic Church of which we too are members, the only difference being they are now in the Church Triumphant, we remain in the Church Militant. Truly, the lack of interest in the Church's history that so many modern Christians have is no virtue, but instead speaks rather poorly about our attitude towards the Holy Bride of Christ of which they are a part!

But there is still more that we can learn from the lives of the saints in general, and Mark in particular. First, they give us an example of God's mercy to sinners like us which lead us to break forth in thanksgiving to our gracious God. For when we hear of Mark's failure on the First Missionary Journey and the rift that such caused, we cannot help but recognize our own shortcomings to be faithful witnesses for the Lord, our own failures to be willing to carry the cross, our own letting others down, especially those in the fellowship of believers. Mark's running back home is a picture of our putting our own earthly families higher than our Christian family, to the detriment of all. And as Mark felt the weight of his guilt, so too do we feel the weight of our own guilt, or at least we should. For such is a sign of the Spirit's working through the Law, our conscience rightly showing our sins. If such is not happening, either we are in have no sins to trouble us, thus being in heaven, or we are Pharisees and so in terrible trouble indeed.

Recognizing our failures as Christians, our poor witnessing, our attempts to avoid suffering for Christ, we may wonder, "Can a sinner like me be forgiven?" And then the example of Mark is put before us. No longer the example of a sinful failure, but of a repentant sinner fully forgiven, a man reconciled to the one whom he had let down, a man restored fully to salvation and to faithful, fruitful service unto the Lord and His Church until called into his eternal home.

And so his example of grace and mercy to Mark brings forth great praise and thanksgiving from us, for that same grace and mercy of the Father in Christ Jesus is ours as well! Thereby our faith is made strong, for the same forgiveness which Mark received is ours as well in Christ crucified and risen. The same hope of reconciliation with others that Mark and Paul found can be ours as well through the working of the Holy Spirit. The same useful service in this life and heavenly glory in the next which was Mark's becomes is ours as well, for we too are children of the heavenly Father through faith in Christ by the working of the Spirit.

So let be more faithful and fruitful by imitating Mark's example. His example of repentance over failures, and faith in the forgiveness of his sins, a faithfulness that overcame horrific death and so saved from even more horrific eternal death, leading to everlasting life in glory. Let us imitate Mark's example of taking mission work seriously, doing such by faithfully supporting the ministry of the church, missionaries far and near, and being faithful witnesses of Christ Jesus in our words and life so that others may know Him by faith and so be saved!

Today especially we thank God for giving to His Church a faithful teacher and, most notably, an Evangelist whose Gospel still teaches the Church. A Gospel that is well-symbolized by the winged lion, for it is honest and bold, proclaiming the weakness of men and, even more, the mighty works of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, His miraculous power over disease, nature, and demons, His conquering of sin, death, and Satan by His suffering, cross, and resurrection, and His triumphant ascension to the right hand of God to rule all things as the omnipotent King.

All this mighty action done for us sinners and for our salvation, that we might be heirs of glory and rule with Jesus. The very truths Mark believed, preached, and wrote and we, by God's grace through His Word, including the Gospel of Mark, believe as well.

Thanks be to God, Amen!

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<sup>i</sup> Acts 12:12; Colossians 4:10-11.

<sup>ii</sup> Acts 12:12.

<sup>iii</sup> Acts 12:12-16.

<sup>iv</sup> See Mark 14:12-16 for Mark's account of this event.

<sup>v</sup> Mark 14:51-52.

<sup>vi</sup> Acts 11:19-30.

<sup>vii</sup> Acts 12:25; Colossians 4:10; Acts 13:5.

<sup>viii</sup> Acts 13:13.

<sup>ix</sup> Acts 15:36-41.

<sup>x</sup> Colossians 4:10-11, Philemon 24.

<sup>xi</sup> 2 Timothy 4:11. All quotes are from *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (ESV) unless otherwise noted.

<sup>xii</sup> 1 Peter 5:13.