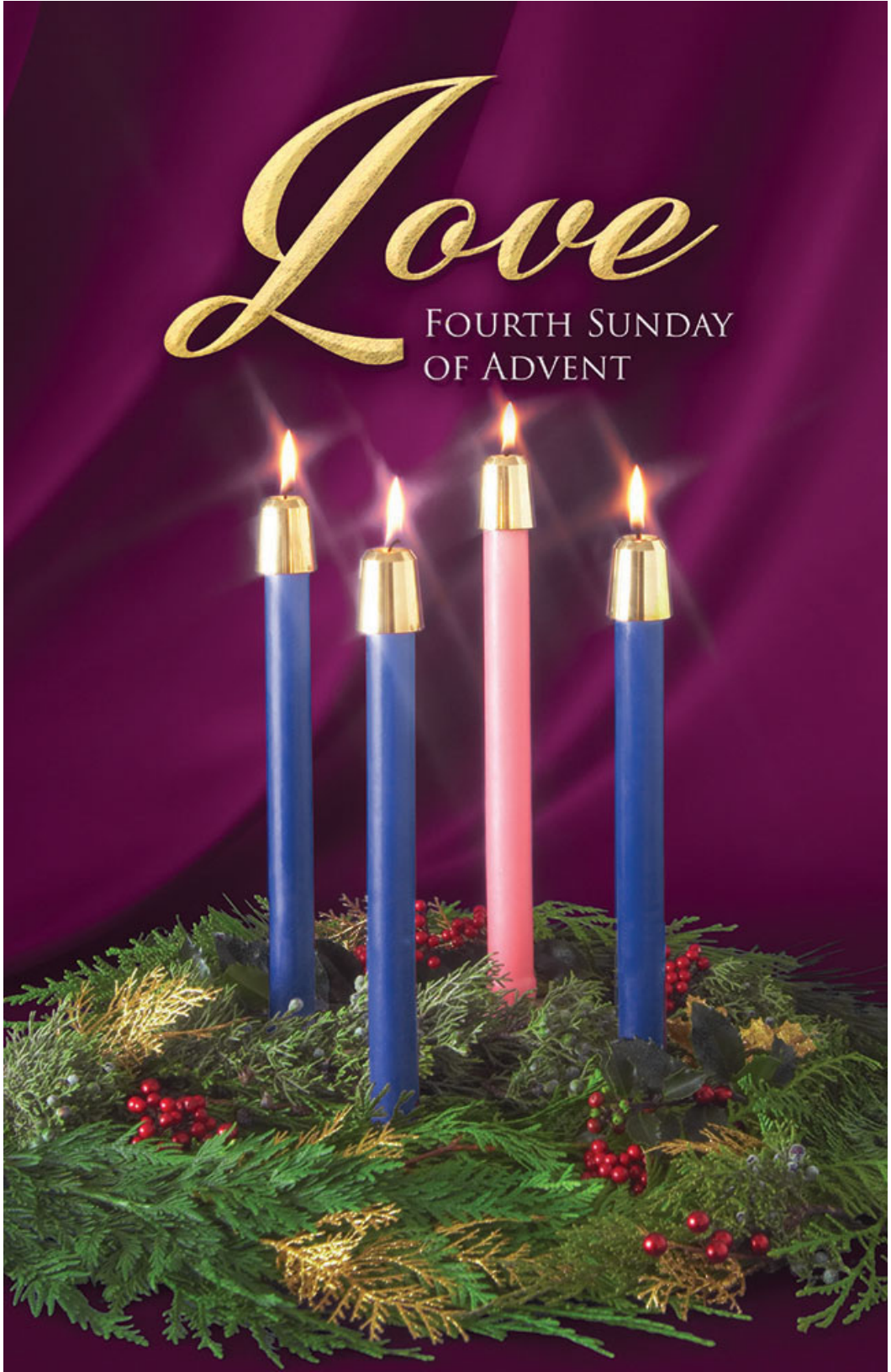


December 18, 2022 **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

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

8:00 am	Early Worship
9:15 am	Sunday School / 1st Year Catechism
9:15 am	Adult Bible Study
10:30 am	Late Worship
11:30 am	2nd Year Catechism every other Sunday

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 Youth Room area in the basement of the Educational Building.

Children ages 3 through 5th grade will meet at 9:15 am for Sunday School in the basement of the church (the JAM Room!).

Catechism Classes: First year class will be held from 9:15 to 10:15 am each Sunday. Second year class will meet every other Sunday from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm.

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 lounge. 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.

*****

ORDER OF WORSHIP—10:30 am

Prelude Dr. Pattin
Ringing of the Bell *(Please stand)*

Opening Song *"Oh Come, All Ye Faithful"* No. 283

Lighting the Advent Wreath—The Fourth Candle

P: The green wreath is a sign of new life, even in the dark of winter. The circle shape of the wreath reminds us that God's love is never-ending.

C: He comes to be with us forever!

P: "I am the Alpha and the Omega . . . the beginning and the end." God's love never ends. It will always be there, like a circle surrounding us everywhere!

C: The shape of our Advent wreath helps us to know that God is eternal. His Word tells us so.

P: The fourth candle on the Advent wreath is called "The Angels' Candle."

C: "Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plain."

P: Join the angels' song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among all people."

C: Christ has come, and he brings us heavenly PEACE and life everlasting.

P: We sing to invite Jesus into our hearts this Christmas season.

(The fourth candle is lit)

C: The Angels' candle shines a message of peace to all the world!

Hymn of Advent *"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"* No. 257

O come, O come, O Lord of might,
as to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times you gave the law
in cloud, and majesty, and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O come, O Branch of Jesse, free
Your own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell your people save,
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

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.
C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray. Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, 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: Isaiah 7:10-16
An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presents a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decides to secure his throne and kingdom by asking mighty Assyria for help. Here, Isaiah reminds him that human attempts to establish security will fail. Isaiah repeats the promise that God alone will make His people secure.

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, [11]Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. [12]But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. [13]Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? [14]Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. [15]He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. [16]For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

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

PSALM: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
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!
[3] Restore 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?
[5] You 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.
[7] Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.
[17] But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,
the one whom you made strong for yourself.
[18] Then we will never turn back from you;
give us life, and we will call on your name.
[19] Restore us, O Lord God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.

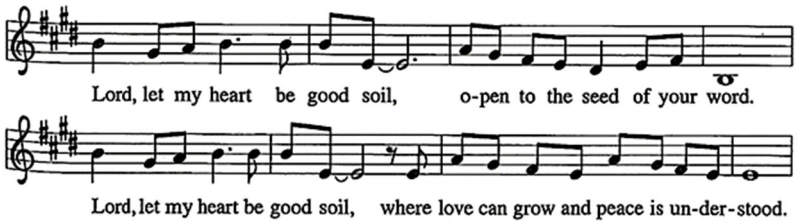
SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-7
Paul's letter here is devoted to presenting the gospel (or "good news") of God, which provides salvation for all who believe. In the opening words of the letter, Paul expands upon the typical salutation to include a statement of faith.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel
of God, [2]which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy
scriptures, [3]the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David
according to the flesh [4]and was declared to be Son of God with power
according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ
our Lord, [5]through whom we have
received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all
the Gentiles for the sake of his name, [6]including yourselves who are called to
belong to Jesus Christ,
[7]To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

(Please stand)

Gospel Acclamation



Gospel Announcement
P: The Gospel according to St. Matthew Chapter 1.
C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25
Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means, literally, "God saves."

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother
Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was
found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. [19]Her husband Joseph, being a
righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to
dismiss her quietly. [20]But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the
Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be
afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the
Holy Spirit. [21]She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will
save his people from their sins." [22]All this took place to fulfill what had been
spoken by the Lord through the prophet:
[23]"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"
which means, "God is with us."
[24]When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded
him; he took her as his wife, [25]but had no marital relations with her until she
had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

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

(Please be seated)

SERMON Pastor Rayl
Sermon Hymn *"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"* No. 282

(Please stand)

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

Offertory Music Dr. Pattin

Offering Prayer

P: God of mercy and grace, the eyes of all wait upon you, and you open your hand in blessing. From all that you have given us, receive these gifts, signs of our thanksgiving and praise.

C: Fill us with good things at your table that we may come to the help of all in need. Amen.

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

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

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

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

Blessing

P: May the God of faithfulness grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus; may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
C: Amen.

Closing Hymn *"Angels We Have Heard on High"* No. 289

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Walk in the light of the Lord.
C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude Dr. Pattin

*****

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

ELDERS

Ted Hagedorn, Jeff Smith

READER

Bob Haar

SOUND BOARD

Amy Nelson

Your 2023 offering envelopes are ready for pick up in the hallway outside 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 2023 offering envelopes until January 1, 2023.* Thank You.**

****

REMINDER

If you want a contribution included on your 2022 financial statement, please turn it in by Sunday, December 25, 2022. NOTE: If you plan on mailing your last offering, please mail early in the week to make sure it gets here by Friday, December 23rd.

Labor and Fulfillment

There is joy in pregnancy: life and promise, hope and anticipation. There may be memories of sorrow around pregnancy: the child we never knew or couldn't conceive, or the mother who lost her life laboring for a child. There are memories of pain in pregnancy: physical pain, lifestyle changes, and pain in the pocketbook. To be pregnant means that something is going to happen, and ready or not, there will be a labor and a fulfillment for those nine months of anticipation and preparing.

This reality of pregnancy and labor is also surprisingly true for our God. The relation of mother and child is reflective of God's relation to us. The "already" and "not yet" of pregnancy is a model for the reign of God: signs of the reign of God are present, but the full reality has not yet come. Like a mother, our God labors, labors to love and care for those who have been created in the image of God.

We live with Mary and Joseph in a pregnant time. Do eyes of faith see the signs of the reign of God, the marks of pregnancy, the results of God's labor pains in the world? It is true that people are still in pain, still dying in the midst of the promise of the new life of God's reign. In the midst of painful and transforming labor--the in-breaking reign of God--we cry out for the Christ, born flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. We cry out for Emmanuel, God-with-us. We cry out for Jesus, that is, "the Lord saves."

Whether we are ready or not--whether or not the shopping is done, the cards sent, the tree up, or the party planned--whether the world is ready or not, the labor is at hand. The inconceivable has been conceived. Ready or not, she's gonna deliver! God is with us. Come Lord Jesus!