

*Welcome*

***"A Sight for Sore Eyes"***  
***December 31, 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.)*

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### **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

# **FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS**

**December 31, 2023**

**8:30 a.m.**

***Our Vision: Grounded in Christ, Growing in Faith, Branching to Others***

## **PRE-SERVICE MUSIC AND A TIME FOR PRAYER**

*Good morning and a blessed welcome to you! It truly is an honor to have you worshiping with us this morning and it is our prayer that you find great comfort and peace in Jesus' Word of love, mercy, and forgiveness! Thank you for worshiping with us; we would love to have you join us again!*

## **RINGING OF THE BELLS**

## **WELCOME/GREETING OF ONE ANOTHER**

*Please take time to complete the appropriate side of the attendance registration cards. Once completed, pass the cards toward the center aisle. They will be collected during the offering.*

## **OPENING SONG**

*Let All Together Praise Our God*

*LSB 389*

## **INVOCATION**

## **OPENING SENTENCES**     *(Psalm 89:1, 52; 71:19, 23)*

**L:** I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever;

**C:** **with my mouth I will make known Your faithfulness to all generations.**

**L:** Your righteousness, O God, reaches the high heavens.

**C:** **You who have done great things, O God, who is like You?**

**L:** My lips will shout for joy, when I sing praises to You;

**C:** **my soul also, which You have redeemed.**

**L:** Blessed be the LORD forever!

**C:** **Amen and Amen.**

## **CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

L: People redeemed by the Lord, let us now make confession of our sins to God, our heavenly Father.

**C: Merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We repent of having sinned in thought, in word, and in deed. So often we have left undone those things which we ought to have done and have done those things which we ought not to have done. We sincerely repent of our sins and humbly ask for the grace and forgiveness that we know to be ours in Jesus, our Savior. By the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, lead us, heavenly Father, to change what is sinful in our lives so that each day we grow in righteousness and godly living to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

L: God has promised pardon, life, and salvation because of the atoning sacrifice of His beloved Son, who has replaced slavery to sin with a priceless inheritance of freedom and joy. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, I forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. As you believe, so may it be.

**C: Amen.**

## **SALUTATION**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

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

*Old Testament*

*Isaiah 61:10–62:3*

<sup>10</sup> I am overwhelmed with joy in the LORD my God! For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness. I am like a bridegroom dressed for his wedding or a bride with her jewels.

<sup>11</sup> The Sovereign LORD will show his justice to the nations of the world. Everyone will praise him! His righteousness will be like a garden in early spring, with plants springing up everywhere. 62 <sup>1</sup> Because I love Zion, I will not keep still. Because my heart yearns for Jerusalem, I cannot remain silent. I will not stop praying for her until her righteousness shines like the dawn, and her salvation blazes like a burning torch. <sup>2</sup> The nations will see your

righteousness. World leaders will be blinded by your glory. And you will be given a new name by the LORD's own mouth. <sup>3</sup> The LORD will hold you in his hand for all to see—a splendid crown in the hand of God. (NLT)

L: This is the Word of our Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

*New Testament*

*Galatians 4:4–7*

<sup>4</sup> But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. <sup>5</sup> God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children. <sup>6</sup> And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, "Abba, Father." <sup>7</sup> Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir. (NLT)

L: This is the Word of our Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

## **COMMON ALLELUIA AND VERSE**

### **HOLY GOSPEL**

*Luke 2:22–40*

L: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter.

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

<sup>22</sup> Then it was time for their purification offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> The law of the Lord says, "If a woman's first child is a boy, he must be dedicated to the LORD." <sup>24</sup> So they offered the sacrifice required in the law of the Lord—"either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." <sup>25</sup> At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him <sup>26</sup> and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. <sup>27</sup> That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, <sup>28</sup> Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, <sup>29</sup> "Sovereign Lord, now let your

servant die in peace, as you have promised. <sup>30</sup> I have seen your salvation, <sup>31</sup> which you have prepared for all people. <sup>32</sup> He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!" <sup>33</sup> Jesus' parents were amazed at what was being said about him. <sup>34</sup> Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby's mother, "This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. <sup>35</sup> As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul. <sup>36</sup> Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher, and she was very old. Her husband died when they had been married only seven years. <sup>37</sup> Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer. <sup>38</sup> She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem. <sup>39</sup> When Jesus' parents had fulfilled all the requirements of the law of the Lord, they returned home to Nazareth in Galilee. <sup>40</sup> There the child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him. (NLT)

L: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

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

## **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

*Pastor Aaron Bird*

## **SERMON HYMN**

*Angels from the Realms of Glory*

*LSB 367*

## **SERMON**

*"A Sight for Sore Eyes"*

*Luke 2:22-40*

*Pastor Aaron Bird*

## **APOSTLES' CREED**

## **OFFERING**

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

## **PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH**

*The Leader will conclude every prayer with: "Lord, in Your mercy,"*

***People respond with: "hear our prayer."***

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **BENEDICTION**

## **SENDING SONG**

*Lord, Bid Your Servant Go in Peace*

*LSB 937*

# **FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS**

December 31, 2023 | 11:00 a.m.

## **OPENING SONGS**

*Hark The Herald Angels Sing*  
*O Come All Ye Faithful/Sing To The King*

## **WELCOME & GREETING**

## **CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION PRAYER**

## **SHARING THE PEACE**

## **OFFERING**

## **SCRIPTURE READING**

*Luke 2:22-40*

## **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

*Pastor Aaron Bird*

## **SERMON**

*"A Sight for Sore Eyes"*

*Luke 2:22-40*

*Pastor Adam Ray*

## **APOSTLES' CREED**

## **PRAYERS**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **BLESSING**

## **SENDING SONG**

*All The Earth*



## SUNDAY SERVANTS

Preacher .....	Pastor Adam Ray
Worship Leader .....	Pastor Aaron Bird
Reader .....	Frank Whitehead
Lay Minister .....	Larry Westbrook/Mark Langston
Organist .....	Sharon Cripe
Ushers .....	8:30 – David Vanskike 11:00 – Dan Murphey/Dan Zimmerman
Computer .....	8:30 – Brandon Patzwitz 11:00 – Ava Saurmann
Live Stream .....	11:00 – Lindsay Tipsword
Camera .....	11:00 – Eric Brown
Sound .....	8:30 – Brendan Duewer 11:00 – John Salogga

### *Praise Team*

Vocals .....	Lindsay Tipsword, Kelli Langston, Ted Hesse
Acoustic Guitar .....	Wendy Salefski
Piano .....	Ted Hesse

**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:** 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

**Meal Train:** A meal train has been set up for Frank & Janet Whitehead. They have requested meals for Sunday's and Tuesday's. They have no dietary restrictions. You can call the office to sign up or use the link below. Any questions, please contact Beth Tatum.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C054AA8AD29A0FE3-46818534-meal>

**What are you doing for dinner on January 10<sup>th</sup>?** Let us take dinner off our plate! Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m., pizza, salad, ice cream bar. Food, fun, and free! #lifetogether

**All Ladies are invited to attend the LWML meeting** on Sunday, January 14th after the 11:00 service. We will have lunch and discuss what we would like to do in 2024. We are considering running three groups based on schedule availability, which would roughly fall into women still in school, women to meet in the evening, and women to meet during the day. More information will be discussed at the meeting. **Bring a free will donation for lunch. Contact Brenda Salogga at [dnbsal@comcast.net](mailto:dnbsal@comcast.net) or text her at 217-429-9183 so we have a general headcount for food.** If you are able to come at the last minute, come! We really want you there.

**Youth Ski Trip Retreat:** The youth are going on a Ski Trip Retreat on (Jan. 12-14). Some youth would like to go but cannot due to funding. If you would like to help by donating toward this, please contact Malinda.

**SOUP'S ON!** The Ladies Friendship Circle officers will prepare a variety of soups for our annual soup luncheon at 1:00 on Tuesday, January 16th. Bring your appetite and enjoy lunch with friends, followed by bingo. Old, new, and prospective members are welcome! Anyone who wants to help prepare favors for homebound members of St. John's should come at 12:30.

**Poinsettia's:** If you purchased a poinsettia, please take one with you.

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

**STEWARDSHIP SEEDS: Psalm 8:2 – “Out of the mouth of babes and infants, you have established strength.”** Jesus pointed to a little child as the image of faith. Infants and children show us a living picture of the sort of trust and dependence we should have on our Heavenly Father. The good works of our Christian life flow forth from that trust.

**Last Week’s Giving**

Weekly Needed .....	\$12,403.85
General Fund .....	\$29,107.00
Online Offering.....	\$1,122.06
Total Giving .....	\$30,229.06

**Last Week’s Attendance**

December 24 <sup>th</sup> 9:30 a.m.....	89
December 24 <sup>th</sup> 2:30 p.m.....	152
December 24 <sup>th</sup> 4:30 p.m.....	184
Total.....	425
December 25 <sup>th</sup> .....	38

## THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

8:30 A.M. .... Traditional Service  
9:45 A.M. .... Fellowship in the Lounge Area  
11:00 A.M. .... Contemporary Service

### MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 2024

Happy New Year – Church Office Closed

### TUESDAY, JANUARY 2

1:00 P.M. .... Staff Meeting  
5:30 P.M. .... Outreach Meeting  
5:30 P.M. .... Fellowship Hall Reserved  
6:30 P.M. .... Parish Planning Meeting (Rock)

### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3

10:30 A.M. .... Sabbatical Meeting

### THURSDAY, JANUARY 4

5:30 P.M. .... TOPS  
7:00 P.M. .... Worship Practice

### FRIDAY, JANUARY 5

No church activities scheduled.

### SATURDAY, JANUARY 6

No church activities scheduled.

### SUNDAY, JANUARY 7

8:30 A.M. .... Traditional Service  
9:45 A.M. .... Fellowship & Refreshments  
11:00 A.M. .... Contemporary Service  
4–5:30 P.M. .... Confirmation Class  
5:30 ..... Dinner  
6:00 P.M. .... Jr. High Youth Groups