

*“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.’ ”*

Matthew 11: 10

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

Third Sunday of Advent – December 11, 2016

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Rev. Robert Zimmerman, Pastor

Jacob Gordon, Director of Music Ministries

*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. 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 11, 2016

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: *Lost in the Night* – Anne Krentz Organ

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

***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.

Amen.

***ADVENT SONG #240:** *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah*, stanzas 1-3

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,
who comes to wake us from sleep,
who leads us into the light of grace.

Amen.

Let us prepare the way of the Lord
by confessing our sin against God and neighbor.

God of all time,
we confess that we have not prepared
for your merciful reign among us.
We ignore our neighbors in need
and fail in the labor of justice and peace.
In your mercy forgive us.
Grant us wisdom to welcome your light
and to seek the things that will endure
until Christ comes again in glory.

Amen.

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
In + Jesus Christ your sins are forgiven
and all things are made new.
Rejoice in this good news!
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.

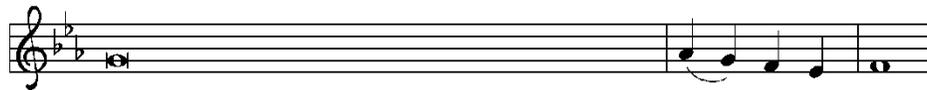
***KYRIE**



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



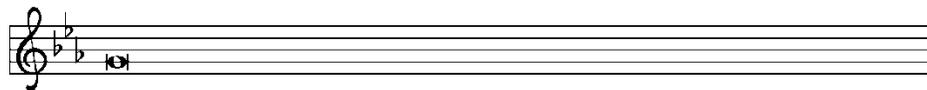
Lord, have mer - cy.



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 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.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

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.

¹The 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.

SONG OF MARY: Luke 1:46b-55

*The cantor sings the refrain, and all repeat it. The congregation sings the verses in **bold**.*



My spir-it re-joic-es in God my Sav-ior.

^{46b}My soul proclaims the greatness | of the Lord,
⁴⁷my spirit rejoices in | God my Savior,
⁴⁸**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your | lowly servant.**

From this day all generations will | call me blessed:
⁴⁹you, the Almighty, have done great | things for me
and holy | is your name.

⁵⁰**You have mercy on | those who fear you,**
from generation to | generation. R

⁵¹You have shown strength | with your arm
and scattered the proud in | their conceit,
⁵²**casting down the mighty | from their thrones**
and lifting | up the lowly.

⁵³You have filled the hungry | with good things
and sent the rich | away empty.
⁵⁴**You have come to the aid of your | servant Israel,**
to remember the prom- | ise of mercy,
⁵⁵the promise made | to our forbears,
to Abraham and his chil- | dren forever. R

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.**

**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**

As we anticipate the fullness of the presence of Christ, we join with the church throughout the world, praying for all who are in need.

For the church and all messengers of the gospel, for all who call upon the name of the Lord, and for congregations throughout the world; that God work through us to bring harmony and reconciliation, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For rain forests and deserts, for wilderness and developed land, and for plants blossoming and dormant; that the splendor and diversity of creation proclaim the glory of the Lord, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For our government, for the military and international relief workers, and for those who care for the stranger, widow, and orphan; that God raise up leaders who work for the protection of all, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For the hungry and homeless, for those in captivity, for the fearful and sorrowful, for those living with HIV/AIDS, and for the sick especially Sally, Bill, Reed, Erin, Davena, Raymond, Francis & Grace, Kathryn, Jane, David & Ellen, those on our prayer list, and all whom we remember aloud or in our hearts; that those who help others serve with patience and grace, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For all who call this community home, for those visiting from near and far, and for those preparing for the holiday season, that the advent of Christ make our hearts and minds rejoice, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

In thanksgiving for the departed who were faithful to God's word; that their words and actions direct us to the one who prepares a way for us, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

In thanksgiving for the departed who were faithful to God's word; that their words and actions direct us to the one who prepares a way for us, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, those spoken aloud and those known only to you, and grant us peace through Jesus Christ, our coming Savior.
Amen.

***PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING

OFFERING HYMN #243: *Lost in the Night

All stand for the final refrain as the gifts are brought forward.

***OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.
Savior of the nations, come.
Make your home here in us.
Feed us with your love,
that our faith shine ever new
and our lives reveal your light.
Amen.

***GREAT THANKSGIVING**

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.

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:

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.

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.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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

Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you.
Share in the feast of salvation.

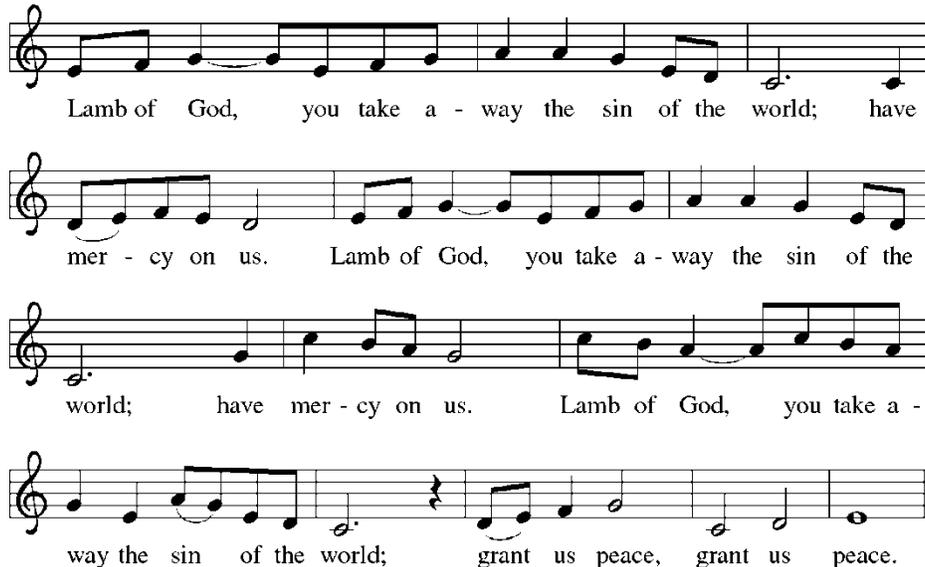
COMMUNION

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 cups bordered by green tape has grape juice.

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

***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 for whom we wait,
you come to us in the broken bread and the cup we share.
Make us ready always to welcome Christ into our hearts,
and send us forth to be your people in the world,
announcing your coming among us
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

***SENDING OF COMMUNION**

Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care:

As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread,
assist us in this ministry on which we are sent forth.

In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those
to whom we bring this sacrament,
that through the body and blood of your Son
we all may know the comfort of your abiding presence.

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: *Hail to the Lord's Anointed

1. Hail to the Lord's a - noin - ted, great Da - vid's great - er Son!
2. You come with res - cue speed - y to those who suf - fer wrong,
3. You shall come down like show - ers up - on the fruit - ful earth;
4. Kings shall fall down be - fore you, and gold and in - cense bring;

Hail, in the time ap - point - ed, your reign on earth be - gun!
to help the poor and need - y, and bid the weak be strong;
love, joy, and hope, like flow - ers, spring in your path to birth.
all na - tions shall a - dore you, your praise all peo - ple sing.

You come to break op - pres - sion, to set the cap - tive free,
to give them songs for sigh - ing, their dark - ness turn to light,
Be - fore you on the moun - tains shall peace, the her - ald, go;
To you shall prayer un - ceas - ing and dai - ly vows as - cend;

to take a - way trans - gres - sion and rule in eq - ui - ty,
whose souls, con - demned and dy - ing, are pre - cious in your sight.
and righ - teous - ness in foun - tains from hill to val - ley flow.
your king - dom still in - creas - ing, a king - dom with - out end.

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: *Prepare the Royal Highway*—Robert Hobby

The flowers this week are given by Amy & Larry Werner to the glory of God in memory of Charles.

8:00 am

Assisting Minister: Christine Dishong
Communion Assistant:
Acolyte:
Lector:
Usher: Bob Dishong
Attendance Last Week: 58
Weekly Budgeted Expense: \$ 3,374.14

YTD Budgeted Expenses: \$165,332.68
YTD Actual Expense: \$156,457.86

10:30 am

Assisting Minister: Martha Ward
Communion Assistant: Denise Hager
Acolyte:
Lector:
Usher: Hager's
Attendance Last Year: 70
Last Week's General Giving: \$ 4,448.05
Last Week's Designated Giving: \$ 500.30
YTD Receipts: \$141,765.98

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Hail to the Lord's Anointed – text by James Montgomery, alt.; music: ELLACOMBE, 18th cent. German melody.