

Welcome

“Comfort, Comfort”

December 10, 2023



**ST. JOHN'S**  
Lutheran Church  
Grounded • Growing • Branching

## **Welcome to St. John's Lutheran Church**

Good morning and a blessed welcome to you! It is an honor to have you worshiping with us this morning and we pray that you find great comfort and peace in Jesus' Word of love, mercy, and forgiveness!

At St. John's we are pleased to offer two styles of worship services on Sunday morning. In our 8:30 a.m. traditional service, we offer familiar hymns and rich, traditional worship forms in a meaningful and inspirational setting. Our 11:00 a.m. contemporary service includes the same message as our 8:30 a.m. service, but in an informal style, enhanced with contemporary music. We encourage you to try both worship styles! Thank you for worshiping with us; we would love to have you join us again!

*(If you need assistance or need a hearing aid device, please see one of the ushers.)*

---

### **Contact Us**

**2727 North Union Boulevard, Decatur, IL 62526**

**Phone: (217) 875-3656; website: [www.stjohnsdecatur.com](http://www.stjohnsdecatur.com)**

**Church office hours: 8:00 am – 4:00 pm, Monday – Friday**

**Members of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod & Unity Christian School**



### **St. John's Staff**

**Rev. Adam Ray**, Lead Pastor

[pastoradam@stjohnsdecatur.com](mailto:pastoradam@stjohnsdecatur.com)

**Rev. Aaron Bird**, Assoc. Pastor

[pastoraaron@stjohnsdecatur.com](mailto:pastoraaron@stjohnsdecatur.com)

**Malinda Standerfer**, Dir. of Christian Ed

[dcemalinda@stjohnsdecatur.com](mailto:dcemalinda@stjohnsdecatur.com)

**Ted Hesse**, Worship Music Director

[tedh@stjohnsdecaur.com](mailto:tedh@stjohnsdecaur.com)

**Georgia Newman**, Office Manager

[georgian@stjohnsdecatur.com](mailto:georgian@stjohnsdecatur.com)

**Carol Reynolds**, Financial Secretary

[carolr@stjohnsdecatur.com](mailto:carolr@stjohnsdecatur.com)

**Jeff Miller**, Custodian

### **Unity Christian School Faculty & Staff – Members of St. John's Lutheran Church**

Ciara Collins

Anne Jesgarz

Angela Martinek

Jeff Salefski

Brenda Salogga

Melissa Saurmann

Stephanie Wilkerson

**SECOND SUNDAY AFTER ADVENT  
DECEMBER 10, 2023**

**RINGING OF THE BELLS**

**WELCOME & GREETING**

**OPENING SONG**

*Hark the Glad Sound*

*LSB 349*

**INVOCATION**

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

**LIGHT ONE CANDLE**

**CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

L: With hope in the Lord's promises of renewal by His Word and Spirit, let us together confess our sins to Him.

**C: Out of the depths I cry to You, Lord!**

L: Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive to my pleas for mercy!

**C: If You, O Lord, should mark iniquities, I would have no hope.**

L: But with You there is forgiveness, therefore we place our trust in You.

**C: Restore us, Lord God, and set us free from our sins.**

L: Renew us in Your hope, that we may wait for Your salvation.

**C: Because of Your steadfast love for us in Christ, redeem us from all our iniquities. Amen.**

L: As we wait for Jesus' final coming, we place our hope and our confidence in the promises of His Word and find our home in the presence of His Spirit. Confessing our sins and turning away from them through lives of repentance, we are assured again this day of the Lord's steadfast love and plentiful redemption for us. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

## **SALUTATION**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

## **LISTENING TO GOD SPEAK TO US THROUGH HIS WORD**

*Old Testament*

*Isaiah 40:1-11*

<sup>1</sup> Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. <sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. <sup>3</sup> A voice cries: "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> And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." <sup>6</sup> A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. <sup>7</sup> The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows on 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> Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" <sup>10</sup> Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. <sup>11</sup> He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

L: This is the Word of our Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

*New Testament*

*2 Peter 3:8-14*

<sup>8</sup> But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. <sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar,

and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. <sup>11</sup> Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in 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 on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! <sup>13</sup> But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. <sup>14</sup> Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. (ESV)

L: This is the Word of our Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **COMMON ALLELUIA and VERSE**

#### **HOLY GOSPEL**

*Mark 1:1-8*

L: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the first chapter.

**C: Glory to You, O Lord.** (*sung*)

<sup>1</sup> The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. <sup>2</sup> As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, <sup>3</sup> the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'" <sup>4</sup> John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup> And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup> Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup> And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. <sup>8</sup> I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (ESV)

L: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

**C: Praise to You, O Christ.** (*sung*)

### **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

*DCE Malinda Standerfer*

## **SERMON HYMN**

*Comfort, Comfort Ye My People*

LSB 347

## **SERMON**

*"Comfort, Comfort"*

*Isaiah 40:1-11*

*Pastor Aaron Bird*

## **APOSTLES' CREED**

## **OFFERING**

*Tithes and gifts may be placed in the collection plate or given at  
[www.stjohnsdecatur.com/giving](http://www.stjohnsdecatur.com/giving).*

## **PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH**

*The Leader will conclude every prayer with: "Lord in Your mercy"  
**People respond with: "Here our prayer."***

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

## **BIBLE BLESSING**

## **RECOGNITION OF BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **BENEDICTION**

## **SENDING SONG**

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (Vv. 1, 6-7)*

LSB 357

**SECOND SUNDAY AFTER ADVENT**

December 10, 2023 | 11:00 a.m.

**OPENING SONGS**

*Sing We The Song of Emmanuel*  
*I Speak Jesus*

**WELCOME & GREETING**

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE**

**CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION PRAYER**

**SHARING THE PEACE**

**OFFERING**

*Emmanuel*

**SCRIPTURE READING**

*Isaiah 40:1-11*

**CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

*DCE Malinda Standerfer*

**SERMON**

*"Comfort, Comfort"*

*Isaiah 40:1-11*

*Pastor Aaron Bird*

**APOSTLES' CREED**

**PRAYERS**

**LORD'S PRAYER**

**BIBLE BLESSING**

**RECOGNITION OF BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**BLESSING**

**SENDING SONG**

*My Lighthouse*

## SUNDAY SERVANTS

Preacher .....	Pastor Aaron Bird
Worship Leader .....	Pastor Adam Ray
Reader .....	Jeff Salefski
Lay Minister .....	8:30 – Drew Miller 11:00 – Matt Cushing
Organist .....	Sharon Cripe
Ushers .....	8:30 – Gary Schwartzle/Rick Laskowski 11:00 – Dan Zimmerman/Debbie Strong
Computer .....	8:30 – Mike Patzwitz 11:00 – Julia Cushing
Live Stream .....	11:00 – Brandon Patzwitz
Camera .....	11:00 – Brandon Patzwitz
Sound .....	8:30 – Brendan Duewer 11:00 – Doug Hicks
Vocals .....	Amanda Ray, Janice Wright, Ted Hesse
Acoustic Guitar .....	Wendy Salefski
Piano .....	Angela Cushing

**OUR MISSION** We are restored to God through the death and resurrection of Jesus. As a family of Christians, we are dedicated to the love and forgiveness of Christ as we reach out, preach and teach the truth of God’s Word to each other, our community and the world.

**IN NEED OF PRAYER:** If you would like to be added to the prayer list or the prayer chain, please contact the church office. Please call the prayer chain with an update of your prayer request.

**IN THE MILITARY:** Kaleb Blakeman, Laura Byers, Bryon Chaney, Kimberly Chaney, Kristel Chaney, Travis Chaney, Dan Cheney, Tristin Comer, Randy Edwards, Caleb Goodson, Austin Highcock, Braden Highcock, Destiny Little, Noah Lung, Nathan Lung, Andrew Nailer, Jared Pinney, Caitlin Goodson, Tyler Salefski, Jacob Thornell



## CONGREGATION NEWS

**“The Clothing of the King” - Advent Services** will begin on Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> through December 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. (Notice the time change.) Advent Dinner will be served starting at 5:00 p.m. If you would like a ride to the meal and/or the service, please contact the church office. This Wednesday will be soup & salad served by the youth group..

**Adult Sunday School Hour:** Pastor Adam is leading a Bible Study series during Sunday morning Adult Education, focusing on the Holy Gospel. Come join us in the Fellowship Hall each Sunday at 9:45 a.m. as we learn more about our faith together.

**Christmas Services:** Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 (one service), Lessons & Carols service with Christmas Brunch following; Christmas Eve service at 9:30 a.m. (one service); Christmas Eve Candlelight services: 2:30 & 4:30 p.m.; Christmas Day service with Communion at 9:30 a.m.

**Christmas Brunch** will follow the Lessons & Carols service on Sunday, Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>. We hope you will be a part of this time of fellowship with one another!

**Bus Trip** to Little Theatre in Sullivan to see “A Christmas Carol” on Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. Cost is \$36.00. Please contact Jerry Pelz at 217-433-2961.

**Northeast Community Fund Service** project will be Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. We will meet at NECF and fill Christmas Baskets. Bring the whole family for some fun and fellowship.

**Friendship Circle** will hold its annual Christmas party at 1:00 on Tuesday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, in the fellowship hall. Please bring your appetite plus a snack, appetizer, or dessert to share. Ladies, even if you have never attended a meeting, come celebrate Christmas with us on the 19<sup>th</sup>!

**Poinsettias:** If you wish to purchase a Poinsettia in someone’s memory or honor, please use a Poinsettia offering envelopes located on the back table.

Suggested donation of \$20.00. Deadline to purchase the Poinsettias is Sunday, December 17.

**Annual Mitten Christmas Tree** is in the foyer and needs your help with decorations. Donate gloves, mittens, scarves, and hats; and hang them on the tree. This is a long-standing partnership between St. John's and Northeast Community Fund.

**Offering Envelopes** are available in your mailbox. If you did not receive envelopes and would like some, please contact the church office.

**Order St. John's Shirts** for your whole family using the order form on the table in the back of the church. Soft t-shirts are available in adult and youth sizes. Moisture-wicking short-sleeved polos and long-sleeved quarter-zip come in both men's and women's cuts. All orders are due to the church office by December 17th. Shirts will arrive in January.

**Choir Robes:** If you would like an old choir robe, please contact Del Gross.

**Mite Boxes:** One of the mission grants being supported with our mites in 2023-2025 is the Serving God's Children with Special Needs — Journeys Lutheran School, Milwaukee, WI \$100,000. Mite boxes are collected at the back of the sanctuary the first Sunday of each month. All congregation members are encouraged to give.

**Thank you** for all your generous donations to NECF.

**Thank you** to everyone for all your prayers. God has been good and at this time the cancer has stabilized. *-Delmar Gross*

**Stewardship Seeds: Romans 15:4 – “For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction.”** God’s Word was given to us to bless us. The Bible warns us of our sin and points us to Christ for our salvation. The Bible also instructs us how to live out our Christian lives (this is the “third use of the Law”). As Christians, we should welcome this instruction in humble faith. We know that Christ has saved us; now, we want to know how to live lives of faith that are pleasing to Him.

---

**Last Week’s Giving**

Weekly Needed .....	\$12,403.85
General Fund .....	\$11,637.00
Total Giving .....	\$11,637.00

**Last Week’s Attendance**

8:30 a.m.....	129
11:00 a.m.....	53
Total.....	182
Wednesday Adult Bible Study .....	13
Wednesday Advent Service.....	76

## THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

8:30 A.M. .... Traditional Service

9:45 A.M. .... Education Hour (FH)

11:00 A.M. .... Contemporary Service

### MONDAY, DECEMBER 11

6:30 P.M. .... Boy Scouts (FH)

### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12

10:00 A.M. .... Circuit Meeting (FH)

1:00 P.M. .... Staff Meeting

6:30 P.M. .... Lay Ministry Meeting

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13

10:00 A.M. .... Adult Bible Study (FH)

5:00 P.M. .... Advent Meal (Soup & Salad)

6:00 P.M. .... Advent Service

7:00 P.M. .... Bell Rehearsal

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14

5:30 P.M. .... TOPS

6:00 P.M. .... Choir Rehearsal

7:00 P.M. .... Worship Practice

### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15

No church activities scheduled.

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16

10:00 A.M. .... Service Project at NECF

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

9:30 A.M. .... Lessons & Carols Service

10:30 A.M. .... Christmas Brunch

4:00 P.M. .... Confirmation Class (FH)

6:00 P.M. .... Youth Christmas Party (FH)