

Welcome

"UNCHANGING GOD"

DECEMBER 8, 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.)

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

Rev. Adam Ray, Lead Pastor
pastoradam@stjohnsdecatur.com

Rev. Aaron Bird, Assoc. Pastor
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Ted Hesse, Worship Music Director
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Unity Christian School Faculty & Staff – Members of St. John's Lutheran Church

Ciara Collins

Angela Martinek

Jeff Salefski

Brenda Salogga

Melissa Saurmann

Lindsay Tipsword

Stephanie Wilkerson

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

DECEMBER 8, 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

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

LSB 344

INVOCATION

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

L: Since we are gathered to hear God's Word and call upon Him in prayer and praise, let us stand before Him in humble and contrite confession. We confess together...

C: O Lord, we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by the things we have done and left undone, and we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. We have not loved the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

L: O God, we justly deserve present and eternal punishment, but for the sake of Jesus Christ, we boldly pray:

C: 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: Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. 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 the Word, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and

of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. May He who began a good work in you bring it to completion on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C: Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

HYMN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel V. 3-4

LSB 357

SALUTATION

PRAYER OF THE DAY

LISTENING TO GOD SPEAK TO US THROUGH HIS WORD

Malachi 3:1-7

OLD TESTAMENT

“Look! I am sending my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. Then the Lord you are seeking will suddenly come to his Temple. The messenger of the covenant, whom you look for so eagerly, is surely coming,” says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. ²“But who will be able to endure it when he comes? Who will be able to stand and face him when he appears? For he will be like a blazing fire that refines metal, or like a strong soap that bleaches clothes. ³He will sit like a refiner of silver, burning away the dross. He will purify the Levites, refining them like gold and silver, so that they may once again offer acceptable sacrifices to the LORD. ⁴Then once more the LORD will accept the offerings brought to him by the people of Judah and Jerusalem, as he did in the past. ⁵“At that time I will put you on trial. I am eager to witness against all sorcerers and adulterers and liars. I will speak against those who cheat employees of their wages, who oppress widows and orphans, or who deprive the foreigners living among you of justice, for these people do not fear me,” says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. ⁶“I am the LORD, and I do not change. That is why you descendants of Jacob are not already destroyed. ⁷Ever since the days of your ancestors, you have scorned my decrees and failed to obey them. Now return to me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. (NLT)

L: This is the Word of our Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle

Philippians 1:2-11

² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴ always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸ For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹ And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (ESV)

L: This is the Word of our Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

COMMON ALLELUIA AND VERSE

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 3:1-15

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

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

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, ² during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³ And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 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. ⁵ Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, ⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'" ⁷ He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. ⁹ Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." ¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, "What then shall we do?" ¹¹ And he answered them, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise." ¹² Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" ¹³ And he said to them, "Collect no more than you are authorized to do." ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages." (ESV)

L: This is the Gospel of our Lord

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

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Pastor Aaron Bird

SERMON HYMN

Chief of Sinners Though I Be (Vv. 1-4)

LSB 611

SERMON

"Unchanging God"

Malachi 3:1-7

Pastor Adam Ray

APOSTLES' CREED

OFFERING

Tithes and gifts may be placed in the collection plate or given at

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

BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

SENDING HYMN

The Advent of Our King

LSB 331

POSTLUDE

Last Week's Giving

Weekly Needed	\$12,403.85
General Fund	\$9,998.00
Online Giving.....	
Total Giving	\$7,499.00

Last Week's Attendance

8:30 a.m.	121
11:00 a.m.....	50
Total.....	171
Thanksgiving Eve Service.....	57
Wednesday Advent Service.....	65

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT
DECEMBER 8, 2024 | 11:00 a.m.

OPENING SONGS

Great Things
King of Kings

WELCOME & GREETING

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION PRAYER

SHARING THE PEACE

OFFERING

Emmanuel

SCRIPTURE READING

Malachi 3:1-7

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Pastor Aaron Bird

SERMON

"Unchanging God"
Malachi 3:12-7
Pastor Adam Ray

APOSTLES' CREED

PRAYERS

LORD'S PRAYER

BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

SENDING SONG

Sing We The Song Of Emmanuel

SUNDAY SERVANTS

Preacher	Pastor Adam Ray
Worship Leader	Pastor Aaron Bird
Reader	Karl Albrecht
Lay Minister	8:30 – Troy Harrison 11:00 – Mike Baggett
Organist	Ted Hesse
Ushers	8:30 – Gary Schwartzle/Rick Laskowski 11:00 – Dan Murphey
Computer	8:30 – Mike Patzwitz 11:00 – Allison Cushing
Live Stream	11:00 – Lindsay Tipsword
Camera	11:00 – Pat Robinson
Sound	8:30 – Brandon Patzwitz 11:00 – Brandon Patzwitz
Vocals.....	Becky Dosien, Kristin Hesse, 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

"His Gospel is Peace" - Advent Services will begin on Wednesday, December 4th through December 18th at 6:00 p.m. Advent Dinner will be served starting at 5:00 p.m. This Wednesday will be Baked Potato Bar served by the Youth.

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

Christmas Brunch will follow the Lessons & Carols service on Sunday, Dec. 22nd. 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) or Pastor Adam.

Ladies Friendship Circle will celebrate Christmas on Tues, Dec., 17th 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!

Bus trip: For those signed up to attend the Little Theater in Sullivan on Wednesday, December 18th, the bus will leave the church at 12:45 p.m.

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. 8th. Please help decorate with donated gloves, mittens, scarves, and hats to hang on the tree. All items will be donated to Northeast Community Fund.

Would you like to help? Looking for volunteers for funeral dinners. How can you help? Set-up, Serve, Cleanup, and/or make a dish? Can you help for 2 to 6 hours? Can you help with one or two a year? If you can answer "yes" or have any questions, please contact Beth Tatum at 217-972-2299.

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.

NECF Food Drive: Thank you to everyone that donated food and monetary gifts. Thank you to Gary & Vicki Schwartzle for organizing and delivering the food to Northeast Community Fund.

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.

Unity's Christmas Concert is Tuesday, December 10th at 5:30 p.m. in the Unity gymnasium.

THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1

8:30 A.M. Traditional Service
9:45 A.M. Education Hour (FH)
11:00 A.M. Contemporary Service

MONDAY, DECEMBER 2

6:30 P.M. Properties Meeting
7:00 P.M. Boy Scouts (FH)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3

1:00 P.M. Staff Meeting
5:30 P.M. Outreach Team Meeting (FH)
6:00 P.M. Discipleship Team Meeting (Rock)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4

5:00 P.M. Advent Meal Begins (FH)
6:00 P.M. Advent Service
7:00 P.M. Bells Rehearsal

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5

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

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6

No church activities scheduled.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7

8:30 A.M. Church Decorating
3:00 P.M. Boy Scouts (FH)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8

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)