

December 6, 2020

Second Sunday of Advent

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! Please review some of our reopening guidelines below.

Masks must be worn. We have some available to take if you don't have one. Some are cloth masks and can be taken home to wash and reuse. There are also disposable masks.

Please do not congregate in the Narthex (entrance area) either as you arrive or leave.

To minimize direct contact, we will use the outside aisles only for entry and exit. The center aisle will be used for communion, special needs, or emergency exit.

Ushers will fill the pews from the front to the back of the church and dismiss from the back to the front. Please follow their directions. We are sorry everyone cannot have their usual seat.

Due to increased cases of Covid in Lucas County, we are returning to no corporate singing or spoken responses. Dr. Tony and Annette Slater will provide music. The service will be recorded and published to the website. Future plans are to "live stream" the service.

Elders will wear gloves. You can get a bulletin at the check-in table when you walk in. Please do not leave your bulletin in the pew when you exit; take it home or put it in the recycling bin at the front door.

There is a small wooden church just to the right of the main door when you come in. It has a slot for your offering.

Restrooms are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take the left set of steps down. The ladies room is at one end of the hallway, and the men's room is at the other. Return to the Narthex using the opposite set of stairs. Please, one person only in the restroom area.

Diaper Changing: A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

Flowers: If you would like to sign up for flowers for a Sunday, please call the church office during the week to check on availability.

HOPE
PEACE

All glory be to God on high, and to the earth be peace.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Prelude
Ringing of the Bell

Dr. Pattin

Opening Hymn "Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding" (v. 1 & 3-5)
(sung by Annette)

Invocation

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity (+) one God, the Lord of Israel who comes to set us free, the mighty Savior who comes to show mercy, the Dawn from on high who guides us into peace. Amen.

P: Let us come before God in confession.

(silence is kept for personal reflection)

P: To you, O God, we lift up our souls. You know us through and through; we confess our sins to you. Remember not our sins; remember us with your steadfast love. Show us your ways; teach us your paths; and lead us in justice and truth, for the sake of your goodness in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

P: Children of God, come with joy and draw water from the well of salvation. Remember the gift of baptism: your sin is washed away in the name of (+) Jesus; you belong to Christ; you are anointed to serve. Stand up and raise your heads! The reign of God is near.

Lighting the Second Candle

P: Blessed are you, God of hope, for you promise to bring forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse who will bring justice to the poor, who will deliver the needy and crush the oppressor, who will stand as a signal of hope for all people.

P: As we light these candles, turn our wills to bear the fruit of repentance, transform our hearts to live in justice and harmony with one another, and fix our eyes on the root of Jesse, Jesus Christ, the hope of all nations.

P: People of hope, come, let us rejoice in the faithfulness of the Lord. Amen.

ADVENT HYMN: Hark the Glad Sound – ELW 239 (Vs. 1 & 3)

*Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes, the Savior promised long;
let ev'ry heart prepare a throne and ev'ry voice a song.*

*He comes the broken heart to bind, the bleeding soul to cure, and
with the treasures of his grace to enrich the bumble poor.*

Greeting

P: The grace given to us in Christ Jesus, the help of the Holy Spirit living in us, and the power of God who calls us with a holy purpose be with you all.

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray. Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Announcements

FIRST READING: Isaiah 40:1-11

In grand, flowing, poetic lines, the prophet known as Second Isaiah announces that the exile of God's people in Babylon is over. The Lord will deliver Israel in an exodus more magnificent than the exodus from Egypt. This word can be trusted, because the only enduring reality in life is the word of the Lord.

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.

²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her

that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.

³A voice cries out:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

⁶A voice says, "Cry out!"

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

⁷The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.

⁸The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.

⁹Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;
say to the cities of Judah,
"Here is your God!"
¹⁰See, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.
¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life. Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation (please stand) *(sung by Annette Slater)*

*Lord, let my heart be good soil,
Open to the seed of your word.
Lord, let my heart be good soil,
Where love can grow and peace is understood. (Repeat)*

Gospel Announcement

P: The Gospel according to St. Mark, Chapter 1.
Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Mark 1:1-8

The gospel of Mark does not begin with a story of Jesus' birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,
"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;
³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,' "

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Gospel Response (Spoken)

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated)

SERMON

Sermon Hymn "Comfort, Comfort Now My People" (v. 1-3)
Pastor Rayl
(sung by Annette)

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Offering *(As you exit, please place your offering in the wooden church in the Narthex if you have not already done so.)*

Offertory Music

Dr. Pattin

Offering Prayer

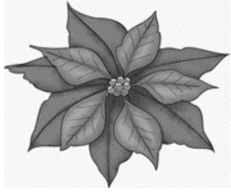
P: Let us pray. God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer *(Each petition concludes with this response)*

P: Hear us, Lord. Your mercy is great.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.



2020 POINSETTIA SALE
SPONSORED BY THE ALTAR GUILD

Fill in the form below to place your order for poinsettias to be used during worship the last two weeks of December. You can place this form with payment in the wooden church we use for offering (located in the Narthex) or mail it to the church office. Payment must accompany orders. Checks payable to: **First St. John Lutheran**

Deadline for placing orders is TODAY.

Number of plants @ \$10.00 each _____ Enclosed: \$ _____

Color (circle one) Red White

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____

In Loving Memory of (Deceased) _____

In Honor of (Living) _____

December 6, 2020

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Setting the Table

The coming of John the Baptist to prepare the way of the Lord may be compared to someone making the necessary arrangements for a fine dinner to be celebrated. To ensure that the guests will be aware of the feast to come, invitations are issued and calendars cleared. Obstacles in the way are dealt with and the smallest details carefully planned for this much anticipated, though yet unrealized, banquet.

Many people considered John to be the Messiah. He was born in messiah-like circumstances attended by wonders. John lived in the wilderness, spoke with authority, and behaved exactly as some people thought the real Messiah would. It almost seemed as though there was confusion about who was who.

John "prepared the table the right way," so to speak, but then stepped aside to open the door to the banquet celebrations. John was not the Messiah, but only prepared the way. He was not the host of the meal, but God's emissary to remind the guests of the coming feast and to encourage those invited to get ready.

Someday, the heavenly banquet will begin. Then we will not need to come to holy communion anymore to be with Christ. We will not have to rely on the bread broken for us, or the cup poured out for us, to sustain us. At that time John the Baptist and the whole company of heaven will stand aside. The anticipated hour will have finally come! Jesus, our heavenly host, will invite us to dine with all the saints at the heavenly banquet. Jesus will be at our very sides.

In the meantime, like John the Baptist, remove the obstacles and excuses and prepare for the advent of Christ!