



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



The 3rd Sunday of Advent

December 11, 2016

10:30 Service of the Word

Strange people, strange places, strange signs, and strange gifts. This is what we encounter today as we read Matthew chapter 2. Though we know this story well as the arrival of the Wise Men it is a strange and mysterious story. There will be winners and losers. Innocent people will get hurt and an evil villain will get away with it. Yet God is at work through all of 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.

Nursery care is available during the service. Please see one of the ushers if you need more information.

† GATHERING †

Prelude and Announcements

Gathering Hymn 'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime
(For music turn to Hymn 284 in the Red Hymnal)

1. 'Twas in the moon of wintertime
when all the birds had fled,
that God, the Lord of all the earth,
sent angel choirs instead.
Before their light the stars grew dim,
And wond'ring hunters heard the hymn:

Refrain Jesus your king is born!
Jesus is born,
in excelsis gloria!

2. Within a lodge of broken bark
the tender babe was found;
a ragged robe of rabbit skin
enwrapped his beauty round;
but as the hunter braves drew nigh,
the angel song rang loud and high: *Refrain*

3. The earliest moon of wintertime
is not so round and fair
as was the ring of glory
on the helpless infant there.
The chiefs from far before him knelt
with gifts of fox and beaver pelt. *Refrain*

4. O children of the forest free,
the angels' song is true.
The holy child of earth and heav'n
is born today for you.
Come, kneel before the radiant boy,
who brings you beauty, peace, and joy. *Refrain*

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 all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; 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

(Read immediately after the congregation is seated from the Prayer of the Day)

A: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. Your prophets spoke of a day when the desert would blossom and water would break forth in the wilderness. Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath. Strengthen our hearts as we prepare for the coming of the Lord. May he give water to all who thirst, for he is our light and our salvation. Blessed be God forever.

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: *Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710, tr. composite. Music: French processional, 15th century.

First Reading Jeremiah 31:15-20

¹⁵Thus says the LORD:

A voice is heard in Ramah,
lamentation and bitter weeping.

Rachel is weeping for her children;
she refuses to be comforted for her children,
because they are no more.

¹⁶Thus says the LORD:

Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears;
for there is a reward for your work, says the LORD:
they shall come back from the land of the enemy;

¹⁷there is hope for your future, says the LORD:
your children shall come back to their own country.

¹⁸Indeed I heard Ephraim pleading:

“You disciplined me, and I took the discipline;
I was like a calf untrained.

Bring me back, let me come back,
for you are the LORD my God.

¹⁹For after I had turned away I repented;
and after I was discovered, I struck my thigh;

I was ashamed, and I was dismayed
because I bore the disgrace of my youth.”

²⁰Is Ephraim my dear son?

Is he the child I delight in?

As often as I speak against him, I still remember him.

Therefore I am deeply moved for him;

I will surely have mercy on him, says the LORD.

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

C: Thanks be to God.

Scripture Poetry Psalm 40:1-12 (read responsively)

L: I waited and waited for God.

At long last God bent down
to hear my complaint,

**C: and pulled me from the grave
out of the swamp,
and gave me a steady stride
on rock-solid ground.**

L: God taught me a new song,
a hymn of praise.
Seeing all this,
many will be moved
to trust in the Lord.

**C: Happy are they who trust in God,
not seduced by idols
nor won over by lies.**

L: You do so many wonders,
you show you care for us,

**C: Lord my God;
you are beyond compare.
Were I to name them all,
no one could keep track.**

L: You did not seek offerings
or ask for sacrifices;
but you drilled ears
for me to hear.

**C: “Yes,” I said, “I will come
to live by your written word.”**

L: I want to do what pleases you;
your teaching is in my heart.

**C: I celebrate your justice
before all the assembly;
I do not hold back the story.
Lord, you know this is true.**

L: I did not hide in my heart
your acts of rescue;
I boldly declared to all
your truth and care, your faithful love.

**C: Your maternal love
surrounds me, Lord.
Your sure and tender care
protects me always.**

Gospel Acclamation (Matthew 2:6)

C: Alleluia. And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel. Alleluia.

Gospel Reading Matthew 2

The gospel is announced:

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew 2nd chapter.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶“And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.””

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.”

⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

¹³Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” ¹⁴Then Joseph got up, took the child and his

mother by night, and went to Egypt, ¹⁵and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

¹⁶When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. ¹⁷Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸“A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”

¹⁹When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰“Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.” ²¹Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He will be called a Nazorean.”

After the reading:

P: The Gospel of the Lord

C: Praise to you O Christ.

Children’s Sermon

Sermon

Hymn of the Day We Three Kings of Orient Are
(For music see Hymn 646 in the Blue Hymnal)

**1. We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain
moor and mountain,
following yonder star.**

Refrain: **Oh, star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright;
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light!**

2. **Born a king on Bethlehem's plain,
gold I bring to crown him again;
king forever,
ceasing never,
over us all to reign. *Refrain***

3. **Frankincense to offer have I;
incense owns a deity nigh;
prayer and praising,
gladly raising,
worshipping God Most High. *Refrain***

4. **Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume
breathes a life of gathering gloom;
sorrowing, sighing,
bleeding, dying,
sealed in the stone-cold tomb. *Refrain***

5. **Glorious now behold him arise,
King and God and Sacrifice;
heav'n sings
alleluia:
alleluia the earth replies. *Refrain***

Text and music: John Henry Hopkins Jr., 1820-1921, alt.

✠ INCORPORATION OF NEW MEMBERS ✠

We welcome William and Nancy Hagerman to St. John's!
*Please turn to page 234 in the front of the Red Hymnal for the Affirmation of
Baptism Service.*

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 ✠

Offering & 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

A: 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.**

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.

The pastor will begin the prayer with a petition and then invites the congregation to add additional petitions and thanksgivings. Please conclude your petition with: Lord in your mercy,

The congregation will respond: **Hear our prayer.**

The pastor concludes the prayer:

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

C: Amen.

Lord's Prayer

A: 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: May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path. Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

Sending Hymn There's a Star in the East
(For music turn to Hymn 645 in the Blue Hymnal)

**1. There's a star in the East on Christmas morn,
rise up, shepherd, and follow.
It will lead to the place where the Christ was born,
rise up, shepherd, and follow.**

Refrain

**Follow, follow, rise up, shepherd, and follow,
follow the star of Bethlehem, rise up, shepherd, and follow.**

**2. If you take good heed to the angel's words,
rise up, shepherd and follow.
You'll forget your flocks, you'll forget your herds,
rise up, shepherd and follow. *Refrain***

Text and music: African American Spiritual

Dismissal

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

C: God's Work. Our Hands.

SO THE MAGI
JUST WALK
IN ON HEROD
TO ASK WHERE
TO FIND
JESUS?



www.aquasoft.com

YEAH.
THAT'S
PRETTY
MUCH
IT.



AMAZING!

WHAT? THAT
THEY ARE
SEEKING THE
MESSIAH IN
THE COMPANY
OF A TYRANT?



NO! THAT
THREE MEN
WOULD ACTUALLY
STOP AND ASK
FOR DIRECTIONS!



MATTHEW 2:1-12

© WETZSTEIN 02-01

Worship assistants TODAY:

Greeters and Ushers	John and Linda Thompson
Acolyte	Scott Wilmot
Nursery Care	Beth Perdan
Counters	Beth Perdan and Bettina Kalish
Coffee Hour	Judy Sax and Babette Huber

Worship assistants for next Sunday, December 18, 2016

Greeters and Ushers	Rob and Laura Stroup
Acolyte	Jaden White
Nursery Care	Beth Perdan
Counters	Ethan and Alyssa Minkel
Coffee Hour	Sue Kaufmann

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 2017* copyright 2016 Augsburg Fortress.

St. John's Lutheran Church
888 County Road 9, Victor, NY 14564
stjohnsvictor.com (585) 924-5192
The Rev. Jonathan Deibler, Pastor
Heidi Griffith, Music Director