



# St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



## *3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent*

*December 17<sup>th</sup> 2023      10:30 Service of the Word*

Our children's Christmas program is all about the year's holidays giving precedence to Jesus. In the same way the Wise Men gave gifts to Jesus we'll have the mythical creatures of many holidays bringing their own gifts. Today you'll meet this cast of characters:

Valentines Cupid, Punxsutawney Phil, Leprechaun, Jack Frost, The Tooth Fairy, Easter Bunny, Uncle Sam, Halloween Witch, and a representative from the Bills Mafia

What do they have to give Jesus?

### *Welcome to worship today!*

If you are visiting with us we invite you to sign the Guest Book in the back of the sanctuary.

Large print bulletins are available on the usher's stand.

# † GATHERING †

## Prelude and Announcements

Gathering Hymn The Friendly Beasts  
(For music see Hymn 101 in the Songbook Binder)

1. **Jesus, our brother, strong and good,  
was humbly born in a stable rude,  
and the friendly beasts around him stood,  
Jesus our brother strong and good.**
2. **“I,” said the donkey, shaggy and brown,  
“I carried his mother up hill and down,  
I carried his mother to Bethlehem town;  
I,” said the donkey shaggy and brown.**
3. **“I,” said the cow all white and red,  
“I gave him my manger for his bed,  
I gave him hay to pillow his head;  
I,” said the cow, all white and red.**
4. **“I,” said the sheep with curly horn,  
“I gave him my wool for his blanket warm,  
he wore my coat on Christmas morn;  
I,” said the sheep with curly horn.**
5. **“I,” said the dove from rafters high,  
“we cooed him to sleep that he should not cry,  
we cooed him to sleep, my mate and I;  
I,” said the dove, from rafters high.**
6. **Thus all the beasts, by some good spell,  
in a stable dark were glad to tell  
of the gifts they gave Emmanuel,  
the gifts they gave Emmanuel.**

Text: 12<sup>th</sup> Century French. Music: Based on Orientis Partibus, a medieval French melody, arr. Bonnie Bridger Coffman, copyright Bonnie Bridger Coffman, 2011

Greeting (2 Corinthians 13:13)

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

**C: And also with you.**

Gathering Dialog (John 1)

A: In the beginning was the Word,

**C: and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

A: In the Word was life,

**C: and the life was the light of all people.**

A: The Word became flesh and lived among us,

**C: and we have seen his glory, full of grace and truth.**

Prayer of the Day

A: Let us pray...

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

† WORD †

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

A: Praise to you, O God, who holds our joy and sorrow. You bring water to parched ground and life out of death. Bless us as this light grows, and send sorrow and sighing to flee away. Give us strength and patience, trusting that you are true to your promises. Transform the lives of all who suffer with your wonders near at hand.

**C: Amen**

*As the third candle on the wreath is lit we sing:*

Oh Come, Oh Come, Emmanuel

*(For music turn to Hymn 257 in the Red Hymnal)*

**1. Oh come, Oh come Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear.**

**Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to you, O Israel.**

**3. O come, O come, O Lord of might,  
as to your tribes on Sinai's height**

**in ancient times you gave the law  
in cloud and majesty and awe. Refrain**

**4. O come, O Branch of Jesse, free  
your own from Satan's tyranny;  
from depths of hell your people save,  
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave. Refrain**

Text: *Psalteriolum Cantionum Catholicarum*, Koln, 1710, tr. composite. Music: French processional, 15<sup>th</sup> century.

First Reading Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

B: The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,  
because the Lord has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and release to the prisoners;  
<sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;  
<sup>3</sup>to provide for those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a garland instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.  
<sup>4</sup>They shall build up the ancient ruins,  
they shall raise up the former devastations;  
they shall repair the ruined cities,  
the devastations of many generations.  
<sup>8</sup>For I the Lord love justice,  
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;  
I will faithfully give them their recompense,  
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.  
<sup>9</sup>Their descendants shall be known among the nations,  
and their offspring among the peoples;  
all who see them shall acknowledge  
that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.  
<sup>10</sup>I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,  
my whole being shall exult in my God;  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,

and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

<sup>11</sup>For as the earth brings forth its shoots,

and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring up before all the nations.

*After the reading the reader may say:* The Word of the Lord

**C: Thanks be to God.**

Scripture Poetry Psalm 126 (*read responsively*)

D: The Lord brings us back to Zion,  
we are like dreamers,  
laughing, dancing,  
with songs on our lips.

**C: Other nations say,  
“A new world of wonders!  
the Lord is with them.”**

D: Yes, God works wonders.  
Rejoice! Be glad!

**C: Lord, bring us back  
as water to thirsty land.**

D: Those sowing in tears  
reap, singing and laughing.

**C: They left weeping, weeping,  
casting the seed.  
They come back singing, singing,  
holding high the harvest.**

Second Reading 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

D: [Paul writes] <sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks  
in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for  
you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Do not despise the words of  
prophets, <sup>21</sup>but test everything; hold fast to what is good; <sup>22</sup>abstain from  
every form of evil.

<sup>23</sup>May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your  
spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of  
our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do  
this.

*After the reading the reader may say:* The Word of the Lord

**C: Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Acclamation (Luke 1:37)

**C: Alleluia. For nothing is impossible with God. Alleluia.**

Gospel Reading Luke 1:26-38

*The gospel is announced:*

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke 1<sup>st</sup> chapter.

**C: Glory to you O Lord.**

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>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. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup>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. <sup>36</sup>And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup>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.

*After the reading:*

P: The gospel of the Lord

**C: Praise to you O Christ.**

Children's Christmas Program: Holiday Creatures' Gifts to Jesus

Hymn of the Day Holy Child within the Manger

*(for music, turn to Hymn 638 in the Blue Hymnal)*

**1. Holy Child within the manger,  
long ago yet ever near;  
come as friend to ev'ry stranger,  
come as hope for ev'ry fear.  
As you live to heal the broken,  
greet the outcast, free the bound,  
as you taught us love unspoken,  
teach us now where you are found.**

2. **Once again we tell the story  
how your love for us was shown,  
when the image of your glory  
wore an image like our own.  
Come, enlighten with your wisdom,  
come and fill us with your grace.  
May the fire of your compassion  
kindle ev'ry land and race.**
3. **Holy Child within the manger,  
lead us ever in your way,  
so we see in ev'ry stranger  
how you come to us today.  
In our lives and in our living  
give us strength to live as you,  
that our hearts might be forgiving  
and our spirits strong and true.**

Text and music: Mary Haugen, Copyright 1987 GIA Publications, Inc.

*Response to the Word*

P: In Christ you have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

**C: We believe in him and are marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit.**

P: Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**C: 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.**

P: Build yourselves up on your most holy faith;

**C: pray in the Holy Spirit.** (Jude 20)

P: Keep yourselves in the love of God;

**C: look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.** (Jude 21)

P: If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:

**C: Everything old has passed away;  
behold, everything has become new!** (2 Corinthians 5:17)

### Prayer of the Church

“Praise from All Creatures” from *Guerillas of Grace* by Ted Loder

### Peace

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

**C: And also with you.**

P: Let us share that peace with one another.

*The congregation may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.*

## † THANKSGIVING †

### Special Music

Hymn of Thanksgiving As the offering is brought forward:

Lord Let My Heart Be Good Soil

*For music turn to Hymn 713 in the Blue Hymnal*

**Lord, let my heart be good soil,  
open to the seed of your Word.**

**Lord, let my heart be good soil,  
where love can grow and peace is understood.**

**When my heart is hard, break the stone away.**

**When my heart is cold, warm it with the day.**

**When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.**

**Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart,**

**Lord, let my heart be good soil.**

Text and music: Handt Hanson, b. 1950, Copyright 1985 Prince of Peace Publishing/Changing Church, Inc.



Thanksgiving Prayer

P: Let us pray: Savior of the nations, come.

**C: Make your home here in us. Feed us with your love, that our faith shine ever new and our lives reveal your light. Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

P: Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**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.**

✠ SENDING ✠

Blessing

P: God the eternal Word,  
who dwells with us in Jesus,  
and holds us in the grace of the Holy Spirit,  
bless you now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

*Sending Hymn* Cold December Flies Away  
(For music turn to Hymn 299 in the Red Hymnal)

**1. Cold December flies away at the rose red splendor.**

April's crowning glory breaks  
while the whole world wonders  
at the holy unseen pow'r  
of the tree which bears the flow'r.  
On the blessed tree blooms the reddest flow'r  
on the tree blooms the rose  
here in love's own garden,  
full and strong in glory.

**2. In the hopeless time of sin shadows deep had fallen.**

All the world lay under death.  
Eyes were closed in sleeping.  
But, when all seemed lost in night,  
came the sun whose golden light  
brings unending joy, brings the endless joy  
of our hope, highest hope,  
of our hope's bright dawning,  
Son beloved of heaven.

**3. Now the bud has come to bloom, and the world awakens.**

In the lily's purest flow'r  
dwells a wondrous fragrance.  
and it spreads to all the earth  
from the moment of its birth;  
and its beauty lives. In the flow'r it lives,  
in the flow'r, and it spreads  
in its heav'nly brightness  
sweet perfume delightful.

Text and music: Catalonian Carol; tr. Howard Hawhee

*Dismissal*

P: Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

C: **God's Work. Our Hands.**



"I'm a king in the living Nativity. I need some gold and a camel by Friday."

**Worship assistants TODAY:**

Greeters and Ushers	Tom and Carol Urbanic
Acolyte	Thomas Bullwinkle
Counters	Babette Huber and Burdie Gillern
Coffee Hour	Cupcakes

**Worship assistants for next Sunday, December 24, 2023**

Greeters and Ushers	Bruce and Connie Stevenson
Acolyte	Alyssa Young
Counters	Michele Myers and Helen Crown
Coffee Hour	Sweet rolls

Scripture readings from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible* copyright 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States. Psalm from *The Psalter* copyright 1994, Liturgical Training Publications. Variable worship texts from *Sundays and Seasons 2024* copyright 2023 Augsburg Fortress.

**St. John's Lutheran Church**  
888 County Road 9, Victor, NY 14564  
stjohnsvictor.com (585) 924-5192  
The Rev. Jonathan Deibler, Pastor  
William Shi, Pianist