



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



4th Sunday of Advent

December 24th 2023 10:30 Service of the Word

Today starts in the Advent season and ends in the Christmas season. Our morning worship celebrates God's promises to the people of Israel as proclaimed by the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah is speaking to the people in the 8th century B.C.E. The nation of Judah is in a serious bind. They've been attacked by their own brothers to the north, the nation of Israel. Why? Because Judah wouldn't support Israel in its defensive campaign against Assyria. Then in an odd twist Judah turns to Assyria for support. It gets that support but at a terrible price. Isaiah promises God's restoration and a better future even though all feels hopeless.

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 Away in a Manger
(For music see Hymn 277 or 278 in the Red Hymnal)

1. **Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
the starts 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.**

Text: North American, 19th century. Music: James R. Murray, 1841-1905

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 your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live

and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

† WORD †

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

A: Praise to you, O God, who lives with us,
Sharing our flesh and bones.

As Mary waited and Joseph dreamed,
so we dream and wait for you.

Bless us and let your face shine upon us,
more radiant than these candles,
and more dear than all else we seek.

Restore us when we fail to refuse the evil and choose the good,
and banish all our fears.

We pray in the name of Emmanuel,
your promised child and our Savior.

C: Amen

As the fourth candle on the wreath is lit we sing:

O Come, O 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**

5. O come O Key of David, come,

**and open wide our heav'nly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery. Refrain**

First Reading Isaiah 9:1-7

B: But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.

³You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

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

C: Thanks be to God!

Scripture Poetry Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 (read responsively)

D: I sing your love all my days, Lord,
your faithfulness, from age to age.

**C: I know your love is unending,
your fidelity outlasts the heavens.**

D: “I, God, covenant with my chosen one,
I swear to David, my servant,

**C: to establish your house forever,
to uphold your throne, from age to age.”**

D: In a vision, O God,
you speak to your beloved:
“I help this warrior,
chosen from the people,

**C: I seek out David, my servant,
and anoint him with sacred oil.**

D: My hand strengthens him,
my arm encircles him.

**C: No enemy ensnares him,
no schemer brings him down.**

D: I crush his foes,
I strike those who hate him.

**C: I pledge loyalty and love;
in my name, I raise him up.**

D: I extend his hand over the sea,
his right hand over the mighty oceans.

**C: He calls out to me: ‘My father,
my God, my rock of safety!’”**

Second Reading Romans 1:1-7a

E: Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ²which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, ⁷To all God’s beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

C: Thanks be to God!

Gospel Acclamation (Luke 1: 50)

C: Alleluia. God's mercy is for those who fear him, from generation to generation. Alleluia.

Gospel Reading Luke 1:39-56

The gospel is announced:

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the 1st chapter.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

⁴⁶And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,

and lifted up the lowly;

⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things,

and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors,

to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

⁵⁶And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

After the reading:

P: The Gospel of the Lord

C: Praise to you O Christ.

Children's Sermon

Sermon

Hymn of the Day I Wonder as a I Wander
(for music, turn to Hymn 642 in the Blue Hymnal)

1. **I wonder as a wander, out under the sky,
how Jesus the Savior did come for to die
for poor ord'n'ry people like you and like I.
I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.**
2. **When Mary birthed Jesus, all in a cow's stall,
came wise men and farmers and shepherds and all,
and high from the heavens a star's light did fall;
the promise of the ages it then did recall.**
3. **If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing,
a star in the sky or a bird on the wing,
of all of God's angels in heav'n for to sing,
he surely could have had it, 'cause he was the king.**
4. **I wonder as a wander, out under the sky,
how Jesus the Savior did come for to die
for poor ord'n'ry people like you and like I.
I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.**

Text and music: Appalachian folk tune; Collected and adapted by John Jacob Niles; Copyright 1934 G. Shirmer, 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

“Let the Star of Morning Rise” 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 Come to Us by Greg Walton. Sung by Dave Bullwinkle and Karen Spawton.

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 Go Tell It on the Mountain
For music turn to Hymn 290 in the Red Hymnal

Refrain

**Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere;
go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!**

**1. While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light. *Refrain***

**2. The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth. *Refrain***

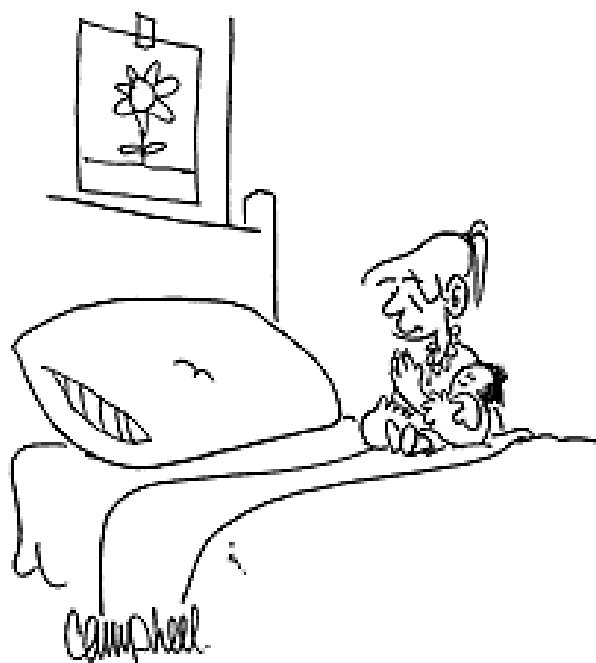
**3. Down in a lonely manger
the humble Christ was born;
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain***

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872-1925, stanzas, alt. Music: African American spiritual

Dismissal

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

C: God's Work. Our Hands.



"I'm a perfect little angel while I'm asleep, Sir.
It's being awake that gives me trouble."

Worship assistants TODAY:

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

Worship assistants for next Sunday, December 31, 2023

Greeters and Ushers	Mary and Greg Zuege
Acolyte	Thomas Bullwinkle
Altar Care	Linda Thompson
Communion Assistant	Greg Zuege
Counters	Bill and Katy Stimmel
Coffee Hour	

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