



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



2nd Sunday of Christmas
January 4, 2026 10:30 Holy Communion

The new year has just begun. What do you have in store for this year? How are you going to serve God? Today we continue our journey through the Gospel of Matthew. We'll meet John the Baptist in the wilderness. He had good news for some and harsh news for others. We'll see what he has to say to us as we look at the year before us.

Welcome to worship today!

If you are visiting St. John's 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 shown in the nursery.

† GATHERING †

Prelude and Announcements

Gathering Hymn Angels, from the Realms of Glory
For music turn to Hymn 275 in the Red Hymnal

1. Angels, from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
once you sang creation's story,
now proclaim Messiah's birth:

Refrain

Come and worship,
come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.

2. Shepherds, in the fields abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night.
God with us is now residing
yonder shines the infant light. *Refrain*

3. Sages, leave your contemplations,
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great desire of nations,
you have seen his natal star. *Refrain*

4. All creation, join in praising
God, the Father, Spirit, Son,
Evermore your voices raising
to the eternal Three in One. *Refrain*

Text: James Montgomery, 1771-1854, alt., sts. 1-3; *Salisbury Hymn Book*, 1857, st. 4. Music: Henry T Smart, 1813-1879

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.

Call to Worship

A: Sing to God something brand new!

C: For God has done wonderful things!

A: God has not forgotten to love us all!

C: Even the ends of the earth have heard!

A: Make a joyful noise!

C: Break forth in song!

A: With strings and horns,

C: sing praise to the Holy One!

A: With the roaring seas and everything in it!

C: With all the land and everything in it!

A: The floods clap their hands.

C: The hills sing for joy.

A: Thank God! God is coming to set everything right:

C: Justice for everyone, everything fair.

A: Sing to God something brand new!

C: For God has done wonderful things!

Hymn of Praise Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
For music turn to Hymn 270 in the Red Hymnal

1. Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn king;
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.”
Joyful, all you nations rise;
join the triumph of the skies;
with angelic hosts proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

Refrain

Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to new the newborn king!”

2. Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the God-head see!
Hail, incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel! *Refrain*

3. Hail the heav’n born Prince of peace!
Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
ris’n with healing in his wings.

**Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise each child of earth,
born to give us second birth. Refrain**

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt. Music: Felix Mendelssohn, 1809-1847; arr. William H. Cummings, 1831-1915

Prayer of the Day

B: Let us pray.

Eternal Father, you gave your incarnate Son the holy name of Jesus to be a sign of our salvation. Plant in every heart the love of the Savior in the world. Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

† WORD †

First Reading 2 Kings 1:1-8

B: After the death of Ahab, Moab rebelled against Israel. ²Ahaziah had fallen through the lattice in his upper chamber in Samaria, and lay injured; so he sent messengers, telling them, “Go, inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this injury.” ³But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, “Get up, go to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron?’” ⁴Now therefore thus says the LORD, ‘You shall not leave the bed to which you have gone, but you shall surely die.’” So Elijah went. ⁵The messengers returned to the king, who said to them, “Why have you returned?” ⁶They answered him, “There came a man to meet us, who said to us, ‘Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him: Thus says the LORD: Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you shall not leave the bed to which you have gone, but shall surely die.’” ⁷He said to them, “What sort of man was he who came to meet you and told you these things?” ⁸They answered him, “A hairy man, with a leather belt around his waist.” He said, “It is Elijah the Tishbite.”

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

C: Thanks be to God.

Scripture Poetry Isaiah 40:3-11

D: ³A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

**C: ⁴Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;**

D: the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

**C: ⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”**

D: ⁶A voice says, “Cry out!”
And I said, “What shall I cry?”

**C: All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.**

D: ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.

**C: ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.**

D: ⁹Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;

**C: lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;
say to the cities of Judah,
“Here is your God!”**

D: ¹⁰See, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;

**C: his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.**

D: ¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,

**C: and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.**

Gospel Acclamation (Matthew 3:3)

**C: Alleluia. Prepare the way of the Lord. Make his paths straight.
Alleluia**

Gospel Reading Matthew 3

The gospel is announced:

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the 3rd chapter.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ²“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” ³This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.’”

⁴Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, ⁶and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruit worthy of repentance. ⁹Do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹“I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. ¹⁶And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

After the reading:

P: The Gospel of the Lord

C: Praise to you O Christ.

Children’s Sermon

Sermon

Hymn of the Day Angels We Have Heard on High
For music turn to Hymn 289 in the Red Hymnal

1. Angles we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o'er the plains
and the mountains in reply,
echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain

**Glo-ria in excelsis Deo;
Glo-ria in excelsis Deo.**

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heav'nly song? *Refrain*

3. Come to Bethlehem and see
him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn king. *Refrain*

Text: French carol; tr. H.F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864. Music: French Carol; arr. Edward S. Barnes, 1887-1958

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.**

Prayer of the Church

“I Hold My Life Up to You Now” 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.

‡ MEAL ‡

Offertory

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. God of glory,

C: great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Jesus Christ our Savior. 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. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. 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: God is now in flesh appearing. Come to the feast of joy!

Communion Distribution

Welcome to the Lord's Supper! All who are baptized are invited to receive communion. Please pick up a communion glass as you come forward to the altar. You will receive bread from the communion assistant. (If you need a gluten free wafer please tell the assistant.) The pastor will pour wine into your glass. If you prefer grape juice it is prefilled 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)

298 *The Bells of Christmas (Red Hymnal)*

269 *Once in Royal David's City (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: Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us.

C: Amen.

† SENDING †

Blessing

P: The triune God,
glorious Mystery,
holy Incarnate One,
abiding Comforter,
bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.

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. Serve the Lord.

C: God's Work. Our Hands.

Worship assistants TODAY:

Greeters and Ushers Janice Lockwood
Acolyte Alyssa Young
Altar Care Linda Flood
Communion Assistant Linda Flood
Counters
Coffee Hour

Worship assistants for next Sunday, January 11

Greeters and Ushers Bruce and Connie Stevenson
Acolyte Charlotte Stroup
Counters
Coffee Hour

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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