



# St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



## *3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent*

*December 16, 2018*

*10:30 Holy Communion*

Luke's gospel takes us to the birth of John the Baptist today. At eight days of age his father is inspired by the Holy Spirit to make a prophesy about his life. What a prophesy it is! How can such a little child be expected to accomplish so much? Yet John will grow up to prepare the way for Jesus, and thus prepare the way for us. May we also prepare the way for God's work. The task is huge, but we are not alone, and God helps us along the way.

### *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 In the Bleak Midwinter  
(For music see Hymn 294 in the Red Hymnal)

1. **In the bleak midwinter,  
frosty wind made moan,  
earth stood hard as iron,  
water like a stone;  
snow had fallen, snow on snow,  
snow on snow,  
in the bleak midwinter,  
long ago.**
  
2. **Heaven cannot hold him,  
nor earth sustain;  
heav'n and earth shall flee away  
when he comes to reign;  
in the bleak midwinter a  
stable place sufficed  
the Lord God almighty,  
Jesus Christ.**
  
3. **What can I give him,  
poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd  
I would bring a lamb;  
if I were a wise man  
I would do my part;  
yet what can I give him-  
give my heart.**

Text: Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1830-1894, Music Gustav Holst, 1874-1934

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 your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; 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: We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord's coming in glory. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may serve our neighbors in need. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

**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**

First Reading Malachi 3:1-4

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. <sup>2</sup>But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; <sup>3</sup>he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. <sup>4</sup>Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

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

**C: Thanks be to God.**

Scripture Poetry Psalm 132:13-18 *(Read responsively)*

A: The Lord has chosen Zion,  
desired it as a home.

**C: "This is my resting place,  
I choose to live her for ever.**

A: I will bless it with abundance,  
even the poor will have food.

**C: I will vest the priests in holiness,  
and the faithful will shout for joy.**

A: Here I will strengthen David's power  
and light a lamp for my anointed.

**C: His enemies I will clothe in shame,  
but on him a crown will shine."**

Second Reading Romans 16:25-27

<sup>25</sup>Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup>but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— <sup>27</sup>to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

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

**C: Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Acclamation (1 Corinthians 1:5)

**C: Alleluia. In every way you have been enriched in Jesus, in speech and knowledge of every kind. Alleluia.**

Gospel Reading Luke 1:57-80

*The gospel is announced:*

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

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

<sup>57</sup>Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son.<sup>58</sup>Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. <sup>59</sup>On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. <sup>60</sup>But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John." <sup>61</sup>They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." <sup>62</sup>Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. <sup>63</sup>He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed. <sup>64</sup>Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. <sup>65</sup>Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. <sup>66</sup>All who heard them pondered them and said,

“What then will this child become?” For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

<sup>67</sup>Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

<sup>68</sup>“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.

<sup>69</sup>He has raised up a mighty savior for us  
in the house of his servant David,

<sup>70</sup>as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,  
<sup>71</sup>that we would be saved from our enemies  
and from the hand of all who hate us.

<sup>72</sup>Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,  
and has remembered his holy covenant,

<sup>73</sup>the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,  
to grant us<sup>74</sup> that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,  
might serve him without fear, <sup>75</sup>in holiness and righteousness  
before him all our days.

<sup>76</sup>And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

<sup>77</sup>to give knowledge of salvation to his people  
by the forgiveness of their sins.

<sup>78</sup>By the tender mercy of our God,  
the dawn from on high will break upon us,

<sup>79</sup>to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

<sup>80</sup>The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the  
wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

*After the reading:*

P: The Gospel of the Lord

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

### Children's Sermon

#### Sermon

Hymn of the Day Blessed Be the God of Israel

(For music see Hymn 250 in the Red Hymnal)

- 1. Blessed be the God of Israel who comes to set us free  
and raises up new hope for us: a Branch from David's tree.  
So have the prophets long declared that with a mighty arm  
God would turn back our enemies and all who wish us harm.**

2. **With promised mercy will God still the covenant recall,  
the oath once sworn to Abraham, from foes to save us all;  
that we might worship without fear and offer lives of praise,  
in holiness and righteousness to serve God all our days.**

3. **My child, as prophet of the Lord you will prepare the way,  
to tell God's people they are saved from sin's eternal sway.  
Then shall God's mercy from on high shine forth and never cease  
to drive away the gloom of death and lead us into peace.**

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944, based on Luke 1:68-79. Text copyright 1989 Hope Publishing Company. Music: English folk tune; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958. Arr. copyright Oxford University Press

### Nicene Creed

A: 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.**

### Prayers of the Church

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.**

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.*

## ✠ 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: 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.**

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, through 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. 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)*

**284** *'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime (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 for whom we wait, you come to us in the broken bread and the cup we share. Make us ready always to welcome Christ into our hearts, and send us forth to be your people in the world, announcing your coming among us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**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 People, Look East  
*(For music see Hymn 248 in the Red Hymnal)*

**1. People, look east. The time is near  
of the crowning of the year.  
Make your house fair as you are able,  
trim the hearth and set the table.  
People look east, and sing today –**

**Love, the Guest, is on the way.**

2. **Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,  
one more seed is planted there.  
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,  
that in course the flow'r may flourish.  
People, look east, and sing today –  
Love, the Rose, is on the way.**
  
3. **Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim,  
one more light the bowl shall brim,  
shining beyond the frosty weather,  
bright as sun and moon together.  
People, look east, and sing today –  
Love, the Star, is on the way.**
  
4. **Angels announce with shouts of mirth  
him who brings new life to earth.  
Set ev'ry peak and valley humming  
with the word, the Lord is coming.  
People, look east, and sing today –  
Love, the Lord, is on the way.**

Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881-1965, copyright Miss Farjeon Will Trust, by permission of David Higham Associates. Music: French carol; arr. Barry Rose, b. 1934, copyright 1999 Novello and Co. Ltd., London.

**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	Olivia DeLeon
Altar Care	Gary Boisseau
Communion Assistants	Sue Kaufmann and Linda Flood
Nursery Care	Katy Stimmel
Counters	Babette Huber and Burdie Gillern
Coffee Hour	Babette Huber

### **Worship assistants for next Sunday, December 9**

Greeters and Ushers	Laura and Rob Stroup
Acolyte	Joe Wyman
Nursery Care	Judy VanDeVelde
Counters	Beth Perdan and Bettina Kalish
Coffee Hour	Cookies

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## **St. John's Lutheran Church**

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Heidi Griffith, Music Director