



ST JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE WEEKLY UPDATE

2025

Welcome to St. John Lutheran Church! **Today is the Third 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 and prepare for his funeral today
For **Pastor Tim Keeler**, brother-in-law of Neva Hornbeck, who has been battling Multiple Myeloma for 16 years, had a mild heart attack following chemo treatments in preparation for a CAR-T infusion procedure
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 14:

Isaiah 35:1-10, Psalm 146:5-10,
James 5:7-10, Matthew 11:2-11

Visitation and Funeral Service for Lee Smith will be today, Sunday, December 14th, at the Dwayne Spence Funeral Home, 650 W. Waterloo St, Canal Winchester:
1-4 pm—Visitation
4 pm—Funeral

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

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS



| | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Don Hornbeck | December 11 |
| Steve Merritt | December 12 |
| Jonette Christy | December 19 |
| Alyssa Dillon | December 21 |
| Larry West | December 22 |

The altar flowers are given by Pam & Neil Jarvis in honor of our Lord, the Messiah.





THE INSIDE STORY BY SALLY ACTON



Today's Opening Hymn, "Hark, the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes", is an Advent hymn written by Philip Doddridge in 1735. This hymn focuses on Christ's mission to bring freedom, healing, and good news, bridging his first and second comings with joyous anticipation. He wrote it to emphasize the Gospel's power to free the oppressed and enrich the poor, ending with a welcoming hosanna.

Congregational meeting today immediately after church

Council meeting immediately after church on the 21st

Christmas eve service: music starts at 7, candlelight service at 7:30, on the 24th

Guys & Gals Lunch Bunch will dine next in January at the Olive Garden in Lancaster.

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.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

7:30 PM

MUSIC BEGINS

7:00 PM





SURVIVE OR THRIVE !

When I think about getting ready for Christmas, I have to admit that my first thoughts aren't of Advent and preparing the way for the Christ child. Unfortunately, I think about starting the LIST. You know the one. Scribbled out and rewritten, it seems to miraculously grow longer, no matter how many items are crossed off. The LIST makes its initial appearance at Thanksgiving when extended family members create and exchange Christmas lists and pore over sale circulars. Then it grows at an exponential rate. The eight dozen cookies for the cookie exchange at work, the Secret Santa purchases, the Christmas cards to buy and send (the witty and informative family letter to create). Even acts of kindness toward others get lumped together on that list of "things to do." Buy mittens for the tree at church "check $\sqrt{\quad}$ ", even writing the Advent devotional!

With my Type A personality, I don't know if I can, as the experts tell me, simplify my life by eliminating or paring down the LIST. But the bottom line is that it's all about choices... and it's our mindset that makes the difference. We can look at pre-Christmas tasks as obstacles or opportunities for worship.

I will extol the Lord at all times;
His praise will always be on my lips.
My soul will boast in the Lord
Let the afflicted hear and rejoice.
Glorify the Lord with me;
Let us exalt his name together.

Psalm 34: 1-3

In this Advent season, let's all exalt his name together, whether we're caroling or checking items off a list. Our attitudes become all-important, and if they're Christ-like, then any act, large or small, practical or devotional, can glorify God.

Holy Father, in the rush and bustle of the holiday season, help us to keep you front and center. It is a magical time of year, full of wonder and awe over the precious gift of your Son. It can also be a busy time. In the busyness of our lives, help us to focus our thoughts, words, and actions on glorifying you and exalting your name. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

By the way, I hope you'll be happy to learn that I got started on this year's LIST 11 1/2 months early last year by beginning this Advent devotional in January when my weary combat with last year's LIST was still fresh in my mind!

- Contributed by Linda Knicely

Bulletin: Sunday, December 14, 2025

Third Sunday of Advent

ELW Service of the Word

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

WE LIGHT THE ADVENT WREATH

Today is the third Sunday of Advent, when we light the candle known as the Candle of Joy.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.
Your prophets spoke of a day when the desert would blossom
and waters would break forth in the wilderness.
Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath.
Strengthen our hearts as we prepare for the coming of the Lord.
May he give water to all who thirst,
for he is our light and our salvation.
Blessed be God forever.
Amen.

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah (ELW 240)

Light three candles to watch for Messiah,
Let the light banish darkness.
Lift your heads and lift high the gateway
For the King of Glory.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,
who creates us and forms us,
who redeems us and calls us,
who unites us and sends us.
Amen.

Gathered in God's presence, let us confess our sin.

Mighty and loving God,
we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We seek our own way. We divide the body of Christ. In your mercy, cleanse us and heal us. Let the words of our mouths, the thoughts of our hearts, and everything that we do be filled with faith, hope, and love. Amen.

Hear the voice of Jesus:
"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to proclaim release to the captives." In the name of ✝ Jesus Christ, I proclaim to you that your sins are forgiven and you are released. The joy of the Lord is your strength, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are yours forever.
Amen.

GATHERING SONG *Hark, the Glad Sound!* (ELW 239)

1 Hark, the glad sound! The Savior comes,
the Savior promised long;
let ev'ry heart prepare a throne
and ev'ry voice a song.

2 He comes the pris'ners to release,
in Satan's bondage held.
The gates of brass before him burst,
the iron fetters yield.

3 He comes the broken heart to bind,
the bleeding soul to cure,
and with the treasures of his grace
to enrich the humble poor.

4 Our glad hosannas, Prince of peace,
your welcome shall proclaim,
and heav'n's eternal arches ring
with your beloved name.

GREETING (ELW p. 213)

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.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (ELW p. 213)

**Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God in the highest;
glory to God, glory to God,
and peace to God's people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

**Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God in the highest;
glory to God, glory to God,
and peace to God's people on earth.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

**Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God in the highest;
glory to God, glory to God,
and peace to God's people on earth.**

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God in the highest; glory to God, glory to God, and peace to God's people on earth, and peace to God's people on earth.

PRAYER OF THE DAY (ELW p. 215)

Let us pray.

**Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.**

FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:1-10

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

A reading from Isaiah.

¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.

³ Strengthen the weak hands
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
“Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you.”

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;
⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert;
⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸ A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God’s people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.
⁹ No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
¹⁰ And the ransomed of the LORD shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 146:5-10

⁵ Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,
whose hope is in the LORD their God;

⁶ **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;
who keeps promises forever;**

⁷ who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger. The LORD sets the captive free.

⁸ **The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.**

⁹ The LORD cares for the stranger; the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

¹⁰ **The LORD shall reign forever, your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!**

SECOND READING: James 5:7-10

In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

A reading from James.

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains.

⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 216)
Alleluia, Lord, to whom shall we go?
Alleluia. You have the words of eternal life.
Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴ Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.'

¹¹ "Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S PRESENTATION

HYMN OF THE DAY *Prepare the Royal Highway* (ELW 264)

1 Prepare the royal highway; the King of kings is near!
Let ev'ry hill and valley a level road appear!
Then greet the King of glory, foretold in sacred story:
Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!

2 God's people, see him coming: your own eternal king!
Palm branches strew before him! Spread garments!
Shout and sing!
God's promise will not fail you! No more shall doubt assail you!
Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!

3 Then fling the gates wide open to greet your promised king!
Your king, yet ev'ry nation its tribute too may bring.
All lands will bow before him; their voices join your singing:
Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!

4 His is no earthly kingdom; it comes from heav'n above.
His rule is peace and freedom and justice, truth, and love.
So let your praise be sounding for kindness so abounding:
Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!

WE PROFESS OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH

Let us profess our Christian faith, using the words of the Apostle's 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 power and mercy, we praise you for Jesus and his acts of healing and liberation. Lead us to proclaim the good news from generation to generation, that all may place their hope in you. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Reader 2: When lands are parched and dry, bring rain and snow; where wilderness is barren, sow seeds of life. Fill the lands with trees that grow, plants that flower, and creatures that thrive, as nature proclaims the wonder of your works. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Reader 3: When there is injustice or corruption among nations and leaders, root it out. Turn their attention to inequity and the cries of the poor. Instill a deeper sense of compassion and care in all who govern. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Minister: When bodies weaken and hearts grow fearful, speak your blessing. In uncertain times, remind us of the promise spoken to our ancestors in faith. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Reader 4: When people are imprisoned or held captive, break the chains and offer release. Strengthen the work of the church in restorative justice, breaking cycles of poverty, and welcoming the immigrant. We pray especially for Global Refuge and Lutheran Social Services. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Reader 5: As we await your coming, we give thanks for the faithful who have lived and died in faith. May their boldness of faith inspire our witness and work. 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.

Let us share the peace with one another.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Let us pray.

O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

Amen.

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.**

BLESSING

The God of glory dwell in you richly, name you beloved,
and shine brightly on your path;
and the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, the ✝ Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.
Amen.

SENDING SONG *Wait for the Lord* (ELW 262)

Wait for the Lord

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.
Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord. 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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