



*“...⁴The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight...’”*

Luke 3:4

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

Second Sunday of Advent – December 6, 2015

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Rev. Robert Zimmerman, 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 6, 2015

Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the Baptizer's voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi's prophesy could as easily herald the coming Lord Jesus as forerunner of the Lord of hosts. Finally all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of the Lord and assist all flesh in capturing a vision of the "salvation of God."

Today we commemorate Nicholas, Bishop of Myra (270-343). Little is known about Nicholas, except that he was a bishop in present-day Turkey. According to legend, he was famous for his giving to the poor, and so has become a symbol of anonymous gift-giving.

PRELUDE: *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry* – Lynn L. Petersen

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***LIGHTING THE CANDLES OF ADVENT**

We praise you, O God, for this circle of light
that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent.
As we light the candles on this wreath,
kindle within us the fire of your Spirit,
That we may be light shining in the darkness.
Enlighten us with your grace,
that we may welcome others as you have welcomed us.
Grant this through Christ our Lord,
whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.
Amen.

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

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,
the Lord of Israel who comes to set us free,
the mighty Savior who comes to show mercy,
the Dawn from on high who guides us into peace.
Amen.

Let us come before God in confession.

Silence for reflection.

To you, O God,
we lift up our souls.
You know us through and through;
we confess our sins to you.
Remember not our sins;
remember us with your steadfast love.
Show us your ways;
teach us your paths;
and lead us in justice and truth,
for the sake of your goodness
in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Sisters and brothers, come with joy
and draw water from the well of salvation.
Remember the gift of baptism:
your sin is washed away in the name of + Jesus;
you belong to Christ;
you are anointed to serve.
Stand up and raise your heads!
The reign of God is near.
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.

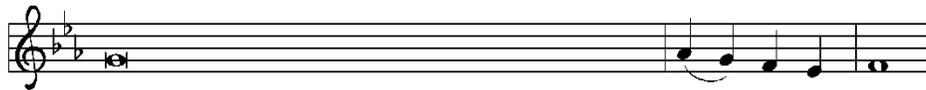
***KYRIE**



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



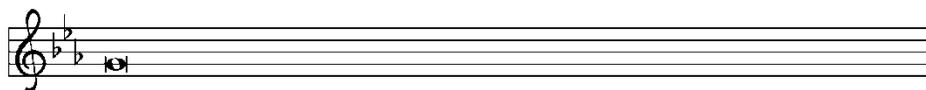
Lord, have mer - cy.



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



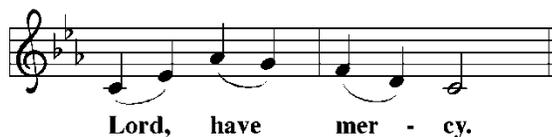
Lord, have mer - cy.



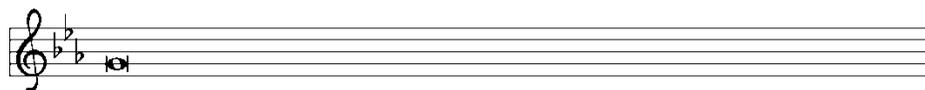
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



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 give to all the people of the world
knowledge of your salvation;**

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: Malachi 3:1-4

The Lord announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means “my messenger”) shall prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God’s people, as silver and gold are refined.

¹See, 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. ²But 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; ³he 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.

⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CANTICLE

The cantor sings the refrain, and all repeat it. The congregation sings the even-numbered verses.

Refrain

In the ten - der com - pas - sion of our God the
dawn from on high shall break up - on us.

1 Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel,
2 You have raised up for us a might - y Savior,
3 Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us from our enemies,
4 to show mercy to our forebears,
5 This was the oath you swore to our fa - ther Abraham:
6 free to worship you without fear,
7 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
8 to give God's people knowledge of sal - vation
9 In the tender compassion of our God
10 to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,

1 you have come to your people and set them free.
2 born of the house of your ser - vant David. *Refrain*
3 from the hands of all who hate us,
4 and to re - member your ho - ly covenant.
5 to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
6 holy and righteous before you, all the days of our life. *Refrain*
7 for you will go before the Lord to pre - pare the way,
8 by the for - give - ness of their sins,
9 the dawn from on high shall break up - on us,
10 and to guide our feet into the way of peace. *Refrain*

SECOND READING: Philippians 1:3-11

The apostle Paul was the pastor of many new churches. He writes in this letter about his joy to be in partnership with the Christians of Philippi. Listen to how tender-hearted Paul, sometimes a stern preacher, is with his friends as he encourages them to grow in love and knowledge.

³I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in

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**

Emmanuel has come, is here, and is coming soon. Let us join in prayer for the church, the earth, and those who are in need, that all receive what God promises to give.

O God, our hope of unity, come to your church around the world. Purify your people and give to all the wisdom and courage to proclaim your word of forgiveness and renewal. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God our Savior, come to the earth that you made. Nurture the health of lands and seas. Give to plants and animals favorable weather. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God of peace, come to all the nations. Inspire heads of state and regional leaders with a passion for justice. Bring peace throughout the world. We pray especially for the Middle East and Africa. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God of love, come to everyone in need. Heal the sick. Answer the cries of those who are poor, those without housing, and those who have fled from violence or famine. We pray especially for Bob, Frieda, Jim, Raymond, Wanda Jean, Francis & Grace, Kathryn, Fred & Jane, David & Ellen, and all those we remember aloud or in our hearts. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God of compassion, come to our congregation and our community. This Advent, help us to prepare for your coming. Make us gifts to one another, that no one remains destitute or despairing. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord of hosts, we praise you for the lives of all the faithful, especially Nicholas, Bishop of Myra. Bring us with them to your feast of eternal compassion. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Receive our prayers, merciful God, and make us ready to receive you when you come through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

***PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY HYMN #255: *There's a Voice in the Wilderness*

(Please 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**



***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 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**

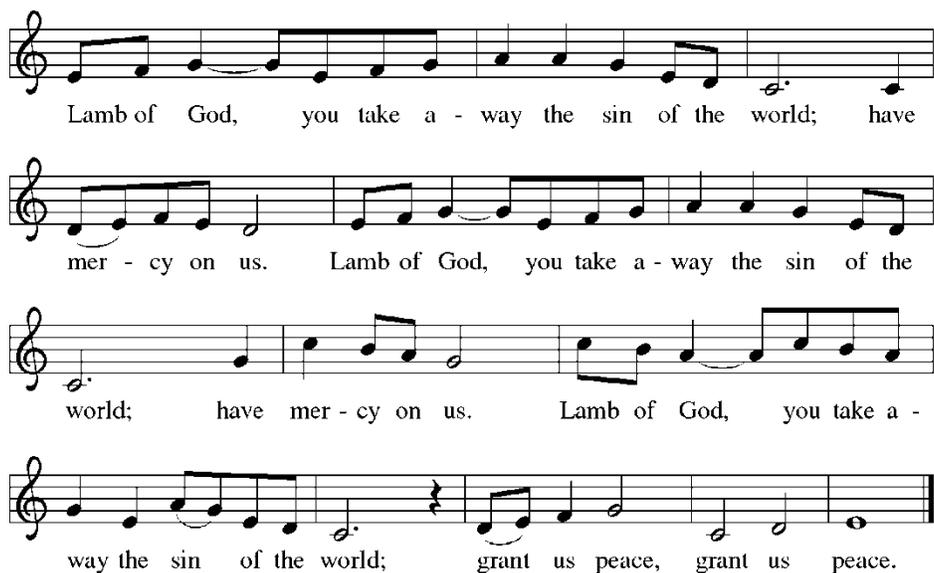
God fills the hungry with good things.
Taste and see that the Lord is good.

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

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

COMMUNION SONG: *Lamb of God*



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.

***POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

Let us pray.
Holy One, we give you thanks
that in this bread and cup
we have feasted again on your endless love.
Let that love overflow more and more in our lives,
that we may be messengers to prepare your way,
harvesters of justice and righteousness,
and bearers of your eternal Word,
our Savior Jesus Christ.
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 A. Hobby

8:00 am

Assisting Minister:	Christine Dishong
Communion Assistant:	Ruth Ann Tully
Acolyte:	
Usher:	Robert Dishong
Attendance Last Week:	68
Weekly Budgeted Need:	\$ 2,755.44
YTD Budgeted Expenses:	\$135,016.67
YTD Actual Expense:	\$130,327.86

10:30 am

Assisting Minister:	Sally Foster
Communion Assistant:	
Acolyte:	
Usher:	Carolyn Jarrett
Attendance Last Year:	57
Last Week's Giving:	\$ 2,012.00
YTD Receipts:	\$127,508.05

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