

The background is a deep blue gradient, densely decorated with golden snowflakes of various sizes and shapes, as well as five-pointed stars. Some of the snowflakes and stars have a bright, multi-pointed starburst effect, giving the overall appearance a shimmering, celebratory feel. The decorations are scattered across the page, with a higher concentration in the top-left and bottom-right corners.

Lessons & Carols

December 22, 2024

St. John's Lutheran Church

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

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

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Ciara Collins

Angela Martinek

Jeff Salefski

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Melissa Saurmann

Lindsay Tipsword

Stephanie Wilkerson

SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

December 22, 2024

9:30 a.m.

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

PRAYER FOR THE UPCOMING CHRISTMASTIDE

O Father of lights, from whom comes every good gift and every perfect endowment, let not the mad and frantic rush of these hurried holidays, the frenzy of our preparations and the schedule of our obligations, drown out the message of the angels drawing near; but give us grace, with peaceful hearts and eager minds, to hear and ponder all the wonder which your living Word proclaims.

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

RINGING OF THE BELLS

WELCOME/GREETING OF ONE ANOTHER

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

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

Prepare the Royal Highway

LSB #343

INVOCATION

LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLE

L: We light the fourth 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 fourth Advent candle has been known as the angel candle and

the candle of love. As our Advent season soon ends, we await the angelic message of the good news of a Savior. We have come to know the love of the one true God this season and always as we have prepared to celebrate His birth. We know God's promises come to fruition in Jesus, who later made known His Father's love in His being born into this world; in His life, ministry, teaching, preaching, healing; and ultimately in His dying and rising. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

C: The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

L: Guided by the light of love, we respond with the psalmist: "Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness to the clouds.

C: Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; Your judgments are like the great deep; man and beast You save, O Lord.

L: How precious is Your steadfast love, O God. For with You is the fountain of life;

C: in Your light do we see light.

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (Vv 1-4)

LSB #357

FIRST LESSON

Genesis 3:8-15

God announces in the Garden of Eden that the seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head.

⁸And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." ¹¹He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten

of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹²The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." ¹³Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." ¹⁴The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." (ESV)

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

L: That we may have true joy in the great things our forgiving God does for us, let us together confess our sins before Him.

C: Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. Just like our ancestors, we continually disobey You and Your Word. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we do and by what we fail to do. Instead of being Your witnesses of love and truth, we are often critical of or indifferent to those around us. For the sake of our Savior and King, have mercy on us. Forgive us and restore us. Guide us and renew us. Help us to walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

L: Our faithful God hears our prayers and answers them, removing our sins from us and declaring us blameless in His sight through faith in Jesus Christ. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

SECOND LESSON

Genesis 22:15-18

God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall the nations of the earth be blessed.

¹⁵And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven ¹⁶and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you

have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son,¹⁷ I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies,¹⁸ and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice." (ESV)

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

The Night Will Soon Be Ending

LSB #337

THIRD LESSON

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah.

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. ⁶For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. (ESV)

MINISTRY IN MUSIC

Worship Team

His Name is Jesus

FOURTH LESSON

Isaiah 11:1-2,6-9

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.

¹There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. ²And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. ⁶The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. ⁷The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

⁹They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (ESV)

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

LSB 338

FIFTH LESSON

Luke 1:26–35,38

The angel Gabriel salutes the virgin Mary.

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ³⁸And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. (ESV)

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

What Child is This

LSB 370

OFFERING

(Children come up for their song.)

SIXTH LESSON

Luke 2:1,3–7

St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

²In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (ESV)

MINISTRY IN MUSIC

Children's Choir

Go Tell It On the Mountain

SEVENTH LESSON

Luke 2:8-16

The shepherds go to the manger.

⁸And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" ¹⁵When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. (ESV)

CONGREGATION HYMN

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

LSB 380

EIGHTH LESSON

Matthew 2:1-11

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.

¹Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ²saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." ³When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ⁶"*"And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."* ⁷Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." ⁹After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. (ESV)

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

The First Noel

(Not in Hymnal)

NINTH LESSON

John 1:1-14

St. John unfolds the great mystery of the incarnation.

(Congregation standing)

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and

the darkness has not overcome it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. ⁹ The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (ESV)

PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING LITANY

L: Jesus, name called Wonderful; our great Counselor,
Jesus, true and mighty God:

C: We praise and bless your holy name.

L: Jesus, Son of David, Branch of Jesse,
Jesus, Son of Abraham, Bright and Morning Star:

C: Deliver us from our sins, we beg you.

L: Jesus, Light of the Gentiles, Desire of Nations;
Jesus, Prince of Peace

C: Help us and bless us.

L: O Jesus, hear us,

C: And prepare us for your coming.

L: Prepare us for your coming,

C: And save us from our sins.

L: Lead us to your manger-throne,

C: And give us your peace. Amen.

TABLE PRAYER

Kaylee & Matteo Ray

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

Angels from the Realms of Glory

LSB #367

STUDENT INSTRUMENTALIST

David Albrecht – Saxophone

Nathan Albrecht – Trombone

Samuel Albrecht – Clarinet

Allison Cushing – Flute

SCRIPTURE READERS

Pastor Aaron Bird

Pastor Adam Ray

AJ Clapp

Julia Cushing

Norma Hubert

Sophia Baggert

SUNDAY SERVANTS

Preacher	Pastor Aaron Bird
Worship Leader	Pastor Adam Ray
Lay Minister	Drew Miller
Organist	Ted Hesse
Ushers	Dave Vanskike
Computer	Kristin Hesse
Live Stream	Brandon Patzwitz
Camera	Brandon Patzwitz
Sound	Doug Hicks
Vocals.....	Becky Dosien, Wendy Salefski, Melissa Saurmann, Pam Saurmann, Lindsay Tipsword, Ted Hesse
Acoustic Guitar	Nathaniel Stoll
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

Christmas Brunch: Please join us for Christmas Brunch immediately following today's service.

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

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

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) or Pastor Adam.

What are you doing for dinner on January 15th? Let us take dinner off our plate! Wednesday, January 15th at 5:30 p.m. Food, fun, and free! #lifetogether

Annual Mitten Christmas Tree is in the foyer. 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.

What are you doing for dinner on January 15th? Let us take dinner off our plate! Wednesday, January 10th at 5:30 p.m., pizza, salad, ice cream bar. Food, fun, and free! #lifetogether

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 to learn more.

STEWARDSHIP SEEDS: *Philippians 4:5-6* – “The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” Wouldn’t you like to be free from worry and anxiety? Isn’t it worry and anxiety that often keep us from living the generous life God has called us to? St. Paul contrasts anxiety with prayer, supplication and thanksgiving in making our requests known to God. In other words, when you are tempted to anxiety and worry, pray to the Lord with a thankful heart and pour out your supplications before Him.

Last Week’s Giving

Weekly Needed	\$12,403.85
General Fund	\$14,975.00
Online Giving.....	\$1,292.18
Total Giving.....	\$16,267.18

Last Week’s Attendance

8:30 a.m.	129
11:00 a.m.....	61
Total.....	190
Wednesday Advent Service	52

THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22

9:30 A.M.Lessons & Carols

10:30 A.M.Christmas Brunch (FH)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 23

1:00 P.M. Staff Meeting

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

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSSES AT NOON

2:30 P.M. Christmas Eve Service

4:30 P.M. Christmas Eve Service

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

9:30 A.M. Christmas Day Service

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26

5:30 P.M.TOPS (FH)

7:00 P.M.Worship Practice

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27

No church activities scheduled.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28

No church activities scheduled.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29

8:30 A.M.Traditional Service

9:45 A.M. Education Hour

11:00 A.M.Contemporary Service