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*For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*Isaiah 9:6*

**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church**

First Sunday of Christmas – December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013

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Rev. Ralph Storm, Guest Pastor

John Thickey - 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**

**First Sunday of Christmas– December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

*The hymns of Christmas are some of the best loved songs in our hymnal. The order for the service of lessons and carols dates back to 1880 when Edward White Benson first used it for Christmas Eve in Cornwall. The best known version is broadcast annually from King's College in Cambridge on Christmas Day. This service goes through human history – starting from the fall from grace and reminds us of God's continued presence with us.*

**PRELUDE** ‘Gabriel’s Message’ – arr. J. Wayne Kerr

**\*GATHERING HYMN # 269:** *Once in Royal David's City*

**\* OPENING PRAYER**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray.

**Gracious God of heaven and earth, you have thrown a lifeline to us in our darkness— a beam of light that shines through Jesus. Though born in a manger, he is the firstborn of all creation. Though crucified on a cross, he is the Lord of life. Fill us with the wonder and joy of his presence in the world and in our hearts. Amen.**

**First Reading: Genesis 3:8 - 19**

*This lesson reminds us of Adam and Eve’s fall from grace, that we are born children of a fallen humanity and that all of us are born into that heritage. The hymn we are opening with was written during the Great Depression – and a reminder of rescue from our original night.*

<sup>8</sup>They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup>But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" <sup>10</sup>He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." <sup>11</sup>He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" <sup>12</sup>The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." <sup>13</sup>Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." <sup>14</sup>The LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this,  
cursed are you among all animals  
and among all wild creatures;  
upon your belly you shall go,  
and dust you shall eat  
all the days of your life.

<sup>15</sup>I will put enmity between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring and hers;  
he will strike your head,  
and you will strike his heel."

<sup>16</sup>To the woman he said,  
"I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing;

in pain you shall bring forth children,  
yet your desire shall be for your husband,  
and he shall rule over you."

<sup>17</sup>And to the man he said,

"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,  
and have eaten of the tree  
about which I commanded you,  
'You shall not eat of it,'  
cursed is the ground because of you;  
in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

<sup>18</sup>thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;  
and you shall eat the plants of the field.

<sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your face

you shall eat bread  
until you return to the ground,  
for out of it you were taken;  
you are dust,  
and to dust you shall return."

**1<sup>ST</sup> CAROL – From With One Voice (Blue Hymnal) #642: I Wonder as I Wander**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: Genesis 22:15–18**

*This reading comes from the binding of Isaac, where God reckons Abraham's faithfulness as righteousness. This reaffirmation of the covenant reminds of God's promise to the children of Abraham and that his offspring will be a blessing to all people. The hymn lyrics come from the Scottish poet James Montgomery.*

<sup>15</sup>The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, <sup>16</sup>and said, "By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup>I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, <sup>18</sup>and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice."

**2<sup>nd</sup> CAROL #275: Angels from the Realms of Glory**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Reading: Isaiah 9:2, 6 – 7**

*This reading is a promise that God will send a king who is righteous and just, that his rule and governance shall be God's peaceable kingdom.*

<sup>2</sup>The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness —  
on them light has shined.

<sup>6</sup>For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
<sup>7</sup>His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Carol #276: Infant Holy, Infant Lowly**

**4<sup>th</sup> Reading: Isaiah 11:1 – 9**

*This reading is known as God's peaceful kingdom. Like the Revelation to John or much of Daniel it is apocalyptic, unlike*

*those other works, this promises that the end will be a time of peace, when all of creation will be remade in God's vision of a peaceful world. This hymn is one of the older Christmas carols, originating from an anonymous author in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century.*

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

<sup>2</sup>The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the

LORD.

<sup>3</sup>His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.  
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide by what his ears hear;

<sup>4</sup>but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his  
mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the  
wicked.

<sup>5</sup>Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,

and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

<sup>6</sup>The wolf shall live with the lamb,  
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,  
and a little child shall lead them.

<sup>7</sup>The cow and the bear shall graze,  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

<sup>8</sup>The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,  
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the  
adder's den.

<sup>9</sup>They will not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain;  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the

LORD

as the waters cover the sea.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Carol # 272: *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming***

##### **5<sup>th</sup> Reading: Luke 1:26 – 35, 38**

*This reading is commonly known as the annunciation, is the announcement to Mary that she will bear the Messiah. Her reaction is graceful and wonderful. This hymn comes from the Basque region of Spain. It took a long time to spread – in part because Basque is such a unique language.*

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup>The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>38</sup>Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> Carol #265: *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came***

##### **6<sup>th</sup> Reading: Luke 2:1 – 7**

*The nativity from Luke is our best known Christmas reading. The beginning part focuses on the struggles the holy family faces in this birth. God is born in the world to a family that is relatively unknown, struggling to make ends meet. The carol has been popular with children since the hymn was first introduced in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, many of us learned it as children.*

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was

expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

**6<sup>th</sup> Carol # 277: *Away in a Manger***

**7<sup>th</sup> Reading: Luke 2:8 – 20**

*Luke's gospel pays particular attention to the lost, least and lonely. Shepherds out in the fields with unsanitary sheep are most definitely least and lonely (and depending on their direction sense may be lost as well). It is to these shepherds, not the powers of the world that the announcement of God's birth comes. The carol was popular by the 19<sup>th</sup> century (it shows up in the Christmas Carol of Charles Dickens) but was published in 1760.*

<sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

<sup>15</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

**7<sup>th</sup> Carol: *God Rest Ye Merry Gentleman***

1. God rest ye merry, gentlemen,  
Let nothing you dismay,  
For Jesus Christ our Saviour  
Was born upon this day,  
To save us all from Satan's power  
When we were gone astray:

3. The shepherds at those tidings  
Rejoiced much in mind,  
And left their flocks a-feeding  
In tempest, storm and wind,  
And went to Bethlehem straightway,  
This blessed Babe to find: *Refrain*

**REFRAIN**

*O tidings of comfort and joy,  
comfort and joy,  
O tidings of comfort and joy.*

2. From God our heavenly Father  
A blessed angel came,  
And unto certain shepherds  
Brought tidings of the same,  
How that in Bethlehem was born  
The Son of God by name: *Refrain*

4. But when to Bethlehem they came,  
Whereat this Infant lay,  
They found Him in a manger,  
Where oxen feed on hay;  
His mother Mary kneeling,  
Unto the Lord did pray: *Refrain*

**8<sup>th</sup> Reading: Matthew 2:1 – 11**

*This is Matthew's version of the nativity. It references the kings who arrive in Bethlehem sometime after the birth of Jesus – according to Christmas tradition on January 6<sup>th</sup>. It is Herod's learning of the birth of this Messiah that forces Joseph and Mary, in Matthew's gospel, to relocate from Bethlehem to Egypt (and later to Nazareth). The hymn comes from 19<sup>th</sup> century United States and was published during the height of the Civil War.*

**8<sup>th</sup> CAROL – *From With One Voice (Blue Hymnal) # 646: We Three Kings***

**9<sup>th</sup> Reading: John 1:1 – 14**

*This reading from John, which is also part of the service on Christmas Day, is part of the promise that God comes in all times and places to rescue his people, that from the beginning he has a plan for our salvation.*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup>in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

**9<sup>th</sup> Carol #292: *Love Has Come***

**RESPONSIVE PRAYER**

It is you, loving God, who lights our path with truth.

**Your Word, Jesus, is truth.**

In his light, draw all to the manger

**to gather in wonder with the shepherds.**

In his light, draw all to the manger

**to kneel in reverence with the wise ones.**

In his light, draw all to the manger

**to sing for joy with the angels.**

In the brightness of his life

**cast away the darkness of injustice, poverty,**

**and hunger in the world.**

It is you, loving God, who meets us on our way.

**In the light of Jesus, show the world the way of life.**

Amen.

**PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**OFFERING**

**OFFERING RESPONSE - *What Child Is This, verse 3***

3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;

come, peasant, king, to own him.

The King of kings salvation brings;

let loving hearts enthrone him.

Raise, raise the song on high,

the virgin sings her lullaby;

joy, joy, for Christ is born,

the babe, the son of Mary!

**OFFERTORY HYMN:** *'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime'* – arr. Robert J. Powell

### OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Good and loving God,  
we rejoice in the birth of Jesus,  
who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace.  
As you have blessed us with your gifts, let them be blessing for others.  
With the trees of the field, with all earth and heaven,  
we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

### DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

**And also 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.  
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 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.

**EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life, at the birth of time your word brought light into the world. In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary, to shine in our dark-ness and to make us your daughters and sons.

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 birth and life among us, his death and resurrection, we await his coming again when all things will be restored in him. By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup, that, held and nourished by you, we may live as your children, shining with the light 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**

**THE 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**

The mystery hidden for the ages is revealed for us in this meal. Come, behold and receive your God.

**COMMUNION**

*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 HYMN # 279: O Little Town of Bethlehem****PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray.

Radiant God, with our eyes we have seen your salvation, and in this meal we have feasted on your grace. May your Word take flesh in us, that we may be your holy people, revealing your glory made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**BLESSING**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!

**Praise God, all creatures here below!**

You are the shepherds telling the story.

**We tell it in the streets and across the land.**

You are the wise ones worshiping with thanksgiving.

**We worship with gifts of song and service, talents and treasures.**

You are the angels announcing peace.

**We live with joy and go now in peace.**

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**



**POSTLUDE** *'The Holly and the Ivy'* – arr. Gordon Phillips

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The flowers are given by Denise and Jim Hager in celebration of Jim's birthday on December 25<sup>th</sup>.

**8:00 am****Assisting Minister:** Christine Dishong**Communion Assistant:****Acolyte:****Usher:****Attendance Last Week:** 33**Weekly Budgeted Need:** \$ 2,669.62**YTD Budgeted Expenses:** \$138,820.00**YTD Actual Expense:** \$ 139,569.06**10:30 am****Assisting Minister:** Sally Foster**Communion Assistant:****Acolyte:****Usher:****Attendance last year:** 76**Last Week's Giving:** \$ 1,802.00**Year to Date Receipts:** \$152,916.26

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