



ST JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE WEEKLY UPDATE

2025

Welcome to St. John Lutheran Church! **Today is the First Sunday of Christmas.** 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 **Pastor Tim Keeler**, brother-in-law of Neva Hornbeck, who has completed a new CAR-T infusion procedure, recovering at home

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

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

Continued prayers for **Jim Fogle, 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, Dec 28:

Genesis 1:1-5,14-18, Micah 5:2-5a,
Luke 1:26-35,38, Matthew 1:18-25,
Luke 2:8-20, Matthew 2:1-11,
John 1:1-14

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.



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS



Guy O'Neil	December 31
Alan Fisher	January 13
Neva Hornbeck	January 15
Judy Kellett	January 26

Guys & Gals Lunch Bunch will dine at the Olive Garden in Lancaster on **Tuesday, January 13, 2026, 2093 Schorrway Dr NW, Lancaster.** Please RSVP to Charlotte Meyer, if possible.





THE INSIDE STORY BY SALLY ACTON



The Christmas Carol, “**Angels We Have Heard on High**” originates from a French carol from the 18th century. It tells the biblical story of angels announcing Jesus’ birth to the shepherds. The carol describes the heavenly chorus, the shepherds’ joyful discovery, and their spreading of the good news, leading to a universal praise of the newborn King. Legend says French shepherds would sing “Gloria in excelsis Deo” across the hills to each other on Christmas Eve, a practice mirroring the angelic announcement.

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.



2025 YTD Offerings Summary	
Offerings through:	12/21/2025
Budget (yearly)	56,750.00
Budget YTD	56,750.00
Offerings - Received	67,279.17
YTD Over(+)/Under(-)	10,529.17

(Includes prepaid offerings from a member's \$3k RMD)

2025 Average Attendance Information
Q1= 33, Q2= 36, Q3= 35, Oct= 33, Nov= 31, Dec= 39

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

Worship Leader

Today Amy Lytle, Synod Authorized Minister (SAM)

Happenings

Today CANCELED - Council Meeting right after Church - CANCELED
 12/29/2025 (Mon) Choir Christmas Party at Rutter's Home @ 2pm
 Christmas Eve Attendance Wednesday's attendance was 70, last year is was 73 !! - Thank You

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	31	39	34
Yr-Yr Chg	19	5	7	13	-11	-10	-12	-2	-3	4	1	3	

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

DECEMBER 28, 2025

1ST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

A SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING SONG *Joy to the World* (ELW 267)

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king; let ev'ry heart prepare him room
And heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

2 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.

3 No more let sin and sorrow 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.

4 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.

DIALOGUE

Jesus, the bright Morning Star, shines light in the world.
By day and night he shines for all to see.

Jesus was born in the midst of injustice and poverty
that the world may see the justice and richness of God.

God so loved the world that God sent Jesus,
so that all who believe in him may not perish but have eternal life.

Jesus is the light of the world.
Jesus is the light of our lives.

Sing to God a new song!
A song of hope, joy, and peace around the world.

Let us pray together:

**Gracious God of heaven and earth,
you have thrown a lifeline to us in our darkness—
a beam of light that shines through Jesus.
Though born in a manger, he is the firstborn of all creation.
Though crucified on a cross, he is the Lord of life.
Fill us with the wonder and joy of his presence in the world
and in our hearts.
Amen.**

WE SHARE THE PEACE

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Let us share the peace with one another.

FIRST READING: Genesis 1:1-5, 14-18

A reading from Genesis:

¹ When God began to create the heavens and the earth, ² the earth was complete chaos, and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³ Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

¹⁴ And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶ God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷ God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

HYMN *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear* (ELW 282)

1 It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all,
From heav'n's all-gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

2 Still through the cloven skies they come
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heav'nly music floats o'er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hov'ring wing,
And ever o'er its babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

3 And you, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow:
Look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing;
Oh, rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing!

4 For lo! The days are hast'ning on, by prophets seen of old,
When with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold,
When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
And all the world give back the song which now the angels sing.

SECOND READING: Micah 5:2-5a

A reading from Micah:

² But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

⁴ And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of
the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth,
⁵ and he shall be the one of peace.

If the Assyrians come into our land
and tread upon our soil,
we will raise against them seven shepherds
and eight rulers.

HYMN *O Little Town of Bethlehem* (ELW 279)

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 thy dark streets 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!

THIRD READING: Luke 1:26-35, 38

A reading from Luke:

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was

Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁸ Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

HYMN *Angels We Have Heard On High* (ELW 269)

1 Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo; gloria in excelsis Deo.

2 Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heav'nly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo; gloria in excelsis Deo.

3 Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn king.
Gloria in excelsis Deo; gloria in excelsis Deo.

FOURTH READING: Matthew 1:18-25

A reading from Matthew:

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ “Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”
which means, “God is with us.” ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

HYMN *O Come All Ye Faithful* (ELW 283)

1 O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him, born the king of angels
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

2 The highest, most holy, light of light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;

Son of the Father now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

3 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God in the highest:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

FIFTH READING: Luke 2:8-20

A reading from Luke:

⁸ Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made

known to us.”¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger.¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child,¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them,¹⁹ and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

HYMN *The First Noel* (ELW 300)

1 The first Noel the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

2 They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east beyond them far;
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

3 And by the light of that same star
Three wise men came from country far;
To seek for a king was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

4 This star drew near to the northwest,
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
And there it did both stop and stay
Right over the place where Jesus lay.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

5 Then entered in those wise men three,
Full rev'rently upon their knee,
And offered there in his presence
Their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

SIXTH READING: Matthew 2:1-11

A reading from Matthew:

¹ In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, ² asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage.” ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶ ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah,
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.”

⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt

down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

HYMN *What Child is This?* (ELW 296)

1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

2 Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through,
The cross be borne for me, for you;
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!

3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
Come, peasant, king, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby;
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

SEVENTH READING: John 1:1-14

A reading from John:

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

HYMN *Away in a Manger* (ELW 277)

1 Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

2 The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care
And fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

RESPONSIVE PRAYER

It is you, loving God, who lights our path with truth.
Your Word, Jesus, is truth.

In his light, draw all to the manger
to gather in wonder with the shepherds.

In his light, draw all to the manger
to kneel in reverence with the wise ones.

In his light, draw all to the manger
to sing for joy with the angels.

In the brightness of his life
**cast away the darkness of injustice, poverty, and hunger in
the world.**

It is you, loving God, who meets us on our way.
**In the light of Jesus, show the world the way of life.
Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray together, using the words of the Lord's Prayer.

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.

BLESSING

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!
Praise God, all creatures here below!

You are the shepherds telling the story.
We tell it in the streets and across the land.

You are the wise ones worshiping with thanksgiving.
We worship with gifts of song and service, talents and treasures.

You are the angels announcing peace.
We live with joy and go now in peace.

May the Almighty God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.
Amen.

SENDING SONG *Good Christian Friends Rejoice* (ELW 288)

1 Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;
Ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

2 Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Now ye hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened heaven's door, and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

3 Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Now ye need not fear the grave; Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Go in peace, serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God!

Let us sing together:

**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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