

*Welcome*

**"WHAT ARE WE SEARCHING FOR?"**

**DECEMBER 15, 2024**



**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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### **The Lord's Supper**

Though we are eager for all to participate fully in the Lord's Supper, we do not want to compromise any portion of God's Word among us. Because Scripture states that the Lord's Supper can be taken to one's spiritual harm if not properly understood, we ask all visitors to refer to the following statement of belief regarding the Lord's Supper before communing:

*I am truly sorry for the sin in my life. I am struggling to die to my sin and to live in faith in Jesus. I am looking to Jesus to empower me to stop my sinning and to live a new life in Him. I believe when I receive the bread, I am receiving the true body of Christ, and when I receive the wine, I am receiving the true blood of Jesus. I believe that when I receive His true body and blood my sins are forgiven, I am given power over sin, death and the devil, and the gift of eternal life. My faith is completely in the words of Jesus.*

The Lord's Supper offers the two-fold gift of forgiveness and peace with God on the one hand, and unity and oneness among those who commune together on the other hand (Matt. 26:28; 1 Cor. 10:16-17). Those who receive the body and the blood of the Lord do so in terms of their relationship with God as well as with their fellow-communicants. Therefore, all baptized believers who understand and agree with the above Lutheran teaching of the Lord's Supper are welcome to attend. As always, we encourage you to speak with Pastor Ray or Pastor Aaron with any questions or concerns. Thank you.

Disabled – The pastor and lay minister will gladly commune anyone unable to come to the communion rail. Let the pastor or an usher know before the service begins.

## THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

DECEMBER 15, 2024

*Grounded in Christ, Growing in Faith, Branching to Others*

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

### RINGING OF THE BELLS

### WELCOME & GREETING

### OPENING SONG

*Hark the Glad Sound*

*LSB 349*

### INVOCATION

### CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

L: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**C: But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

*Silence for reflection on God's Word and self-examination.*

L: Let us then confess our sins to God our Father:

**C: Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

L: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the

name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

### **LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

L: We light the third Advent candle as we prepare for the arrival of the Savior, who would come to His people in human flesh, and who promises to come again. In a world of darkness, a light shines. Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

**C: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

L: The third, pink Advent candle has been known as the shepherd candle or the candle of joy. The third Sunday of Advent is known also as Gaudete Sunday. *Gaudete* in Latin means “rejoice,” as found in Philippians 4:4. We find our joy in Christ this season and always as we prepare to celebrate His birth. Jesus affirms the joy found only in Him as we remain connected to Him: “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”

**C: The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.**

L: Guided by the light of joy, we respond with the psalmist: “Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into His presence with singing!

**C: Know that the Lord, He is God! It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.**

### **HYMN**

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel V. 5-7*

*LSB 357*

### **SALUTATION**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

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

### **OLD TESTAMENT**

*Zephaniah 3:14-20*

<sup>14</sup> Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! <sup>15</sup> The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil. <sup>16</sup> On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. <sup>17</sup> The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. <sup>18</sup> I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach. <sup>19</sup> Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. <sup>20</sup> At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes," says the Lord. (ESV)

L: This is the Word of our Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **New Testament**

*Philippians 4:4-7*

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. <sup>5</sup> Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; <sup>6</sup> do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (ESV)

L: This is the Word of our Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

## **COMMON ALLELUIA AND VERSE**

## **HOLY GOSPEL**

*Luke 7:18-28*

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

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

<sup>18</sup> The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, <sup>19</sup> calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" <sup>20</sup> And when the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'" <sup>21</sup> In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. <sup>22</sup> And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. <sup>23</sup> And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." <sup>24</sup> When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>25</sup> What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing and live in luxury are in kings' courts. <sup>26</sup> What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>27</sup> This is he of whom it is written, "'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.'" <sup>28</sup> I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." (ESV)

L: This is the Gospel of our Lord

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

## **SERMON**

*"What Are We Searching For?"*

*Luke 7:18-28*

*Pastor Aaron Bird*

## **NICENE 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: "We rejoice in You always,"  
**People respond with: "again I will say, Rejoice."***

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

**PREFACE** (*responses sung*)

## **PROPER PREFACE**

**SANCTUS** (*sung*)

## **WORDS OF OUR LORD**

## **PAX DOMINI**

**AGNUS DEI** (*sung*)

## **DISTRIBUTION**

## **DISTRIBUTION HYMNS**

<i>Come, Thou Precious Ransom Come</i>	<i>LSB 350</i>
<i>Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness</i>	<i>LSB 849</i>
<i>Rejoice, My Heart, Be Glad and Sing</i>	<i>LSB 737</i>

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **BLESSING**

## **SENDING HYMN**

<i>Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee</i>	<i>LSB 803</i>
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## **POSTLUDE**

**THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT**  
**DECEMBER 15, 2024 | 11:00 a.m.**

**OPENING SONGS**

*Hymn of Joy*  
*Sing We The Song of Emmanuel*

**WELCOME & GREETING**

**CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION PRAYER**

**SHARING THE PEACE**

**OFFERING**

*Lord I Lift Your Name on High*

**SCRIPTURE READING**

*Luke 7:18-28*

**SERMON**

*"What Are We Searching For?"*

*Luke 7:18-28*

*Pastor Aaron Bird*

**APOSTLES' CREED**

**PRAYERS**

**LORD'S PRAYER**

**COMMUNION**

*Emmanuel*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**BLESSING**

**SENDING SONG**

*This Is Our God*



## SUNDAY SERVANTS

Preacher .....	Pastor Aaron Bird
Worship Leader .....	Pastor Adam Ray
Reader .....	Jan Bryant
Communion Helper .....	Jerry Pelz & Jeff Salefski
Lay Minister .....	8:30 – Larry Westbrook 11:00 – Michael Baggett
Organist .....	Carol Pelz
Ushers .....	8:30 – Brady Fawcett 11:00 – Dan Murphey/Tom Schollenbruch
Computer .....	8:30 – Ted Hesse 11:00 – Zach Hesse
Live Stream .....	8:30 – Eric Brown
Camera .....	8:30 – Eric Brown
Sound .....	8:30 – Jessie Denning 11:00 – Jessie Denning
Vocals.....	Amanda Ray, Lindsay Tipsword, 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:** 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

## CONGREGATION NEWS

**"His Gospel is Peace" - Advent Services** will begin on Wednesday, December 4<sup>th</sup> through December 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. Advent Dinner will be served starting at 5:00 p.m. This Wednesday will be Brinner (breakfast for dinner) served by the Youth.

### CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

Sunday, December 22 <sup>nd</sup> at 9:30 a.m.	Lessons & Carols Service
Tuesday, the 24 <sup>th</sup> at 2:30 & 4:30 p.m.	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Wednesday, the 25 <sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m.	Christmas Service w/ Communion

**Christmas Brunch** will follow the Lessons & Carols service on Sunday, Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup>. We hope you will be a part of this time of fellowship with one another! For lots of laughs and festive fun, you are invited to join in a **White Elephant Gift Exchange** during the Christmas Brunch! Just bring a wrapped gift, and together we'll share some laughs, enjoy a few surprises, and maybe even spark a little friendly rivalry!

**Seeking Names:** St. John's is seeking to call a Director of Faith Formation! As we begin this process, we are gathering names of potential candidates for the position. How can you help? 1) Review the job description (located on the back table) 2) Spread the word - share this news with family, friends, and any LCMS contacts! 3) Let us know of any possible candidates! Contact Rachel Tavarczyk ([rtavarczyk@gmail.com](mailto:rtavarczyk@gmail.com)) or Pastor Adam.

**Ladies Friendship Circle** will celebrate Christmas on Tues, Dec., 17<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. Bring a snack to share and join us for some fun fellowship. An optional project is bringing an item for the dogs and cats at the Macon County Animal Shelter. Please see the E-Messenger Newsletter for more information. All ladies are invited and bring a friend!

**If you wish to purchase a Poinsettia** in someone's memory/honor, please use a Poinsettia offering envelope located on the back table. Suggested donation of \$20.00. Deadline to purchase Poinsettias is Sun., Dec. 15.

**Annual Mitten Christmas Tree** will be in the foyer by Sunday, Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>. Please help decorate with donated gloves, mittens, scarves, and hats to hang on the tree. All items will be donated to Northeast Community Fund.

**NECF Christmas Baskets:** If you would like to provide a Christmas dinner for a low income family, the Christmas Basket forms are on the back table. Please return the forms and money in the collection plate or to the Church office by Dec. 22.

**Unity Auction Team** - Unity's largest fundraiser of the year will take place May 2, 2025, and we need your help! Unity is looking for people with event planning/fundraising experience, or just a passion for the school and willingness to help to join our 2025 Auction Team. You can contribute in a way that works with your schedule and unique gifts. Please get in touch with Brian Booth at [bbooth@unitydecatour.org](mailto:bbooth@unitydecatour.org) to learn more.

**STEWARDSHIP SEEDS: Luke 3:4 – “As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’”** God makes long-range plans: Isaiah lived more than seven hundred years before St. John the Baptist preached by the Jordan River. Obviously, God sees farther into the future than we do! That’s yet another reason to trust Him when it comes to how He tells us to live our lives: He knows what’s coming and we don’t.

**Last Week’s Giving**

Weekly Needed .....	\$12,403.85
General Fund .....	\$10,378.00
Online Giving.....	\$1,310.69
Total Giving .....	\$11,688.69

**Last Week’s Attendance**

8:30 a.m. ....	125
11:00 a.m.....	54
Total.....	179
Wednesday Advent Service.....	59

## THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15

8:30 A.M. .... Traditional Service  
9:45 A.M. .... Education Hour (FH)  
11:00 A.M. .... Contemporary Service  
12:30 P.M. .... Confirmation Class (FH)  
3-5:00 P.M. .... Boy Scouts (FH)

### MONDAY, DECEMBER 16

7:00 P.M. .... Boy Scouts (FH)

### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17

1:00 P.M. .... Staff Meeting  
1:00 P.M. .... Ladies Friendship Circle (FH)

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18

10:00 A.M. .... Adult Bible Study (FH)  
12:45 P.M. .... Bus leaves for Sullivan  
5:00 P.M. .... Advent Meal Begins (FH)  
6:00 P.M. .... Advent Service  
7:00 P.M. .... Bells Rehearsal

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19

5:30 P.M. .... TOPS (FH)  
6:00 P.M. .... Choir Rehearsal  
7:00 P.M. .... Worship Practice

### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20

No church activities scheduled.

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21

No church activities scheduled.

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22

9:30 A.M. .... **One Service** – Lessons & Carols  
10:30 A.M. .... Christmas Brunch (FH)