



*"The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."*

*~Mark 1:7-8*

**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**Second Sunday of Advent – December 7, 2014**

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Rev. Marsella Esseck, 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**  
**Second Sunday of Advent – December 7, 2014**

*John called people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing would get in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up our voices fearlessly and say, "See, your God is coming!" We say it to one another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.*

***Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, died around 397***

*While a governor of northern Italy, Ambrose was elected bishop of Milan on the same day he was baptized. He was a famous preacher, a writer of hymns we still sing today, and helped lead St. Augustine to faith.*

**PRELUDE:** Variations on 'Puer Nobis Nascitur' – Nicolas Lebègue

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**LIGHTING THE CANDLES OF ADVENT**

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.  
John the Baptist calls all people to prepare the Lord's way  
for the kingdom of heaven is near.

**Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath.**

**Baptize us with the fire of your Spirit,  
that we may be a light shining in the darkness  
welcoming others as Christ has welcomed us,  
for he is our light and our salvation.**

**Blessed be God forever.**

**Amen.**

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

**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 #264: Prepare the Royal Highway**

**\*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 our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son.  
 By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives;  
 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 40:1-11** (page 667 in Old Testament)

*In grand, flowing, poetic lines, the prophet announces that the exile of God's people in Babylon is over. The Lord will deliver Israel and will care for her as a shepherd cares for his sheep. This word can be trusted, because the only enduring reality in life is the word of the Lord.*

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. <sup>2</sup>Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup>A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

<sup>4</sup>Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. <sup>5</sup>Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

<sup>6</sup>A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. <sup>7</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass.

<sup>8</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

<sup>9</sup>Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"

<sup>10</sup>See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. <sup>11</sup>He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM 85**

1. You have been gracious to your land,  
And Jacob's wealth has been restored;  
You set aside your people's sins  
And blotted out their wrongs, O Lord.

2. Lord, you are speaking now to us,  
And I will listen for my part,  
For you speak peace to faithful souls  
Who turn to you with all their heart.

3. To those who bow in reverent awe,  
Your saving help is very near;

Your purpose is that in our land  
Your radiant glory may appear.

4. Mercy and truth at last have met,  
Justice and peace are reconciled;  
Truth has arisen from the earth,  
Justice looked down from heav'n and smiled.

5. You grant prosperity to us,  
Our land will yield its full increase;  
Justice shall go before your face,  
The pathway for your feet is peace.

*From: A New Metrical Psalter*

*Tune: Canonbury*

**SECOND READING: 2 Peter: 3: 8-15a** (page 238 in New Testament)

*This short letter deals with pressing concerns regarding the final advent of Jesus, especially concerns that could arise over its apparent delay. The author of the letter calls on Christians to anticipate the promised coming of the Lord through conduct dedicated to God.*

<sup>8</sup>But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. <sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

<sup>11</sup>Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, <sup>12</sup>waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? <sup>13</sup>But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; <sup>15</sup>and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

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.

Prepare the way of the Lord. All flesh shall see the salva - tion of God.

*Repeat alleluia*

**\*GOSPEL READING: Mark 1: 1 – 8** (page 34 in New Testament)

*The Gospel of Mark does not begin with a story of Jesus' birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.*

The holy gospel, according to Mark.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. <sup>2</sup>As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; <sup>3</sup>the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'"

<sup>4</sup>John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup>Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

### **CHILDREN'S SERMON SERMON**

**\*HYMN OF THE DAY #255: *There's a Voice in the Wilderness***

#### **\*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.

For the church, that it be a herald of glad tidings, announcing the good news that you are drawing near. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all who strive for peace and an end to conflict and warfare, that righteousness find a home in their midst. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For wilderness and desert terrains, for mountains and plains, for fields fallow in winter, and for fruitful vegetation during these summer days in the Southern Hemisphere. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all who are weighed down with economic instability, sorrow, anxiety, or sickness, especially Jim, John, Robert, Frieda, Joe, Bill & Kathy, Jim, Raymond, George, Wanda Jean, Helen, Francis & Grace, Kathryn, Ed, Fred & Jane, and David & Ellen, that you speak tenderly to them and comfort them in your compassionate embrace. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For this community of faith, that in our busy and fast-paced lives you will grant us the gift of patience and trust in your steadfast love. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For our bishop and call committee, that you guide their way in seeking a new pastor for this congregation. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for Ambrose and all your holy ones who faithfully prepared the way of the Lord. Open our eyes to the new heavens and new earth made known in your advent among us. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

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 #249: *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry***

(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.

**\*EUCHARISTIC 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**

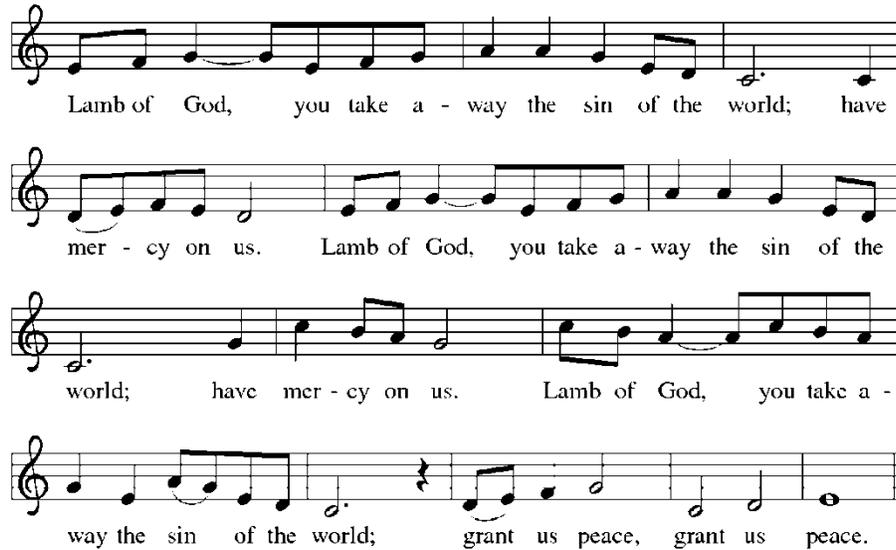
Come to Christ,  
who comes to us in this holy supper.

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

**\*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 #256: *Comfort, Comfort Now My People***

**\*DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

**Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE: 'Prepare the Royal Highway' – Robert Hobby**

The flowers this week are given by the family of Wanda Jean Weidner in honor of her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on Dec. 10. Wanda has been a life-long member of St. John's.

**9:00 am**

**Assisting Minister:** Christine Dishong

**Communion Assistant:** Ruth Ann Tully

**Acolyte:** Cardinal

**Lector:** Sally Foster

**Usher:**

**Attendance Last Week:** 55

**Attendance last year:** 108

**Weekly Budgeted Need:** \$ 2,640.27

**Last Week's Giving:** \$ 613.25

**YTD Budgeted Expenses:** \$ 124,092.66

**Year to Date Receipts:** \$128,476.00

**YTD Actual Expense:** \$ 113,449.97

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