



# St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



## *The 3rd Sunday of Advent*

*December 15, 2019*

*10:30 Holy Communion*

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 it is strange and mysterious. 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.**

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God;  
who comes to wake us from sleep.  
who leads us into the light of grace.

**C: Amen.**

P: Let us prepare the way of the Lord by confessing our sin against God and neighbor.

*(A moment of silence for reflection)*

P: God of all time,

**C: we confess that we have not prepared for your merciful reign among us. We ignore our neighbors in need and fail in the labor of justice and peace. In your mercy forgive us. Grant us wisdom to welcome your light and to seek the things that will endure until Christ comes again in glory. Amen.**

P: Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. In Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven and all things are made new. Rejoice in this good news!

**C: Amen**

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, 15<sup>th</sup> century.

*First Reading* Jeremiah 31:15-20

<sup>15</sup>Thus 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.

<sup>16</sup>Thus 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;

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

<sup>18</sup>Indeed 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.

<sup>19</sup>For 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.”

<sup>20</sup>Is 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*)

A: 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.**

A: 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.**

A: 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.**

A: 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.”**

A: 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.**

A: 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 2:1-18

*The gospel is announced:*

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew 2<sup>nd</sup> 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, <sup>2</sup>asking, “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.” <sup>3</sup>When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup>and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup>They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup>“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.””

<sup>7</sup>Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>Then 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.”

<sup>9</sup>When 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. <sup>10</sup>When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup>On 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. <sup>12</sup>And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road. <sup>13</sup>Now 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." <sup>14</sup>Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, <sup>15</sup>and 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."  
<sup>16</sup>When 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. <sup>17</sup>Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:  
<sup>18</sup>"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."

*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 ✠**

*Please turn to page 234 in the front of the Red Hymnal for the Affirmation of Baptism Service.*

We welcome into St. John's: Steven and Jae Ireland and their children, Wayne and Elizabeth Young and their children, Curt and Anne Stromstad, and Steve and Christine Campbell



† MEAL †

Offering & Special Music

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

A: Let us pray: Giver of every good things,

**C: we set before you the gifts that you have already given to sustain our lives and to share with others. Help us to be good stewards of the earth and all that is in it, and let our lives be a testimony to the abundant feast you prepare for all who hunger. 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: Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you. Share in the feast of salvation.

Communion Distribution

*Welcome to the Lord's Supper! All who are baptized are invited to receive communion. You will receive bread from the communion assistant. (If you need gluten free wafers please ask the assistant distributing bread.) You may receive wine from either the common cup or in an individual glass. If you would like to receive in a glass please pick one up from the tray as you approach the altar rail. White grape juice is available in the individual glasses for those who do not wish to take wine. As we commune together everyone is invited to sing the following hymns:*

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

**266** *All Earth Is Hopeful (Red Hymnal)*

**244** *Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers (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 of abundance, we give you thanks that in this holy meal you have invited us to feast with you and one another. May the taste of your love remain with us, and may our words and our work in your name invite others into your bountiful grace. Send us from your table to proclaim your presence, even as we await the glorious coming of Christ our Savior.

**C: 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*

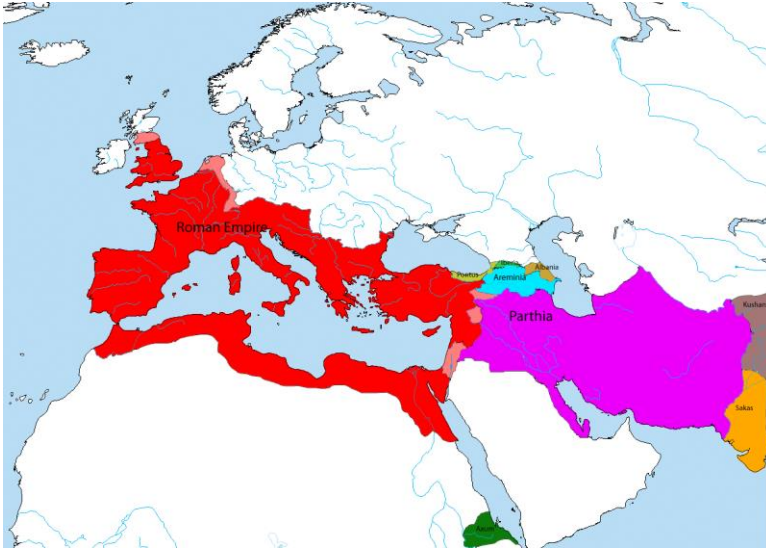
**Follow, follow, rise up, shepherd, and follow,  
follow the star of Bethlehem, rise up, shepherd, and follow.**

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**

Dismissal

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

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



**Worship assistants TODAY:**

Greeters and Ushers	Sally Mansfield and Helen Crown
Acolyte	Jonathan Buch
Altar Care	Linda Thompson
Communion Assistants	Sarah DeMuzio and Tricia Kolczynski
Nursery Care	Judy VanDeVelle
Counters	Nancy and Ivan Shuler
Coffee Hour	Liz Brown and Linda Thompson

**Worship assistants for next Sunday, December 22, 2019**

Greeters and Ushers	John and Gay Card
Acolyte	Abbie Bullwinkle
Nursery Care	Beth Perdan
Counters	Bruce Boncke and Art Fields
Coffee Hour	

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