

⁶ *“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all
might believe through him.”*

~John 1:6-7

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

Third Sunday of Advent – December 14, 2014

PO Box 411

Mars, PA 16046-0411

www.stjohnchurchmars.org

Phone: 724-625-1830 email: office@stjohnchurchmars.org

Rev. Deborah Byrum, Guest Pastor

Jacob Gordon, Director of Music

*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 14, 2014

"Rejoice always," begins the reading from First Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. "All God's children got a robe," go the words of the spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes that make us feel happy just to put on. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God's party.

John of the Cross, renewer of the church, died 1591

John was a member of the Carmelite monastic order, and worked to reform it. His writings reflect a deep interest in mystical thought and meditation.

PRELUDE: 'Savior of the Nations, Come' –Hugo Distler

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING THE CANDLES OF ADVENT

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.

Your prophets spoke of a day
when the desert would blossom
and waters 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.

ADVENT SONG #240: *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah* (stanzas 1, 2 & 3)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,
who shapes the whole creation,
who comes with might and mercy,
who fills the hungry with good things.

Amen.

Let us approach the throne of grace with repentant hearts.

Faithful God,
we confess that we have been unfaithful to you.

**Like dry leaves and withered grass,
our lives are blown about by our sins
and the powers of evil around us.**

**Restore us, O God;
let the light of your face shine on us,
and we shall be saved. Amen.**

God is patient, not wanting any to perish,
but all to come to repentance.
In the name of + Jesus Christ,
I bring you this good news:
You are free from all that imprisons you;
your sins are forgiven;
God heals your broken hearts.
Live in peace and harmony
as you wait for the day of God.
Amen.

GATHERING SONG #239: *Hark, the Glad Sound!

***GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
be with you all.
And also with you.

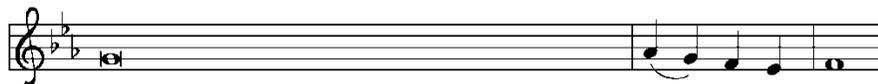
***KYRIE**



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from above, and for our salvation, 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 unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

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

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

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. Amen.**

FIRST READING: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 (page 691 in Old Testament)

Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of the Lord, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion — to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

⁸For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 126

1. We were like people in a dream
When God set Zion free;
We laughed, we sang, our voices rang
With shouts of liberty.
The heathen nations 'round us said,
"God's gifts to them are good";
Yes, God has done great things for us,
We praise God as we should.

2. Restore our fortunes now, O Lord,
Like Negev's waterways,
And grant that those who sow in tears
May reap with hymns of praise.
Let those who weep as they go out
And take with them the seed
Come back in joy with harvest sheaves
Fulfilling all their need.

From: A New Metrical Psalter

Tune: Forest Green

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians: 5: 16-24 (page 205 in New Testament)

Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ's coming.

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.
Repeat alleluia
I am sending my messen - ger before you, who will prepare your way before you.

***GOSPEL READING: John 1: 6 – 8, 19-28** (page 91 in New Testament)

John's gospel describes Jesus as the "light of the world." John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.

The holy gospel, according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who

sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said,
"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,
'Make straight the way of the Lord,'"

as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SERMON SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY #715: *Christ, Be Our Light

***NICENE CREED**

**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 Holy Spirit and 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 INTERCESSION**

With longing and hopeful expectation, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

That the people of God prepare the way of the Lord by bearing witness to the light and giving thanks in all circumstances. Let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

That governments, political leaders, and social service agencies will work together to free all those held captive by poverty, oppression, and disease. Let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

That from the garden of this earth praise and righteousness will spring forth, and fruitful harvests will provide bread to feed all who are hungry. Let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

That you teach us to pray without ceasing as we commend into your care all who are brokenhearted, lonely, grieving, or ill, especially Jim, John, Robert, Frieda, Joe, Bill & Kathy, Jim, Raymond, George, Wanda Jean, Helen, Francis & Grace, Kathryn, Ed, Fred & Jane, and David & Ellen. Let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

That you strengthen the hands of all who serve in this congregation as teachers, musicians, worship leaders, and volunteers. Let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

That you guide our bishop and call committee in seeking a new pastor for this congregation. Let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

That you clothe us with the garments of salvation, until with John of the Cross and all your saints we behold the fullness of your glory. Let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Receive our prayers, faithful God, as we watch and wait for your coming among us in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

***PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY HYMN #266: *All Earth is Hopeful*

(All stand for the final stanza as the gifts are brought forward)

***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 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.

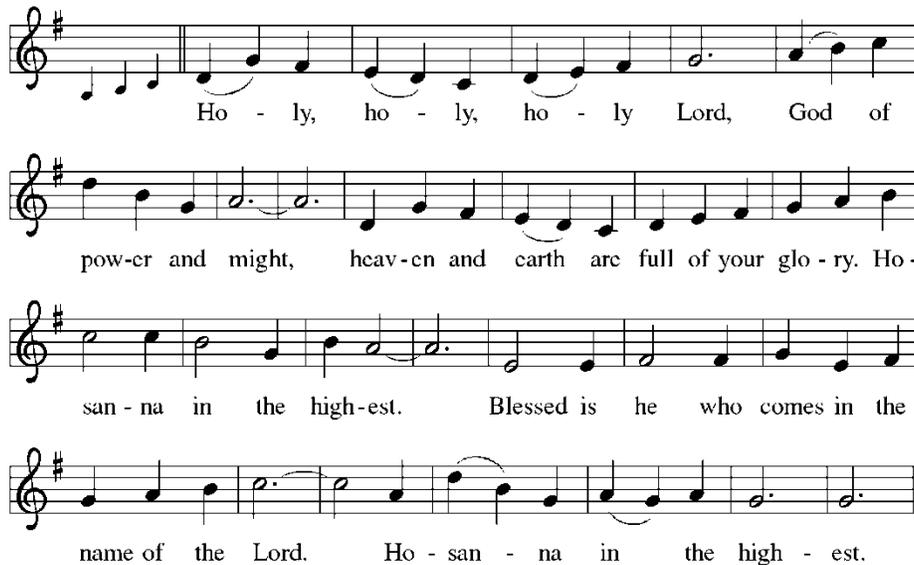
*PREFACE

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.

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 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. Blessed is he who comes in the
name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

*EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

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 betrayed,
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 Christ,
who comes to us in this holy supper.

COMMUNION

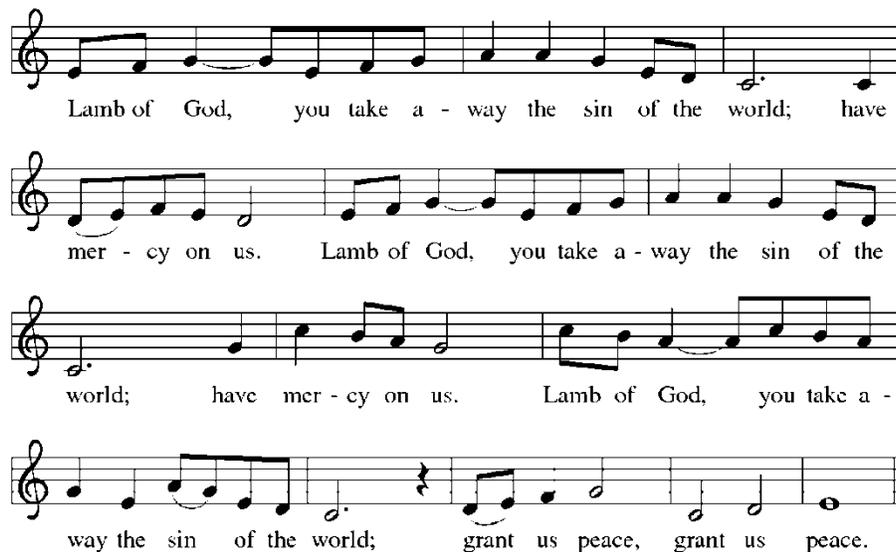
The body of Christ, given for you.

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 cups bordered by green tape has 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 #253: *He Came Down

***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.

Lord God, we give you thanks that you have fed us even now with the banquet that is yet to come.

Keep us alert for signs of your presence in the world around us.

Send us as healing oil and sheltering comfort to those in need,

and make us bold in testifying to the light of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

***BLESSING**

May Almighty God, by whose providence our Savior Christ came among us in great humility, sanctify you with the light of his blessing and set you free from all sin. **Amen.**

May he whose second Coming in power and great glory we await, make you steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and constant in love. **Amen.**

May you, who rejoice in the first Advent of our Redeemer, at his second Advent be rewarded with unending life. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son +, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG #242: *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: ‘*Savior of the Nations, Come*’ – Paul Manz

8:00 am

Assisting Minister: Christine Dishong
Communion Assistant: Cindy Wills
Acolyte: Danielle Dishong
Lector:
Usher: Bob Dishong
Attendance Last Week: 57
Weekly Budgeted Need: \$ 2,640.27
YTD Budgeted Expenses: \$ 124,092.66
YTD Actual Expense: \$ 113,449.97

10:30 am

Assisting Minister: Sally Foster
Communion Assistant: Denise Hager
Acolyte: Cardinal
Lector:
Usher:
Attendance last year: 73
Last Week's Giving: \$ 4,883.50
Year to Date Receipts: \$133,359.50

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