



# St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



## *2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent*

*December 7, 2025 10:30 Holy Communion*

Today we read the account of Jesus' birth from Matthew's gospel. While this is a Christmas text, we'll discover that it doesn't talk about Jesus' birth at all. Instead, the story is more about Joseph and the dilemma he faces as struggles with what to do with Mary. Joseph's life is about to become chaotic. One problem will lead to another. Yet God is with him in all that occurs.

### *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.

The Zoom feed for this service is available in the nursery.

# † GATHERING †

## Prelude and Announcements

### 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.**

### Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God,  
whose home is heaven and earth,  
whose salvation is sure.

**C: Amen**

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.  
*Silence for reflection.*

P: Long-expected God,

**C: we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become anxious and impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake.**

**Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in service to our neighbors. Increase our trust in your timing and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may have the hope that you have promised.**

**Amen.**

P: God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior.

**C: Amen**

### Gathering Hymn Light the Candle

*(For music turn to Hymn 57 in the Songbook binder)*

- 1. Light the candle as a symbol  
of the Light that leads the way;  
For each candle is a symbol  
of the hope that's ours to-day.  
As we strike the match  
and light the wick,**

**come Spirit shine bright.  
Grant that all may see from the darkness  
Your Gift, Your Truth, Your Light.  
Emmanuel, son of the Father,  
Come to us now, Savior and Lord.**

2. **Light the candle as a symbol  
of the Light that leads the way;  
For each candle is a symbol  
of the peace that's ours today.  
As we strike the match  
and light the wick,  
come Spirit shine bright.  
Grant that all may see from the darkness  
Your Gift, Your Truth, Your Light.  
Your Gift, Your Light.**

Text and music: Maureen Griepentrog; Copyright 1991 Treble C Music; CCLI #2982867

*Prayer of the Day*

A: Let us pray...

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace; 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 gives us courage to start again. You fasten righteousness around your waist and baptize with the Holy Spirit's fire. Bless us as we mirror your mighty fire in these simple flames, and teach us to mirror your justice in the paths we prepare. We ask that peace abound, until none hurt or destroy over all the earth.

**C: Amen**

*As the second 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**

*First Reading* Isaiah 7:13-17

B: <sup>13</sup>Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup>Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. <sup>15</sup>He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup>For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted. <sup>17</sup>The LORD will bring on you and on your people and on your ancestral house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria."

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

**C: Thanks be to God.**

*Scripture Poetry* Psalm 2 (*Read responsively*)

D: Why is this strife among nations?  
Why this pointless scheming?

**C: Kings stand against God,  
nobles plot together  
against the Lord's anointed:**

D: "Let us break these fetters,  
let us cast off these chains!"

**C: High above the earth  
God laughs in mockery,**

D: speaking in anger  
striking them with terror:

**C: "On Zion, my holy mountain,  
I anoint my king."**

D: I will repeat the Lord's decree:  
"You are my son,

today I give you birth.

**C: Ask and the nations are yours,  
even the far-off lands.**

D: You will strike them with an iron rod,  
shatter them like clay pots.”

**C: Kings, come to your senses;  
rulers, take heed.**

D: Serve the Lord with joy,  
tremble in awe,  
bow at God’s feet,

**C: for if you provoke God’s anger,  
you will perish in a flash.  
How much better  
to find shelter in God!**

Gospel Acclamation (Matthew 1:23b)

**C: Alleluia. They shall name him Emmanuel, which means, God is with us. Alleluia.**

Gospel Reading Matthew 1:18-25

*The gospel is announced:*

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

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

<sup>18</sup>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 with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. <sup>20</sup>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. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

<sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup>“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”

which means, “God is with us.” <sup>24</sup>When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, <sup>25</sup>but

had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

*After the reading:*

P: The Gospel of the Lord

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

Children's Sermon

Sermon

Hymn of the Day Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers  
(For music turn to Hymn 244 in the Red Hymnal)

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!**

Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660-1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823-1907; Music: Swedish folk tune

*Nicene Creed*

P: Let us confirm our faith with the Nicene Creed

**C: We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation**

**he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again,  
in accordance with the scriptures;**

**he ascended into heaven**

**and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,**

**and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Peace

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

**C: And also with you.**

P: We share that peace with one another.

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

Offertory and Gathering of Prayers and Offerings

*During the offertory you are invited to write a prayer concern on the small blank slip of paper in your worship bulletin. This slip will be collected by the ushers in the offering plates. The concerns raised will be prayed for later in the service.*

† MEAL †

Hymn of Thanksgiving Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful Lord

*For music turn to page 35 in the Blue Hymnal*

**Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord,  
and fill to the brim our cup of blessing.**

**Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown,  
that we may be fed with the bread of life.**

**Gather the hopes and dreams of all;  
unite them with the prayers we offer now.**

**Grace our table with your presence, Lord,  
and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.**

Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray. Merciful God,

**C: in the mystery of the Word made flesh, you embrace our lives  
with your great love for humanity. With joy and gladness we ask  
that these gifts may be for many a sign of that love, and that we may  
continue to share in your divine life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

P: With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

*Issues raised by the congregation are prayed for.*

*The prayer concludes:*

P: Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

**C: Amen.**

Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

**C: We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P: 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 the Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, though 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 in their unending hymn:

*(Isaiah 6:3, spoken)*

**C: Holy, holy, holy Lord,**

**God of power and might,**

**Heaven 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.**

P: In the night in which he was handed over our Lord Jesus took bread, 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

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.

Invitation to Communion

P: Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

Communion Distribution

*Welcome to the Lord's Supper! All who are baptized are invited to receive communion. We use wheat bread and wine for communion. If you would prefer a gluten free wafer instead of bread please tell the communion assistant. Also, if you prefer grape juice to wine, it is available pre-filled in the individual glasses. As we commune together everyone is invited to sing the following hymns:*

*Lamb of God (Page 39 of the Blue Hymnal)*

**254** *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus (Red Hymnal)*

**272** *Lo, How a Rose (Red Hymnal)*

Communion Blessing *After all have communed the pastor will say:*

P: The body and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**C: Amen.**

Post Communion Prayer

A: Let us pray:

God our host,  
at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness.  
Send us forth, eager to hare the feast,  
welcome the stranger,  
and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.

**C: Amen.**

† SENDING †

*Blessing*

P: May God who comes among us,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
Grant you patience in waiting,  
peace in the darkness,  
and good news to share today and always.  
C: Amen.

*Sending Hymn* Bethlehem Highway

*(For music turn to Hymn 45 in the Songbook binder)*

**Chorus: There is hope on Bethlehem highway  
for the ones who will journey there.  
And the hope is the child in a manger  
bringing us love beyond compare**

**1. It's a lifeline for the needy,  
It's sight to those who can't see.  
It's a freedom for the faithful  
in a child of prophecy. Chorus**

**2. Let the an-gels go before us.  
Let the darkness become light.  
Now the savior lives among us.  
Now truth has come to life. Chorus**

Text and music: David Lee Brown and James Hersch; Copyright 1992 Dakota Road Music, used with permission # 1941957

*Dismissal*

P: Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.  
C: **God's Work. Our Hands.**

**Worship assistants TODAY:**

Greeters and Ushers     John and Linda Thompson  
Acolyte                     Alyssa Young  
Altar Care  
Communion Assistants   Gary Boisseau  
Counters                    Bruce and Connie Stevenson  
Coffee Hour                Greta Crowell

**Worship assistants for next Sunday, December 14**

Greeters and Ushers     Sue Kaufmann  
Acolyte                     Charlotte Stroup  
Counters                    Greg and Mary Zuege  
Coffee Hour                Organ Anniversary

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