



ST JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE WEEKLY UPDATE

Welcome to St. John Lutheran Church! **Today is the First Sunday of Advent.** We are delighted to have you worship with us. If you'd like to connect with us, share a prayer request, or learn more about St. John, please complete a yellow communication card located on the back of the pews and place it in the offering plate.

PRAYER REQUESTS

When we pray for each other, we demonstrate Christ's love for each of us

For **Peggy Smith and family**, as they mourn the loss of Lee Smith

For **Sue Mason**, in Pickerington Medical Center awaiting a heart catheterization on Monday

For **Logan Rutter**, grandson of Freda & Ed, having major eye issues

For **Charlotte Meyer**, as she is dealing with complications from kidney stones

For **Jerrie Ripley**, as she continues cardiac rehab

For **Brian Fowler**, as he slowly recovers from West Nile Virus

For **Jim Fogle**, having difficulty recovering from his hip surgery

For **Karma Wisecarver**, daughter of Lee & Peggy Smith, having a difficult time as she continues through her cancer journey

Continued prayers for **Jon & Linda Leist, Bill Meyer, Freda Rutter, Linda Miller, and Shirley & Larry West**

If you have a prayer request, please reach out to Sue Mason, who will email our church members. She can be reached at: 614-260-1107 or at susiemase3@hotmail.com.



Scripture for today, Nov 30:

Isaiah 2:1-5, Psalm 122,
Romans 13:11-14, Matthew 24:36-44

It is with an extremely heavy heart that we share that Lee Smith, a long time and treasured member of our church family, passed away last Sunday. We thank God for his life and the love that he shared with us. His warm, unforgettable laugh, along with the hugs he so freely gave to us, will certainly be missed. Please keep Peggy and the entire Smith family in your prayers, including their son Troy and daughters Karma and Kelly. May the comfort of the Lord surround them.

Dear Lord, we trust that Lee now rests in Your loving arms, where there is no more pain, no more sorrow, but everlasting joy. Help us to honor his memory by living with the same faith, kindness, and hope that Lee carried. May Your grace sustain us in this time of loss, and may Your light guide us forward. In Christ, death is not the end, but a doorway into everlasting life.

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS



Jim Fogle	December 2
Debbie Long	December 4
Ryan Rutter	December 9
Don Hornbeck	December 11



THE INSIDE STORY BY SALLY ACTON



Today's Hymn of the Day, "People Look East", was written by Eleanor Farjeon in 1928 and set to an old French folk tune. He wrote it as an Advent carol that uses the metaphor of preparing a home for a guest to represent preparing one's heart for the coming of Christ. The title and lyrics refer to the tradition of looking east, the direction of the rising sun and of the coming Messiah, to symbolize hope and new beginnings.

Amy's December office hours will be Wednesday, December 3 and 17, weather permitting, from 10-2.

A big **Thank You** to those that stayed after church last Sunday to help decorate for Christmas. The place does glow with joy and beauty as we prepare our church for the celebration of Christ's birth.

We will **NOT** be holding our **Bake Sale** at the Dec 13 Christmas event at Wagnalls this year.

We always welcome new singers to our choir! No requirement, just come and join the fun! We practice most every Wednesday from 3-4 pm here in the sanctuary.

Christmas Gospel Sing is December 13th @ 2pm here at St. John Lutheran Church. Some of the singers and groups are The St. John Choir, Ed Ewing, Arnold Coy, Cameron Spence, Rick Moore, and All4HIM.

Did you notice the apples on the Christmas tree in the front of the sanctuary?

The tradition of decorating Christmas trees with apples originates in medieval Europe, especially through the "Paradise Plays" performed on December 24—the feast of Adam and Eve. In these religious dramas, a central prop was the "Paradise Tree," an evergreen hung with red apples to represent the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden. Because evergreens retained their foliage in winter, they symbolized eternal life, while the apples symbolized the forbidden fruit. This pairing connected themes of the Fall of Man with the promise of redemption.



By the 15th to 17th centuries, the idea of a decorated evergreen moved from church plays into private homes, particularly in German-speaking regions. Early Christmas trees were adorned with apples, nuts, wafers, and sweets—simple, affordable items that carried symbolic meaning. Apples remained especially popular because they were visually striking and strongly tied to the Paradise Tree tradition.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, real apples gradually gave way to handcrafted glass ornaments, especially in the glassmaking centers of Thuringia, Germany. These ornaments preserved the look of apples while becoming more durable and decorative. Over time, this practice evolved into the modern tradition of using glass baubles and other ornaments on Christmas trees, with the apple as one of the earliest and most influential decorations.



LIGHTS, LIGHTS, CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Memories: Riding around in the car looking at Christmas lights is a traditional Christmas event for probably all of us. I remember our children, as excited preschoolers, saying "lights, lights, Christmas lights; lights, lights Christmas lights," as we came upon a street full of houses decorated for the season. Those were really sweet times for our family.

History of Christmas Lights: Martin Luther is credited with the idea of putting lights on a tree. As he walked home one evening, he was taken with the beauty of the stars seen through the evergreens, and he decided to replicate the sight by placing lighted candles on his evergreen Christmas tree. Three years after Thomas Edison invented the electric light bulb in 1879, his associate, Edward Johnson, put electric lights on a tree. Then, in 1895, President Grover Cleveland set up a lighted Christmas tree in the White House, and the general public began to notice. So began the tradition.

Bible Verses: In him was life, and that life was the light of men. John 1:4 When Jesus spoke to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12 You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men. That they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:14-16

The **Altar Flower** chart is in the Narthex where you may sign up to place flowers on the altar. Flowers are \$35. You may leave the money in the envelope under the chart for Linda Leist. Please be sure to indicate if the flowers are for a special occasion, and let Don Hornbeck know if you would like it posted in the Bulletin.

We all know times have been tough lately, and our local food pantry is seeing more families in need. If you are able, please place your food donation for the **Food Pantry** in the shopping cart. For the **Embassy of Winchester** nursing home, please place your donated items in the collection box located in the Narthex. Every contribution, no matter how small, makes a difference. Together we can help ensure no one goes hungry. Thank you !

2025 YTD Offerings Summary	
Offerings through:	11/23/2025
Budget (yearly)	56,750.00
Budget YTD	52,384.62
Offerings - Received	62,646.32
YTD Over(+)/Under(-)	10,261.70
(Includes prepaid offerings from a member's \$3k RMD)	

Thank you for your contributions
to pay-off our loan for
the new sanctuary ceiling

2025 Average Attendance Information	
Q1 = 33, Q2 = 36, Q3 = 35,	Oct = 33, Nov = 34

Worship Leader

11/30/2025 Amy Lytle, Synod Authorized Minister (SAM)
 12/3/2025 (Wed) Amy's Office Hours 10am - 2pm (weather permitting)
 12/7/2025 Amy Lytle, Synod Authorized Minister (SAM)
 12/17/2025 (Wed) Amy's Office Hours 10am - 2pm (weather permitting)

Happenings

Today First Sunday in ADVENT
 12/13/2025 (Sat) Gospel Sing at St John at 2pm
 12/14/2025 (Sun) **Congregational Meeting** immediately after church
 12/21/2025 (Sun) Council Meeting immediately after church

Opportunities to Serve

Contact Don Hornbeck with information for our weekly Sunday bulletins.

Sunday School & Bible Study

Adults - Sunday mornings 9am-10am upstairs in the Parish Hall
 Children - During the church service in the Parish Hall youth room (Jonette Christy)

Weekly Average Attendance by month for 2021 through 2025

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Avg
2021	0	15	22	34	29	26	30	28	29	30	30	20	24
2022	14	21	26	48	40	32	31	30	38	32	29	34	31
2023	24	31	29	35	38	33	33	30	35	26	29	29	31
2024	17	23	30	25	46	46	45	39	34	29	30	36	33
2025	36	28	37	38	35	36	33	37	31	33	34		34
Yr-Yr Chg	19	5	7	13	-11	-10	-12	-2	-3	4	-1		

Amy Lytle's email address: amyblytle@gmail.com
 Amy Lytle's cell phone: 614-208-3719
 Council President contacts: 614-286-6175 / alfisher@aol.com
 St John's website: www.stjlithopolis.com
 St John's email address: office.stjohnlithopolis@gmail.com
 St John's office phone: 614-837-2947 (voice mailbox)
 St John's mailing address: 133 West South Street, PO Box 206 / Lithopolis, Ohio 43136
 St John's facebook page: https://facebook.com/StJohnLithopolis

Bulletin: Sunday, November 30, 2025

First Sunday of Advent

ELW Holy Communion Setting Ten

GATHERING & ANNOUNCEMENTS PRELUDE & ANTHEM

WE LIGHT THE ADVENT WREATH

We praise you, O God, for this evergreen crown
that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent.
As we light the first candle on this wreath,
rouse us from sleep, that we may be ready to greet our Lord
when he comes with all the saints and angels.
Enlighten us with your grace,
and prepare our hearts to welcome him with joy.
Grant this through Christ our Lord,
whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.
Amen.

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah (ELW 240)

**Light one candle to watch for Messiah:
let the light banish darkness.
He shall bring salvation to Israel,
God fulfills the promise.**

GATHERING SONG *The King Shall Come (ELW 260)*

1 The King shall come when morning dawns
and light triumphant breaks,
when beauty gilds the eastern hills
and life to joy awakes.

2 Not as of old a little child,
to bear and fight and die,
but crowned with glory like the sun
that lights the morning sky.

3 Oh, brighter than the rising morn
when Christ, victorious, rose
and left the lonesome place of death,
despite the rage of foes.

4 Oh, brighter than that glorious morn
shall dawn upon our race
the day when Christ in splendor comes,
and we shall see his face.

5 The King shall come when morning dawns
and light and beauty brings.
Hail, Christ the Lord! Your people pray:
come quickly, King of kings.

GREETING

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

KYRIE (ELW p. 203)

**Have mercy on us, Lord, and hear our solemn prayer.
We come to hear your living word; it saves us from despair.
Have mercy on us, Christ, and wash away our sin.
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may
begin.
Have mercy on us, Lord, make sin and shame depart.
Renew us with your saving pow'r; create in us new hearts!**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection save us from the threatening dangers of our sins, and enlighten our walk in the way of your salvation, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 2:1-5

The visionary message presented in this reading focuses on a future day when God establishes a universal reign of peace. Divine decisions will make war obsolete, and the worshiping community responds: "Let us walk in the light of that Lord now!"

A reading from Isaiah.

¹ The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

² In days to come

the mountain of the LORD's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains
and shall be raised above the hills;
all the nations shall stream to it.

³ Many peoples shall come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths."

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

⁴ He shall judge between the nations
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
they shall beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation;
neither shall they learn war any more.

⁵ O house of Jacob,
come, let us walk
in the light of the LORD!

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 122

¹ I was glad when they said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the LORD.”
² **Now our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem.**
³ Jerusalem is built as a city
that is at unity with itself;
⁴ **to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD,
the assembly of Israel, to praise the name of the LORD.**
⁵ For there are the thrones of judgment,
the thrones of the house of David.
⁶ **Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
“May they prosper who love you.**
⁷ Peace be within your walls
and quietness within your towers.
⁸ **For the sake of my kindred and companions,
I pray for your prosperity.**
⁹ Because of the house of the LORD our God,
I will seek to do you good.”

SECOND READING: Romans 13:11-14

Paul compares the advent of Christ to the coming of dawn. We live our lives today in light of Christ's coming in the future.

A reading from Romans.

¹¹ Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is already the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers;

¹² the night is far gone; the day is near. Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³ let us walk decently as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in illicit sex and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy.

¹⁴ Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 205)

Alleluia! Lord and Savior: open now your saving word.

Let it burn like fire within us; speak until our hearts are stirred.

Alleluia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

GOSPEL: Matthew 24:36-44

Jesus describes his second coming as a sudden, turbulent event that will bring about deep change to our normal, day-to-day lives. Therefore, he urges people to stay awake, be aware, and wait expectantly, because the Son of Man will come unannounced.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples,] ³⁶ “About that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷ For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so, too, will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Then two will be in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken, and one will be left. ⁴² Keep awake, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

⁴³ But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into.

⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON: ARE WE READY?

HYMN OF THE DAY *People, Look East* (ELW 248)

1 People, look east. The time is near
of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east, and sing today--
Love, the Guest, is on the way.

2 Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
one more seed is planted there.
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
that in course the flow'r may flourish.
People, look east, and sing today--
Love, the Rose, is on the way.

3 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim,
one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather,
bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east, and sing today--
Love, the Star, is on the way.

4 Angels announce with shouts of mirth
him who brings new life to earth.
Set ev'ry peak and valley humming
with the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east, and sing today--
Love, the Lord, is on the way.

WE PROFESS OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH

Let us confess our faith using the words of the Apostles' Creed.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Minister: In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

Reader 1: God of the people, we come seeking wisdom and instruction. Uphold and strengthen lay leaders, teachers, deacons, pastors, and bishops. Teach us your ways and lead us in your paths. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Reader 2: God of the earth, we seek your goodness in the grandeur of creation. Empower us to care for forests and oceans, as we see you in the world around us. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Reader 3: God of the nations, grant wisdom to leaders, judges, and mediators. Cast out words of hate and transform them into words for building up community. Remake implements of war to sow peace. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Minister: God of healing, bring comfort and strength. We pray for our kindred and companions who are ill or despairing. We pray especially for all those who are mourning the loss of our dear brother in Christ, Lee Smith. Lord God, you are our comfort and our hope. We know you are with us in our grief. Send your spirit of comfort as we trust in your promise of resurrection and eternal life. Surround Peggy, Lee's family, and all those we lift to you in prayer with care and consolation. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Reader 4: God of new possibilities, when addiction wounds, jealousy tears down, and relationships fray, show us how to journey with one another. Nurture therapists, counselors, and sponsors in their care for others. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Reader 5: God of all time, build up our lives that we would reflect your grace. At the last, bring us with all the saints to your holy city where peace and goodness make a home. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Minister: Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.
Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

WE PREPARE FOR COMMUNION

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

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 Christ.
You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,

through whom you will also make all things new
in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW p. 207)

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heav'n 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, hosanna in the highest.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION (ELW p. 108)

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,

the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread,
and 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

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

**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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION SONG (ELW p. 208)

**O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;
you suffered death our lives to save: have mercy now, we
pray.**

**O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mercy now, we
pray.**

**O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;
eternal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we
pray.**

SONG AFTER COMMUNION *Let Us Break Bread Together* (ELW 471)

1 Let us break bread together on our knees; let us break bread together on our knees.

When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun, O Lord, have mercy on me.

2 Let us drink wine together on our knees; let us drink wine together on our knees.

When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun, O Lord, have mercy on me.

3 Let us praise God together on our knees; let us praise God together on our knees.

When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun, O Lord, have mercy on me.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

God for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

May the Lord look upon you with favor and ✝ give you peace.

Amen.

SENDING SONG *Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers* (ELW 244)

1 Rejoice, rejoice, believers, and let your lights appear;
the evening is advancing, and darker night is near.
The bridegroom is arising and soon is drawing nigh.
Up, pray and watch and wrestle; at midnight comes the cry.

2 The watchers on the mountain proclaim the bridegroom near;
go forth as he approaches with alleluias clear.
The marriage feast is waiting; the gates wide open stand.
Arise, O heirs of glory; the bridegroom is at hand.

3 The saints, who here in patience their cross and suff'rings bore,
shall live and reign forever when sorrow is no more.
Around the throne of glory the Lamb they shall behold;
in triumph cast before him their diadems of gold.

4 Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear;
arise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this benighted sphere.
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see
the day of earth's redemption that sets your people free!

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the Good News.

Thanks be to God.

CONGREGATION JOINS IN SINGING:

**God be with you 'til we meet again,
By his counsel's guide, uphold you,
With his sheep securely fold you,
God be with you 'til we meet again.
Amen.**

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