

>Welcome

“Who is This?”

December 14, 2025



**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.)*

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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)

**Ted Hesse**, Worship Music Director  
[tedh@stjohnsdecatur.com](mailto:tedh@stjohnsdecatur.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*

*Angela Martinek*

*Jeff Salefski*

*Brenda Salogga*

*Melissa Saurmann*

*Kelly Smith*

*Lindsay Tipsword*

*Stephanie Wilkerson*

# Third Sunday in Advent

December 14, 2025

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**

## **OPENING SONG**

*Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates (Vv. 1-4)*

LSB 341

## **INVOCATION**

## **CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

L: Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God.

**C: The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.**

*Silence for self-examination.*

L: Holy and gracious God,

**C: I confess that I have sinned against You this day. Some of my sin I know—the thoughts and words and deeds of which I am ashamed—but some is known only to You. In the name of Jesus Christ I ask forgiveness. Deliver and restore me that I may rest in peace. This I ask in Jesus' 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.**

L: He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

**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 the candle of joy. The third Sunday of Advent is known also as Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete in Latin means "rejoice," and we find our joy in Christ this season and always as we prepare to celebrate His birth.

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.**

### **SALUTATION**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

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

*Old Testament*

*Isaiah 35:1-10*

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; <sup>2</sup>it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God.

<sup>3</sup>Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. <sup>4</sup>Say to those

who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you."<sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; <sup>6</sup> then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; <sup>7</sup> the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. <sup>8</sup> And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. <sup>9</sup> No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. <sup>10</sup> And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (ESV)

L: This is the Word of our Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

*Epistle*

*James 5:7-11*

<sup>7</sup> Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. <sup>8</sup> You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. <sup>9</sup> Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. <sup>10</sup> As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. (ESV)

L: This is the Word of our Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**COMMON ALLELUIA AND VERSE**

## **Holy Gospel**

*Matthew 21:1-11*

L: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-first chapter.

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

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup>saying to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. <sup>3</sup>If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once." <sup>4</sup>This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, <sup>5</sup>"Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'" <sup>6</sup>The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. <sup>7</sup>They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. <sup>8</sup>Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup>And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" <sup>10</sup>And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" <sup>11</sup>And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee." (ESV)

L: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

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

## **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

*Pastor Aaron Bird*

## **SERMON HYMN**

*Prepare the Royal Highway*

*LSB 343*

## **SERMON**

*"Who is This?"*

*Matthew 21:1-11*

*Pastor Adam Ray*

## **APOSTLES' CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **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: "let us pray to the Lord:"*

***People respond with: "Lord, have mercy."***

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

## **BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **BENEDICTION**

## **SENDING SONG**

*O Savior, Rend the Heavens Wide (Vv. 1-4)*

*LSB 355*

## **POSTLUDE**

# **Third Sunday in Advent**

***December 14, 2025***

***11:00 a.m.***

## **OPENING SONGS**

*All The Earth*

*Hymn of Joy*

## **WELCOME & GREETING**

## **CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

## **LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLE**

## **SHARING THE PEACE**

## **OFFERING**

*Emmanuel*

## **SCRIPTURE READING**

## **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

*Pastor Aaron Bird*

## **SERMON**

*"Who is This?"*

*Matthew 21:1-11*

*Pastor Adam Ray*

## **APOSTLES' CREED**

## **PRAYERS & LORD'S PRAYER**

## **BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **BLESSING**

## **SENDING SONG**

*Holy Forever*

## SUNDAY SERVANTS

Preacher .....	Pastor Adam Ray
Worship Leader .....	Pastor Aaron Bird
Reader .....	Jean Munson
Lay Minister .....	8:30 – David Salogga 11:00 – Larry Westbrook
Organist .....	Ted Hesse
Ushers .....	8:30 – Gary Schwartzle/Rick Laskowski 11:00 – Dan Zimmerman
Computer .....	8:30 – Denise Gentry 11:00 – Pat Robinson
Acolytes.....	8:30 – 11:00 – Zoey Collins
Live Stream .....	11:00 – Brandon Patzwitz
Camera .....	11:00 – Brandon Patzwitz
Sound .....	8:30 & 11:00 – Jessie Denning
Vocals .....	Becky Dosien, Kristin Hesse, 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, Logan Cline, Tristin Comer, Randy Edwards, Caleb Goodson, Braden Highcock, Destiny Little, Noah Lung, Nathan Lung, Andrew Nailer, Jared Pinney, Caitlin Goodson, Tyler Salefski

## CONGREGATION NEWS

**Christmas Brunch** will follow the Lessons & Carols service on Sunday, Dec. 21. We hope you will be a part of this time of fellowship with one another!

### CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

Sunday, December 21 at 9:30 a.m. (One Service)      Lessons & Carols Service  
Wednesday, the 24<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 & 4:30 p.m.      Christmas Eve Candlelight Service  
Thursday, the 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m.      Christmas Service w/ Communion

**Advent Service** will be on Wednesday, Dec. 17 at 6:00 p.m. Dinner will be served starting at 5:00 p.m. This Wednesday meal will be Pulled Pork served by the Properties Team.

**Join us for a Christmas Cookie Exchange** in the Fellowship Hall on Monday, December 22nd at 6:00 PM. Please RSVP by December 19th in the back of the church or by calling the church office. Come with 3-4 dozen cookies and leave with an assortment of goodies! Want to share your recipe? Bring a copy along and we will make copies to share. Guests may also participate in a Christmas Sock Exchange if they so wish. To participate, simply bring a pair of festive or funny socks filled with small items and tied with a ribbon to keep its contents a surprise. We recommend spending no more than \$15.

**Ladies Friendship Circle** will celebrate Christmas with our traditional social gathering on Tuesday, December 16, at 1:00 in the fellowship hall. If you are able, bring some finger food to share. We will nibble, chat, and participate in a few Christmas activities. As a follow-up to our November meeting, you are asked to bring a gift for New Life Pregnancy Center. This center truly is a ministry. A list of their current needs is on the table in the back of the church or in the kitchen. All are welcome!

**Sunday Adult Bible Study** will begin a new study during Advent on Sunday November 30 focusing on the Messianic Prophecies we see in Isaiah which we will also be exploring during our Midweek Advent series.

**Is there any evidence for what we read in the Bible?** Come learn how more evidence is being discovered all the time at our upcoming Wednesday Adult Bible Study on Biblical Archaeology starting Wednesday, December 10 at 10:00 a.m. Everyone is welcome to attend. Wednesday Adult Bible Study will not meet on December 24<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Bus Trip:** Come celebrate the holidays with a trip to the Little Theatre on Wed., December 17. We will be traveling to Sullivan for the 2:00 p.m. performance of the Million Dollar Quartet Christmas. Tickets are \$44.00 each and may be reserved by contacting the church office or Jerry Pelz at 217-433-2961.

**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.

**Poinsettias:** Our Altar Guild has purchased artificial Poinsettias to use each Christmas season due to the recurring cost and maintenance of live plants. If you still wish to designate a Poinsettia in someone's memory or honor, please do so by Dec. 21st by using a Poinsettia offering envelope located on the back table (a suggested donation is \$20.00). Please contact the church office with any questions.

**Last Week's Giving**

Weekly Needed.....	\$12,403.85
General Fund.....	\$23,397.00
Online Giving (General Fund) .....	2,909.19
Total Giving .....	\$26,306.19

**Last Week's Attendance**

8:30 a.m. ....	114
11:00 a.m.....	51
Total .....	165
Wednesday Adult Bible Study .....	16
Wednesday Advent Service .....	65

## THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14

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

### MONDAY, DECEMBER 15

- 7:00 P.M. .... Boy Scouts

### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16

- 8:30 A.M. .... Hospitality Team Meeting  
1:00 P.M. .... Staff Meeting  
1:00 P.M. .... Friendship Circle  
6:30 P.M. .... Parish Planning Meeting

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17

- 10:00 A.M. .... Adult Bible Study (FH)  
12:30 P.M. .... Bus Trip to Little Theatre, Sullivan  
5:00 P.M. .... Advent Meal Begins  
6:00 P.M. .... Advent Services  
7:00 P.M. .... Bells Rehearsal

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18

- 5:30 P.M. .... TOPS  
6:00 P.M. .... Choir Rehearsal  
7:00 P.M. .... Worship Practice

### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19

- All Day .... Set-up for Christmas Brunch

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20

- All Day .... Set-up for Christmas Brunch

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

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