

*“<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.”*

*John 1:6-8*

**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**Third Sunday of Advent – December 17, 2017**

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The Rev. Robert Zimmerman, Pastor  
Maizy Fisher, 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? 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 17, 2017**

*“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.*

**PRELUDE:** *Toccata - Pachelbel*

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*The Claus Family will light the wreath this week for the 8:00 am service.  
The Schneider Family will light the wreath this week for the 10:30 am service.*

### **LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH: ADVENT 3**

We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath  
that marks our days of preparation for Christ’s advent.

As we light the candles on this wreath,

Strengthen our hearts

As we await the Lord’s coming in glory.

Enlighten us with your grace,

that we may serve our neighbors in need.

Grant this through Christ our Lord,

whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

**Amen.**

*Light three candles during the singing of the hymn.*

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

### **GATHERING**

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

#### **\*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 HYMN #244: *Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers***

**\*GREETING**

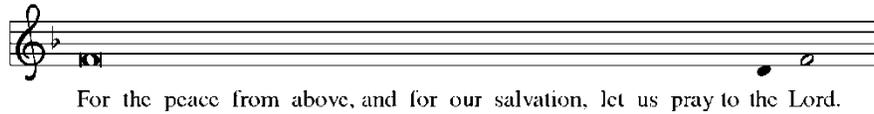
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

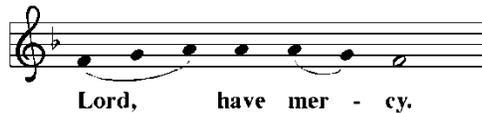
**\*KYRIE**



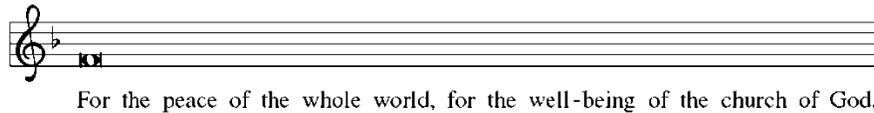
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.



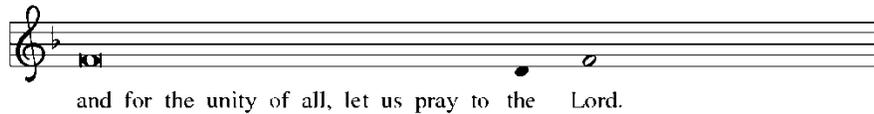
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



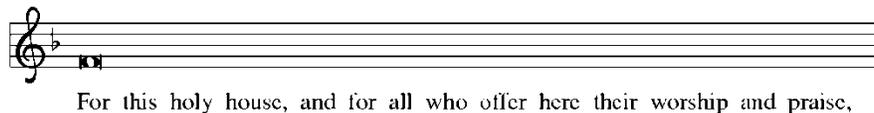
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



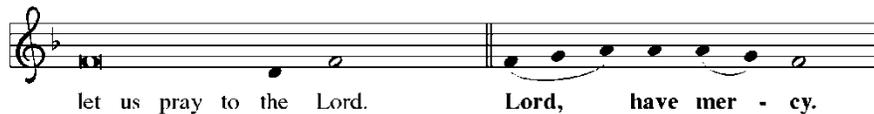
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



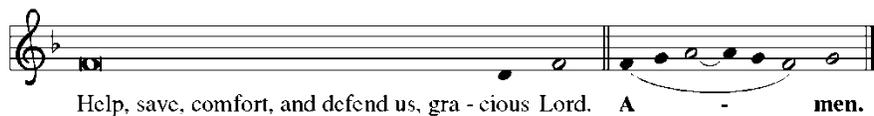
Lord, have mer - cy.



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 defend us, gra - cious Lord. 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.**

## **WORD**

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

### **FIRST READING: Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11**

*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.*

<sup>1</sup>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;

<sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;

<sup>3</sup>to 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.

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

<sup>8</sup>For 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.

<sup>9</sup>Their 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.

<sup>10</sup>I 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.

<sup>11</sup>For 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: HYMN #251 – My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness**

**SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians: 5:16-24**

*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.*

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

<sup>23</sup>May 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. <sup>24</sup>The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**\*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



**\*GOSPEL READING: John 1: 6-8, 19-28**

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*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.*

<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>19</sup>This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup>He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." <sup>21</sup>And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." <sup>22</sup>Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup>He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,  
'Make straight the way of the Lord,'"  
as the prophet Isaiah said.

<sup>24</sup>Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup>They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" <sup>26</sup>John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, <sup>27</sup>the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." <sup>28</sup>This 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 #246: Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding!**

## **APOSTLES CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.\*  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Guided by the light of Christ, let us pray for the coming dawn of joy, healing, and comfort for all God's people.

Guiding Lord, bless church leaders, volunteers, teachers, musicians, acolytes, deacons, pastors, seminarians, and those discerning a call to ministry. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Creating God, protect Earth's wilderness, especially where the lands are isolated and unexplored. Watch over all living creatures who remain free from human exploitation. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Prince of Peace, send us your Spirit of unity, so that justice may spring up among the nations. Give us the will to repair the broken systems that perpetuate injustice. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, comfort your children who are mourning, bind up the brokenhearted, and heal our wounds. We pray for those who are homeless or imprisoned, refugees, those who struggle with addiction or mental illness, and all in need, especially Carol, Amy, Carol, Jeff, Jim, Dan, Bill, Francis & Grace, David & Ellen, those on our prayer list, and all whom we remember aloud or in our hearts. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of justice, strengthen and increase the ministry of food pantries, meal service deliveries, employment training programs, and advocacy for equity among all classes and races. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Eternal God, clothe us in your garments of salvation, so that together we may rejoice in your presence with the saints who have died and with those unable to be with us today. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We raise our prayers to you, O God, in the name of the one who is, who was, and who is to come, Jesus Christ our Lord. **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 #726: *Light Dawns on a Weary World***

*Please stand for the final verse 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'r and might,  
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -  
san-na. 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.

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:  
Blessed are you for the birth of creation.  
Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.  
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.  
Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.  
Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.  
Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,  
the Word made flesh.  
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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup  
we remember your Word dwelling among us,  
full of grace and truth.  
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.  
We look with hope for his coming.  
**Come, Lord Jesus.**  
Holy God, we long for your Spirit.  
Come among us.  
Bless this meal.  
May your Word take flesh in us.  
Awaken your people.  
Fill us with your light.  
Bring the gift of peace on earth.  
**Come, Holy Spirit.**  
All praise and glory are yours,  
Holy One of Israel,  
Word of God incarnate,  
Power of the Most High,  
one God, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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.  
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.

**COMMUNION HYMN #737: *He Comes to Us as One Unknown***

**\*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.  
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 in mission to the world.*

**\*BLESSING**

May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you  
and scatter the darkness from before your path.  
Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

**\*SENDING SONG #815: *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light***

**\*DISMISSAL**

Go in peace

Prepare the way of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE: *Fantasia* - Pachelbel**

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**8:00 am**

**Assisting Minister:** Christine Dishong  
**Communion Assistant:**  
**Acolyte:** Danielle Dishong  
**Lector:**  
**Usher:** Robert Dishong  
**Attendance Last Week:** 61  
**Weekly Budgeted Expense:** \$ 3,185.02  
**YTD Budgeted Expenses:** \$  
**YTD Actual Expense:** \$

**10:30 am**

**Assisting Minister:** Sally Foster  
**Communion Assistant:** Denise Hager  
**Acolyte:**  
**Lector:**  
**Usher:** John Fritz  
**Attendance Last Year:** 41  
**Last Week's General Giving:** \$ 1,563.30  
**Last Week's Designated Giving:** \$ 165.70  
**YTD Receipts:** \$ 149,059.24

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