



# St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



## *Sermon on the Mount*

*January 18, 2026*

*10:30 Holy Communion*

Today we will read Jesus' great Sermon on the Mount. Early in his ministry thousands of people gathered to hear his words. His words show what he expects of those who would follow him. The sermon covers personal piety, prayer, moral conduct, and lots more. We discover that these expectations are very high – too high in fact. So the sermon also speaks of our need for God's grace, and the promise that we have it.

### *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

Gathering Hymn I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say  
(For music see Hymn 611 in the Red Hymnal)

1. I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
“Come unto me and rest;  
lay down, O weary one, lay down  
your head upon my breast.”  
I came to Jesus, as I was,  
so weary, worn, and sad;  
I found in him a resting place,  
and he has made me glad.
  
2. I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
“Behold, I freely give  
the living water, thirsty one;  
stoop down and drink and live.”  
I came to Jesus, and I drank  
of that life-giving stream;  
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
and now I live in him.
  
3. I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
“I am this dark world’s light;  
look unto me, your morn shall rise,  
and all your day be bright.”  
I looked to Jesus, and I found  
in him my star, my sun;  
and in that light of life I’ll walk  
till trav’ling days are done.

Text: Horatius Bonar, 1808-188.9 Music: English Folk Tune

## Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God,  
the Creator of heaven and earth,  
the Word who spoke life into being,  
the Wind stirring the waters.

**C: Amen.**

P: Let us turn in confession to the one who knows us completely.

*Silence for reflection and self-examination*

P: Mighty God, lover of justice,

**C: you call us to life in community,  
but we have served our own interests  
at the expense of our neighbors.**

**We have sown deceit where honesty was needed.**

**We say the right words,  
but our hearts are far from you.**

**Turn us to seek your face.**

**Knit us together and give us the mind of Christ,  
that we may do justice, love mercy,  
and walk humbly with you, our God.**

**Amen.**

P: The former things have passed away,  
and new things God now declares:

Like a spring of water that never fails,  
God covers you in the righteousness of Christ,  
and forgives your sin in Jesus' name.

May the Spirit give you strength to live for others,  
and bless you with the gift of peace.

**C: Amen.**

*Hymn of Praise* Now the Feast and Celebration

*(For music turn to Hymn 789 in the Blue Hymnal)*

*Refrain*

**Now the feast and celebration,  
all of creation sings for joy  
to the God of life and love and freedom  
praise and glory forevermore!**

**1. Now is the feast of the Lamb once slain,  
whose blood has freed and united us  
to be one great people of God.      *Refrain***

**2. Power and riches, wisdom and might,  
all honor and glory to Christ forever. *Refrain***

**3. For God has come to dwell with us,  
to make us people of God;  
to make all things new.      *Refrain***

Prayer of the Day

A: Let us pray...

God our creator, you have come to live among us as Jesus our savior. You have taught us yourself how we should think and act and live. Help us as we seek to follow your commands and forgive us when we fail, in Jesus' name we pray.

**C: Amen.**

‡ WORD ‡

Children's Sermon

Sermon on the Mount Background

Bible Reading: Matthew 5-7

P: Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. <sup>24</sup>So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them. <sup>25</sup>And great crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup>Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

**C: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

<sup>4</sup>**"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.**

<sup>5</sup>**"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.**

<sup>6</sup>**"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.**

<sup>7</sup>**"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.**

<sup>8</sup>**"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.**

<sup>9</sup>**"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.**

<sup>10</sup>**"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

<sup>11</sup>**"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice**

**and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

A: “You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. <sup>14</sup>“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. <sup>15</sup>No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

B: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup>For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. <sup>19</sup>Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup>For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

**C: “You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’; and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’**

D: But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell of fire. <sup>23</sup>So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, <sup>24</sup>leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. <sup>25</sup>Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. <sup>26</sup>Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

**C: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’**

E: But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup>If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup>And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it

is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell. <sup>31</sup>“It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ <sup>32</sup>But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

**C: “Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.’**

A: But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, <sup>35</sup>or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. <sup>36</sup>And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. <sup>37</sup>Let your word be ‘Yes, Yes’ or ‘No, No’; anything more than this comes from the evil one.

**C: “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’**

B: But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; <sup>40</sup>and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; <sup>41</sup>and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. <sup>42</sup>Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

**C: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’**

D: But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup>so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. <sup>46</sup>For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup>And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup>Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

**C: “Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.**

E: “So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup>But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

**C: “And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.**

A: But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

**C: “When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. <sup>8</sup>Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.**

B: “Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. <sup>10</sup>Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup>Give us this day our daily bread. <sup>12</sup>And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. <sup>13</sup>And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. <sup>14</sup>For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; <sup>15</sup>but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

**C: “And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.**

D: But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

**C: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal;**

E: but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. <sup>22</sup>“The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; <sup>23</sup>but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! <sup>24</sup>“No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

**C: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?**

A: Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? <sup>27</sup>And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? <sup>28</sup>And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, <sup>29</sup>yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. <sup>30</sup>But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? <sup>31</sup>Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ <sup>32</sup>For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup>But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. <sup>34</sup>“So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

**C: “Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. <sup>2</sup>For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get.**

B: Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? <sup>4</sup>Or how can you say to your neighbor, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ while the log is in your own eye? <sup>5</sup>You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor’s eye. <sup>6</sup>“Do not give what is holy to dogs; and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under foot and turn and maul you.

**C: “Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.**

D: For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. <sup>9</sup>Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? <sup>10</sup>Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? <sup>11</sup>If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

<sup>12</sup>“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.

E: “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. <sup>14</sup>For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

A: “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. <sup>16</sup>You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup>In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup>A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup>Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup>Thus you will know them by their fruits.

B: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup>On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?’ <sup>23</sup>Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.’

D: “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. <sup>25</sup>The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. <sup>26</sup>And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. <sup>27</sup>The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!”

**C: Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, <sup>29</sup>for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.**

*Hymn of the Day*      My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less  
(for music, see Hymn 597 in the Red Hymnal)

**1. My hope is built on nothing less  
than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;  
no merit of my own I claim,  
but wholly lean on Jesus’ name.**

**Refrain: On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;  
all other ground is sinking sand.**

**2. When darkness veils his lovely face,  
I rest on his unchanging grace;  
in ev’ry high and stormy gale  
my anchor holds within the veil.      Refrain**

3. **His oath, his covenant, his blood  
sustain me in the raging flood;  
when all supports are washed away,  
he then is all my hope and stay. Refrain**
  
4. **When he shall come with trumpet sound,  
oh, may I then in him be found,  
clothed in his righteousness alone,  
redeemed to stand before the throne! Refrain**

Text: Edward Mote, Music John B. Dykes

Apostles' Creed

P: We confirm our faith with the Apostles' Creed

**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.**

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

*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.*

Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray: God of majesty,

**C: no eye has seen, nor ear heard**

**what you have prepared for those who love you,**

**yet in this meal you reveal the wideness of your mercy.**

**Use what we have gathered**

**to feed us with the kingdom of God come near,**

**Jesus Christ, our Savior and 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.**

† MEAL †

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 Christ. By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations; in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son, and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory. 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 the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Come to the table; taste and see.

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)*

**599** *Lord Jesus Think on Me (Red Hymnal)*

**603** *God, When Human Bonds Are Broken (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*

E: Let us pray:

Radiant God,

we have seen your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

In the sacrament of his body and blood

you have drawn us to your heart.

Send us from this table with delight,

that our lives may reflect the beauty of your love,

and bear witness to all we have seen and heard,

through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C: Amen.**

## † SENDING †

*Blessing*

P: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

**C: Amen.**

*Sending Hymn* Be Thou My Vision

*(For music turn to Hymn 793 in the Red Hymnal)*

- 1. Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  
naught be all else to me, save that thou art:  
thou my best thought both by day and by night,  
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.**
- 2. Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;  
I ever with thee and thou with me Lord.  
Thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tow'r,**

raise thou me heav'nward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.

3. **Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise,  
thou mine inheritance, now and always:  
thou, and thou only, first in my heart,  
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.**
  
4. **Light of my soul, after victory won,  
may I reach heaven's joys, O heaven's Sun!  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

Text and Music: Irish Folk Tune 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century; tr. Mary Burne; vers. Eleanor Hull

*Dismissal*

**P:** Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

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



**Worship assistants TODAY:**

Greeters and Ushers	John and Linda Thompson
Acolyte	Elijah Young
Altar Care	Linda Flood
Communion Assistant	Mary Zuege
Counters	Greg and Mary Zuege
Coffee Hour	Congregational Meeting - Sandwiches

**Worship assistants for next Sunday, January 25**

Greeters and Ushers	Greg and Mary Zuege
Acolyte	Thomas Bullwinkle
Counters	John and Linda Thompson
Coffee Hour	

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