



Lessons & Carols

December 21, 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.)

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 Adam 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.

SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

December 21, 2025

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

OPENING HYMN

O Come, O Come Emmanuel (Vv. 1, 4-7)

LSB #357

WELCOME

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 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.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” 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: How precious is Your steadfast love, O God. For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light do we see light.

GREETING OF ONE ANOTHER

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Once in Royal David's City

LSB #376

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, ¹⁷I 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, ¹⁸and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice." (ESV)

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

Of the Father's Love Begotten

LSB #384

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

Choir

Breath of Heaven

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

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

LSB #366

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. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He 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, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” ³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” ³⁵ And 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. ³⁸ And 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

Angels from the Realms of Glory

LSB #367

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

Away In a Manger

SEVENTH LESSON

Luke 2:8-16

The shepherds go to the manger.

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And 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!" ¹⁵ When 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." ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. (ESV)

CONGREGATION HYMN

O Little Town of Bethlehem

LSB #361

EIGHTH LESSON

Matthew 2:1-11

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.

¹ Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ² saying, "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." ³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They 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.'" ⁷ Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had

appeared.⁸ And 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."⁹ After 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.¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.¹¹ And 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.² He was in the beginning with God.³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men.⁵ The 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

COMMUNION

WORDS OF OUR LORD

PAX DOMINI

AGNUS DEI (*sung*)

DISTRIBUTION

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

Bell Choir

Let all Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

What Child is This

Emmanuel

LSB #621

LSB #370

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

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

Angels We Have Heard on High

LSB #368

INSTRUMENTALIST

David Albrecht – Saxophone

Nathan Albrecht – Trombone

Wendy Albrecht – Trumpet

Karl Albrecht – Trumpet

Samuel Albrecht – Clarinet

Allison Cushing – Flute

SCRIPTURE READERS

Pastor Aaron Bird

Alan Bishop

Kaylee Ray

Ava Saurmann

Leighton Tavarczyk

Pastor Adam Ray

Jason Frisby

Pat Robinson

Avery Smith

Allison Thomas

SUNDAY SERVANTS

Preacher	Pastor Adam Ray & Aaron Bird
Communion Helper	David Salogga/Jason Frisby
Lay Minister	Steve Craycroft
Organist	Ted Hesse
Ushers	Brady Fawcett
Acolytes	Jude Langston/Noelle Calhoun
Computer	Brandon Patzwitz
Live Stream	Matt Cushing
Camera	Matt Cushing
Sound	Doug Hicks

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

Christmas Brunch is today following the Lessons & Carols service. We hope you will be a part of this time of fellowship with one another!

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

Wednesday, the 24th at 2:30 & 4:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Thursday, the 25th at 9:30 a.m. Christmas Service w/ Communion

Join us for a Christmas Cookie Exchange in the Fellowship Hall on Monday, December 22nd at 6:00 PM. Please call the church office if you would like to attend. 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.

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 24th & 31st.

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.

Offering Envelopes are available in the back of the sanctuary. If you did not receive envelopes, please contact the church office.

LSA ReSale Shop: Did you know that we not only take donations on Thursday 2:00–6:00 PM, but we are OPEN for shoppers till 6:00 also! The Shop is open 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM Monday – Wednesday & Friday – Saturday with Thursday hours 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM. Other donation times are Monday & Tuesday 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM. The Shop offers clothes for everyone, shoes, purses, kitchen items, décor of any kind, vintage items, seasonal decorations, etc. Stop by the Shop at 421 E. Cerro Gordo or call 217-423-0122. Follow the Shop on Facebook for the most up-to-date information!

STEWARDSHIP SEEDS: Matthew 6:25 – “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life.” God is in charge. God is our loving Father. Put those two statements together, and they spell the end of worry and anxiety. Yes, we will have crosses to bear. Yes, we will have difficulties. But, through it all, our loving heavenly Father is in charge, and He will carry us through. It is that simple faith, the faith of a child, that frees us from worry. And in the absence of worry, faith can step forward in bold action and into the kind of generosity that can only operate in an atmosphere of trust.

Last Week's Giving

Weekly Needed.....	\$12,403.85
General Fund.....	\$1,830.00
Online Giving (General Fund).....	
Total Giving.....	\$1,830.00

Last Week's Attendance

8:30 a.m.	No Service
11:00 a.m.....	No Service
Total.....	
Wednesday Advent Service	64

THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

9:30 A.M. Lessons & Carols Service
10:45 A.M. Christmas Brunch

MONDAY, DECEMBER 22

6:00 P.M. Christmas Cookie Exchange (FH)
7:00 P.M. Boy Scouts

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23

10:00 A.M. DMH Grief Support Group
1:00 P.M. Staff Meeting

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24

Church Office Closed at Noon
2:30 P.M. Christmas Eve Service
4:30 P.M. Christmas Eve Service

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25 – MERRY CHRISTMAS

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
9:30 A.M. Christmas Day Service with Communion

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
All Day Set-up for Christmas Brunch

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27

No church activities scheduled.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28

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