

Pregnant Pause

Fresh from her encounter with the angel Gabriel, Mary runs to visit her older relative. Can you imagine this visit, this meeting of intimates? Two women pregnant with the promise of new life, pregnant with hope. Two women in their time of wonder and wondering--nine months full of expectation and mystery.

Unexpectedly, their lives have been graciously rearranged. One mother-to-be is expecting a child in her old age. The other will be the virgin mother of God. Surely each ponders what her life will be now, how it will change. What does it mean that God has chosen each for her particular task? What does it mean that each has said yes? What will the future hold?

In their holy moment of wondering and wonderment, Mary and Elizabeth lead us into a pregnant pause. We, too, ponder what God is doing in us and through us. We wonder what the future will bring. We count the cost of saying yes to God. We share our hopes and fears, our longings and our joys with those dear to us. Like these faithful women, we experience holy moments, blessed by God, when we open ourselves to the mystery of God's presence and the unexpectedness of God's leading.

Where is your pregnant pause? Where is the quiet place within that could become a cradle for the God who desires to make a home in you? How do you welcome God's gracious leading? What is it that leaps for joy within you? In these waning days of Advent, these days of expectation and hope, pause with Mary and Elizabeth. Dear, favored ones of God, let this pause fill you with the gentle and startling love of God in Christ Jesus. Let this love grow inside you and be born again and again.



December 19, 2021

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! We offer two services with Sunday School for youth and adults and catechism between the services. Our Sunday schedule is:

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|----------|---------------------------|
| 8:00 am | Early Worship |
| 9:15 am | Sunday School / Catechism |
| 10:30 am | Late Worship |

Covid Guidelines: If you are fully vaccinated, you do not need to wear a mask. However, if you have not been vaccinated, please continue wearing a mask. We have some available near the entryway if you don't have one.

Livestream and Recorded Worship: We livestream the service on our church website at www.firststjohn.com. Also, the service will be recorded and published to the website.

Adult Sunday School meets at 9:15 am in the lounge (middle floor of the educational building – turn right out of the door by the choir loft).

Children ages 3 through 5th grade will meet for Sunday School in the basement of the church (the JAM Room!).

Catechism Class: Class will be held from 9:15 to 10:15 am each Sunday.

Nursery is in the church basement and is currently unstaffed; you are welcome to sit with your child. A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

Restrooms are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take either set of steps to the basement hallway. The ladies room is at one end, and the men's room is at the other.

Flowers: If you would like to sign up for altar flowers, there is a book in the Narthex (lobby) by the telephone. Or, you can call the church office during the week to check on availability.

Memorials: If you wish to give a memorial in honor or memory of a loved one, you may mail it in or pick up a memorial card in the church office or in the Narthex (lobby) and place it in the offering plate.

Your 2022 offering envelopes are ready for pick up in the lounge. They are in alphabetical order reading from top to bottom, left to right. Envelopes are prepared for confirmed and contributing members of First St. John and friends who worship with us (upon request).

NOTE: If a husband and wife share offering envelopes, only the husband's name will appear on the envelope box. The computer will allow only one name per number.

If you cannot find your offering envelope box or if there is a correction or change in address or name, please call the church office at 419-691-7222.

**PLEASE TAKE A MOMENT TO PICK UP YOUR
OFFERING ENVELOPES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

**EVEN IF YOU HAVE YOUR OFFERING DEDUCTED
FROM YOUR BANK ACCOUNT, SPECIAL ENVELOPES
ARE IN THE BOXES FOR HOLIDAY OFFERINGS AND
OTHER SUPPORT TO GENACROSS LUTHERAN
SERVICES AND BENEVOLENCES.**

***Reminder: Do not use your 2022 offering envelopes
until January 2, 2022. Thank You.***

REMINDER

If you want a contribution included on your 2021 financial statement, please turn it in by Sunday, December 26, 2021. NOTE: If you plan on mailing your last offering, please mail early in the week to make sure it gets here by Friday, December 24th.

Blessing

P: The God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, through Christ Jesus for whom we wait.

C: Amen.

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Christ is near.

C: Thanks be to God.

| | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Closing Hymn | <i>"Go Tell It on the Mountain"</i> | No. 290 |
| Postlude | | Dr. Pattin |

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

ELDERS

Jeff Smith, Ted Hagedorn

HYMN LEADER

Annette Slater

ACOLYTE

Mason Schweizer

ORDER OF WORSHIP—8:00 am

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Prelude | Dr. Pattin |
| Ring of the Bell | <i>(please stand as you are able)</i> |

| | | |
|--------------|--|---------|
| Opening Song | <i>"Angels from the Realms of Glory"</i> | No. 275 |
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Lighting the Fourth Advent Candle

Isaiah 9:6

P: For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

P: Blessed are you, God of hosts, for you promised to send a son, Emmanuel, who brought your presence among us; and you promise through your Son Jesus to save us from our sin.

(Light the fourth candle)

P: As we light these candles, turn again to us in mercy, strengthen our faith in the word spoken by your prophets; restore us and give us life that we may be saved.

P: O house of David, come,

C: let us rejoice, for the Son of God, Emmanuel, comes to be with us. Amen.

Confession and Forgiveness

(All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism)

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who alone does wonders, who lifts up the lowly, who fills the hungry with good things.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

(Silence is kept for reflection.)

P: God for whom we wait,

**C: in the presence of one another,
we confess our sin before you.**

**We fail in believing that your good news is for us.
 We falter in our call to tend your creation.
 We find our sense of self in material wealth.
 We fear those different from ourselves.
 We forget that we are your children
 and turn away from your love.
 Forgive us, Blessed One,
 and assure us again of your saving grace. Amen.**

P: God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you! Through the power of the Holy Spirit, † your sins are forgiven. You are children of the Most High, inheritors of the eternal promise, and recipients of divine mercy. God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace.

C: Amen.

Prayer of the Day

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray. Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

(Please be seated)

Announcements

FIRST READING: Micah 5:2-5a

Many years before the time of Micah, God promised David his dynasty would last forever. Although prophets such as Micah warned judgment would come from unfaithfulness, Micah foresees a restoration beyond that judgment.

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
 who are one of the little clans of Judah,
 from you shall come forth for me
 one who is to rule in Israel,
 whose origin is from of old,
 from ancient days.

³Therefore he shall give them up until the time
 when she who is in labor has brought forth;
 then the rest of his kindred shall return
 to the people of Israel.

⁴And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
 in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

The Lord's Prayer *(prayed by all)*

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
 thy kingdom come,
 thy will be done, n earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread;
 And forgive us our trespasses,
 as we forgive those who trespass against us;
 And lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.
 For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
 and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

P: Come to Christ's banquet. Feast on God's gift of grace.

C: Thanks be to God.

(please be seated)

The Communion *(distribution will be continuous)*

If you wish to receive apple juice instead of wine, place your hand over your shoulder as you approach the person distributing the wine.

"All baptized Christians, believing that our Lord Jesus Christ is truly present in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, bringing to us the gift of forgiveness and the promise of eternal life, are welcome to gather at the Lord's table. Infants, children and others who have not been baptized are welcome to come to receive a blessing; please make an X with your arms across your chest."

Communion Hymns

"Love Has Come" No. 292
 "Angels We Have Heard on High" No. 289

(After all have received communion, please stand.)

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and sustain you in God's grace. Amen.

Prayer After Communion

P: Most High God, you have come among us at this table. By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word, sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all, through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest.

C: Amen.

Offering Prayer

P: God of our waiting and watching, we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives to the service of all your people. Prepare the way before us as we meet you in this simple meal, through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace.

C: **Amen.**

The Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P: It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and ever-living God. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes again to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

C: **(spoken) Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

P: In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

P: Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

P: All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth;
⁵and he shall be the one of peace.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 80:1-7

Let your face shine, that we may be saved. (Ps. 80:7)

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!

You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth

²**before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh.**

Stir up your might, and come to save us!

³Restore us, O God;

let your face shine, that we may be saved.

⁴**O Lord God of hosts,**

how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?

⁵You have fed them with the bread of tears,

and given them tears to drink in full measure.

⁶**You make us the scorn of our neighbors;**

our enemies laugh among themselves.

⁷Restore us, O God of hosts;

let your face shine, that we may be saved.

SECOND READING: Hebrews 10:5-10

The author uses the image of religious sacrifice to convey the significance of Christ's coming. Through obedient acceptance of God's will, Christ allows his own body to become the greatest sacrifice of all, one through which we are made a holy people.

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

"Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,

but a body you have prepared for me;

⁶in burnt offerings and sin offerings

you have taken no pleasure.

⁷Then I said, 'See, God, I have come to do your will, O God'

(in the scroll of the book it is written of me)."

⁸When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), ⁹then he added, "See, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

(Please stand)

Alleluia Verse

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.

Gospel Acclamation

P: The Gospel according to St. Luke Chapter 1.

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: Luke 1:39-55

Luke presents Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, as women who are filled with the Holy Spirit and faith. We hear Elizabeth's inspired greeting and Mary's song of praise: God is among the lowly and the hungry.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

⁴⁶And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;

⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Gospel Response

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

(Please be seated)

SERMON

Sermon Hymn

"What Child Is This"

Pastor Rayl

No. 296

(Please stand)

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation

He came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;

He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Intercessory Prayer *(following each petition)*

P: Lord, in your mercy,

C: **hear our prayer.**

(Please be seated)

The Offering *(We now are passing the offering plates again.)*

Musical Offertory

Dr. Pattin