

# Peace

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



**December 10, 2023**

**Second Sunday of Advent**

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

8:00 am	Early Worship
9:15 am	JAM Sunday School
9:15 am	Adult Bible Study
10:30 am	Late Worship
11:45 am	2nd Year Catechism (every other Sunday)

**LIVESTREAM AND RECORDED WORSHIP:** We livestream the service on our church website at [www.firststjohn.com](http://www.firststjohn.com). Also, the service will be recorded and published to the website

**SMILE! YOU'RE ON CAMERA:** Please remember you may be on camera during the livestream and the recording of the service.

**IMPORTANT REMINDER:** Please remember to silence your cell phone before church begins. Thanks!

**ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL** meets at 9:15 am in the lounge every Sunday.

**CHILDREN AGES 3 THROUGH 5TH GRADE** will meet at 9:15 am for Sunday School in the basement of the church (JAM Room).

**2ND YEAR CATECHISM CLASSES:** Second year class will meet every other Sunday at 11:45 am.

**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.

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## ORDER OF WORSHIP—10:30 am

Preludes Dr. Anthony Pattin

“The Friendly Beasts”  
“A Christmas Medley”

FSJ Bell Choir  
Cheri Sergeant, Director

Ring of the Bell (Please stand)

**Opening Hymn** “Blessed be the God of Israel” No. 250

### **Lighting the Advent Wreath—The Second Candle**

*A reading from the prophet Isaiah 11:1-2*

P: A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.  
The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

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.

(Light the second candle)

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: O people of hope, come,

**C: let us rejoice in the faithfulness of the Lord. Amen.**

***O Come, O Come, Emmanuel – ELW 257 (vs. 1 & 4)***

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear.

*Refrain*

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.

4 O come, O Branch of Jesse, free  
your own from Satan's tyranny;  
from depths of hell your people save,  
and give them victory o'er the grave. *Refrain*

### **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 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.  
with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

*(Please be seated)*

### **Announcements**

#### **Special Music**

“The Bell Carol”  
“O, Holy Night”

FSJ Bell Choir  
Cheri Sergeant, Director

### **Introduction**

John the Baptist calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to  
completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets in the way of the  
Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this  
radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to  
repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little  
ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up our voices  
fearlessly and say, “See, your God is coming!” We say it to one  
another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need  
of justice and peace.

### **FIRST READING: Isaiah 40:1-11**

*In grand, flowing, poetic lines, the prophet announces that the exile of God's  
people in Babylon is over. God will deliver Israel and will care for her as a  
shepherd cares for the sheep. This word can be trusted, because the only enduring  
reality in life is the word of God.*

<sup>1</sup>Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.

<sup>2</sup>Speak 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.

<sup>3</sup>A voice cries out:

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

<sup>4</sup>Every 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.

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

<sup>6</sup>A voice says, "Cry out!"

And I said, "What shall I cry?"  
All people are grass,  
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

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

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

<sup>9</sup>Get 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!"

<sup>10</sup>See, the Lord GOD comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;  
his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.

<sup>11</sup>He 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.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: 85:1-2, 8-13** — Congregation responds in **BOLD**.

<sup>1</sup>Lord, you were favorable to your land;  
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

<sup>2</sup>**You forgave the iniquity of your people;  
you pardoned all their sin.**

<sup>8</sup>Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,  
for he will speak peace to his people,  
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.

<sup>9</sup>**Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,  
that his glory may dwell in our land.**

<sup>10</sup>Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;  
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.

<sup>11</sup>**Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,  
and righteousness will look down from the sky.**

<sup>12</sup>The Lord will give what is good,  
and our land will yield its increase.

<sup>13</sup>**Righteousness will go before him,  
and will make a path for his steps**

## **SECOND READING: 2 Peter 3:8-15a**

*This short letter deals with pressing concerns regarding the final advent of Jesus, especially concerns that could arise over its apparent delay. The author of the letter calls on Christians to anticipate the promised coming of the Lord through conduct dedicated to God.*

<sup>8</sup>Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. <sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

<sup>11</sup>Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, <sup>12</sup>waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? <sup>13</sup>But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; <sup>15a</sup>and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

*(Please stand)*

### Gospel Acclamation



Lord, let my heart be good soil, o-pen to the seed of your word.

Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is un-der-stood.

When my heart is hard, break the stone a - way. When my heart is cold,

warm it with the day. When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.

Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart be good soil.

### Gospel Announcement

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

C: **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.*

<sup>1</sup>The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

<sup>2</sup>As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way;

<sup>3</sup>the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight,' "

<sup>4</sup>John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And 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. <sup>6</sup>Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>He 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. <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

### Gospel Response

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

*(Please be seated)*

### **SERMON**

Pastor Rayl

### Sermon Hymn

"On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry"

No.249

*(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.

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

P: Merciful God,

C: **Receive our prayer.**

*(Please be seated)*

### The Offering

### Offertory Music

"Sing We Now of Christmas"

*Dr. Joan Walldorf, Director*

*Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician*

### 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.**

*(Please stand)*

### **The Great Thanksgiving**

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

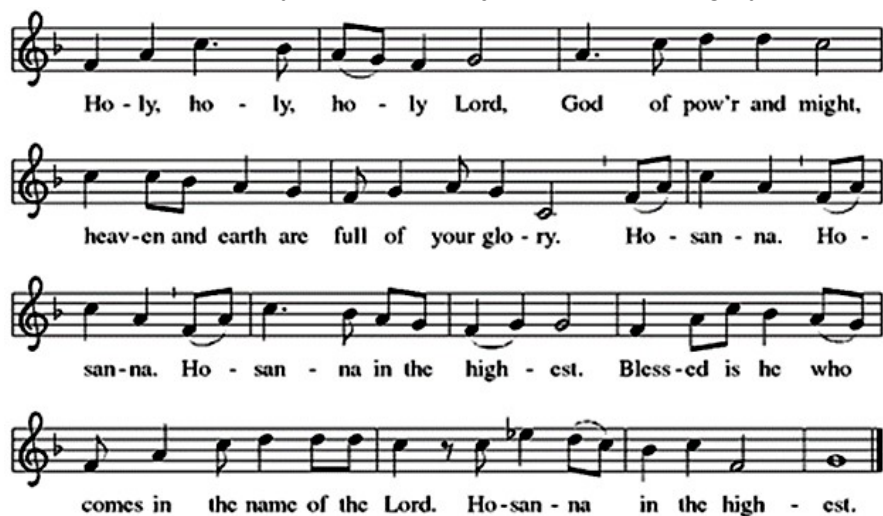
P: Lift up your hearts.

**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, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



P: Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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.

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.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink of this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**C: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

P: Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

### **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.

*(Please be seated)*

### **Invitation to Communion**

P: There is a place for you at the banquet.

**C: Come and feast at Jesus' table.**

### **The Communion** *(distribution will be continuous)*

*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."*

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

*(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.

C: Amen.

### **Prayer after Communion**

P: Jesus Christ, host of this meal, you have given us not only this bread and cup, but your very self, that we may feast on your great love. Filled again by these signs of your grace, may we hunger for your reign of justice, may we thirst for your way of peace, for you are Lord forevermore.

C: Amen.

### **Blessing**

P: May the God of all creation, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved, who strengthens us for service, give you reason to rejoice and be glad! The blessing of God, Sovereign, ✚ Savior, and Spirit, be with you today and always.

C: Amen.

**Closing Hymn**      *"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"*      No.270

### **Dismissal**

P: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Dr. Anthony Pattin

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### ***PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE***

#### **ELDERS**

Darold Henninger, Dick Haar

#### **READER**

Tom Hartford

#### **SOUND BOARD**

Amy Nelson

**December 10, 2023**

**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!