

"Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Matthew 11:11

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

Third Sunday of Advent – December 15th, 2013

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Rev. Mark Bringman, Pastor

Jacob Gordon – Guest Organist

We welcome you to St. John Lutheran Church. We are delighted to have you worship with us this morning. Should you have no permanent church-home in this community, why not consider making this one your own? Please sign the guest book as you leave worship today or the attendance pad in the pew. You are most welcome here at St. John! Most elements of our service can be found in the bulletin, everything else is in the hymnal. Page refers to the numbered pages towards the front of the hymnal, hymns are bold and towards the back. Please rise when there is an *, congregational responses are in **bold**, and underlined elements of the service are found in the hymnal.

HOLY COMMUNION
Third Sunday of Advent – December 15th, 2013

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom. Jesus points to signs of God's reign: the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

PRELUDE *'Hark a Thrilling Voice is Sounding'* – Malcolm Archer

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Advent Wreath Lighting

Song - O Come, O Come, Emmanuel ELW 257, st. 1

1 O come, O 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.

Pastor: At every beginning there is a yearning for the one who is coming. O Emmanuel,

Prepare us for your coming.

Assisting minister: We gather together to allow our deeply held hopes to be reshaped by God's promises. O Emmanuel,

Prepare us for your coming.

Pastor: We wait for the day when God will make for us a future that is no longer predicated on our fear. O Emmanuel,

Prepare us for your coming.

Assisting Minister: We find a new receptivity within us that desires God's will over our own will and relies of God's justice and mercy to accomplish it. O Emmanuel,

Prepare us for your coming.

Pastor: Jesus, we welcome your presence now with the lighting of these candles, whose flames bring warmth to winter and fill this place with the glow of hope. **Amen.**

Song - O Come, O Come, Emmanuel ELW 257, st. 6, stanza 8 from Mark Bringman

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***

8 O come, O Hope of Ages, speed
To save all in our times of need,
Help us embrace the world as one,
Your will here, as before your throne.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

*** THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, our life, our mercy, our might. **Amen.**

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight.

Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons, making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life, and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ. Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love. To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

GATHERING HYMN #254: - *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

***GREETING** From the one who is and who was and who is to come, and from Jesus Christ, the first fruits of the resurrection, grace and peace be with you all. **And also with you.**

KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



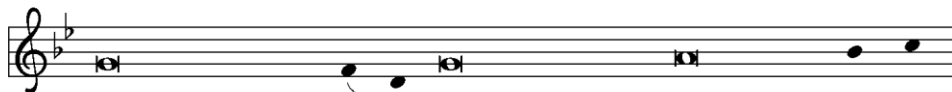
Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a - bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace of the whole world, for the well - being of the church of



God, and for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

For this ho - ly house, and for all who offer here their wor - ship and
 praise, let us pray to the Lord.
 Lord, have mer - cy.
 Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.
 A - men.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

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.

Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:1 - 10

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
 the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
 like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly,
 and rejoice with joy and singing.
 The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
 the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
 They shall see the glory of the LORD,
 the majesty of our God.

³Strengthen the weak hands,
 and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
 "Be strong, do not fear!
 Here is your God.
 He will come with vengeance,
 with terrible recompense.
 He will come and save you."

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
 and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

⁶then the lame shall leap like a deer,

and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;

⁷the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: HYMN #251: *My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness*

SECOND READING: James 5:7–10

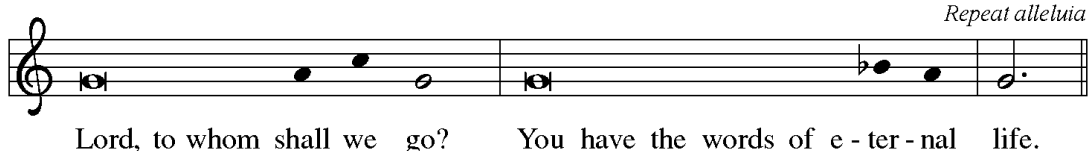
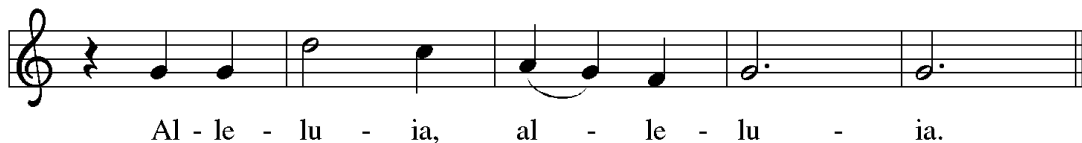
In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent

⁷Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth. From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this.

The gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you O Lord.

²When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.'

¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

**CHILDREN'S SERMON
SERMON**

HYMN OF THE DAY #243: *Lost in the Night

PRESENTATION

God, who is rich in mercy and love, gives us a new birth into a living hope through the sacrament of baptism. By water and the Word God delivers us from sin and death and raises us to new life in Jesus Christ. We are united with all the baptized in the one body of Christ, anointed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, and joined in God's mission for the life of the world.

Rob and Tracey: I present Jocelyn Karasack for baptism.

Called by the Holy Spirit, trusting in the grace and love of God, do you desire to have your daughter baptized into Christ?

Ryan and Sarah: I do.

As you bring your daughter to receive the gift of baptism, you are entrusted with responsibilities:

to live with her among God's faithful people,
bring her to the word of God and the holy supper,
teach her the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments,
place in her hands the holy scriptures,
and nurture her in faith and prayer,
so that your daughter may learn to trust God,
proclaim Christ through word and deed,
care for others and the world God made,
and work for justice and peace.

Do you promise to help your daughter grow in the Christian faith and life?

Ryan and Sarah: I do.

Sponsors, do you promise to nurture this daughter in the Christian faith as you are empowered by God's Spirit, and to help

her live in the covenant of baptism and in communion with the church?

*Rob and Tracey:*I do.

People of God, do you promise to support Jocelyn and pray for her in her new life in Christ?

We do.

BAPTISMAL SONG: Borning Cry ELW 732 – verses 1 & 2

1 "I was there to hear your borning cry,
I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized
to see your life unfold.
I was there when you were but a child,
with a faith to suit you well;
in a blaze of light you wandered off
to find where demons dwell."

2 "When you heard the wonder of the Word
I was there to cheer you on;
you were raised to praise the living Lord,
to whom you now belong.
If you find someone to share your time
and you join your hearts as one,
I'll be there to make your verses rhyme
from dusk till rising sun."

***PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the church.

Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God?

I renounce them.

Do you renounce the powers of this world that rebel against God?

I renounce them.

Do you renounce the ways of sin that draw you from God?

I renounce them.

Do you believe in God the Father?

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

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.

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

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.

THANKSGIVING AT THE FONT

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Blessed are you, holy God. You are the creator of the waters of the earth. You are the fire of rebirth. You poured out your Spirit on your people Israel. You breathe life into our dry bones. Your Son Jesus promised to send the Spirit to us that the world may know your peace and truth.

Pour out your Holy Spirit, and breathe new life into those who are here baptized. By your Spirit adopt us all as your children, through our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

BAPTISM

Jocelyn Karasack, I baptize you in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

You belong to Christ,
in whom you have been baptized.
Alleluia.

Let us pray.

We give you thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give your daughters and sons new birth, cleanse them from sin, and raise them to eternal life.

Sustain *Jocelyn* with the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, both now and forever.

Amen.

Jocelyn, child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.

Amen.

Assisting Minister: Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Let us welcome the newly baptized.

We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share: join us in giving thanks and praise to God and bearing God's creative and redeeming word to all the world.

BAPTISMAL SONG: Borning Cry ELW 732 – verses 3 & 4

3 "In the middle ages of your life,
not too old, no longer young,
I'll be there to guide you through the night,
complete what I've begun.
When the evening gently closes in
and you shut your weary eyes,
I'll be there as I have always been,
with just one more surprise."

4 "I was there to hear your borning cry,
I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized
to see your life unfold."

*** PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

In hope and anticipation, we pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

Stir up in our hearts an eagerness for your coming. Grant us patience in our waiting, and while we wait, strengthen us to persevere in ways of justice and righteousness. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In this season, nurture dry and dormant lands so that they will blossom in the coming months. Spread your abundance throughout all lands, that every living thing may be filled. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Draw near to all who are oppressed or neglected. Lift up all who are cast down. Deliver those in the captivity of loneliness and poverty into your freedom. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Strengthen those who are made weak by the heavy burdens that they carry especially Bill & Kathy, Jim, Raymond, George, Wanda Jean, Helen, Francis & Grace, Kathryn, Ed, Fred & Jane, and David & Ellen. Surround them with messengers who announce your presence with them. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Raise the expectations of all who seek you in this season. Turn us from material things, and open us to a life full of

healing and renewal, where all people receive good news. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Remembering the saints who have entered into your eternal reign, sustain us through their witness to your everlasting faithfulness until we are united in the fullness of your kingdom. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Almighty God, we entrust to you all for whom we pray, confident that you fulfill your promises through Christ our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

***PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY #244 - *Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers*

***OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.

God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

***DIALOGUE**

The Lord be with you. **And al - so with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

***PREFACE**

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. 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 all the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and
 might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
 san - na in the high-est, ho - san - na in the high - est.
 Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
 san - na in the high-est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God, the Beginning and the End, our Salvation and our Hope, we praise you for creating a world of order and beauty. When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair, you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy.

At this end of the ages your Son Jesus came to bring us your love and to heal all the suffering world.

In the night in which he was handed over,
 our Lord Jesus took bread, and 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.

Remembering, therefore, his life, death, and resurrection, we await his coming again in righteousness and peace. Send your Spirit on us and on this bread and wine we share: strengthen our faith, increase our hope, and bring to birth the justice and joy of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever. **Amen.**

***LORD'S PRAYER**

**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

Come to the table
where Christ comes to make a home in you.

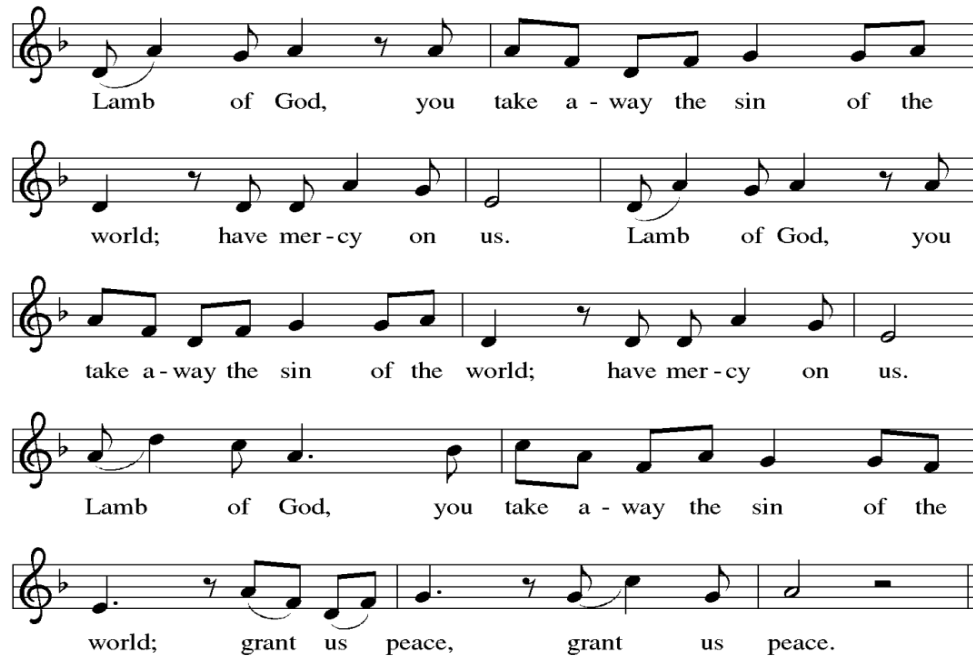
COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you. **Amen.**

The blood of Christ, shed for you. **Amen.**

In response to Jesus' invitation, all are welcome to come forward and experience the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine of communion. Through this meal, we know forgiveness, life and salvation as the blessings of God's sacramental grace. All are invited forward for communion or a blessing. The area of individual cups on the platter, surrounded by green tape, contains grape juice.

COMMUNION SONG



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

***COMMUNION HYMN #262: Wait for the Lord**

***POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in grace. **Amen.**

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray.

God of wonder, we give thanks that you have fed us once again with this foretaste of the feast to come. Strengthen us through this gift to serve our neighbor with joy, that all may come to see your glory reflected in the lives of your people; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

***BLESSING**

The God of hope, through Christ our peace, in the power of the Holy Spirit, + bless you now and forever.
Amen.

SENDING SONG #246: *Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding!***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Bring good news to the poor.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: *'Rejoice, Rejoice Believers'* – Paul Manz

8:00 am

Assisting Minister: Christine Dishong
Communion Assistant:
Acolyte:
Usher:
Attendance Last Week: 73
Weekly Budgeted Need: \$ 2,669.62

YTD Budgeted Expenses: \$128,141.54
YTD Actual Expense: \$ 128,649.30

10:30 am

Assisting Minister: Sally Foster
Communion Assistant:
Acolyte:
Usher:
Attendance last year: 72
Last Week's Giving: \$ 3,395.25

Year to Date Receipts: \$148,292.56

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