

# Joy

## THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT



**December 17, 2023**

**Third 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

Prelude Dr. Anthony Pattin

Ring of the Bell (Please stand)

**Opening Hymn** "O Come, All Ye Faithful" v 1-3 No. 283

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

P: This season of preparation is half done, and today we light the third candle of our wreath. It is pink to remind us there is so much about which we should rejoice.

**C: We are a people seeking true joy in the arms of the One who comes to bring it. Even as night continues to lengthen, we sense the coming of light that will brighten our days, so we listen for the Living Word in the words of the prophet.**

P: Every year we light candles as we prepare for the coming of Christ. More and more candles, more and more light, as we watch and wait for Jesus, the Light of the World.

*(The third Advent candle is lit)*

**C: God of Promise, come into our darkness. Renew your hope in us, for you alone bring life out of death.**

P: Receive God's promise of light from Isaiah 57:

*"For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."*

**C: Let the light of your face shine upon us, O LORD. We will rise up and go forth in joy. For you alone, O LORD, make us dwell in safety. May your unfailing love rest upon us, O LORD, even as we put our hope in you.**

Hymn of Advent "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (vs. 5-6) No. 257

5 O Come, O Key of David, come,  
and open wide our heav'nly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high,  
and close the path to misery.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

6 O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;  
O Sun of justice, now draw near  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
and death's dark shadow put to flight.  
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: Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

*(Please be seated)*

### **Announcements**

### **Introduction**

"Rejoice always," begins the reading from 1 Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. "All God's children got a robe," go the words of a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God's party.

### **FIRST READING: Isaiah 61:1-2, 8-11**

*Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.*

<sup>1</sup>The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,  
because the Lord has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and release to the prisoners;  
<sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,

and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;  
<sup>8</sup>For I the Lord love justice,  
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;  
I will faithfully give them their recompense,  
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.  
<sup>9</sup>Their descendants shall be known among the nations,  
and their offspring among the peoples;  
all who see them shall acknowledge  
that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.  
<sup>10</sup>I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,  
my whole being shall exult in my God;  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.  
<sup>11</sup>For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring up before all the nations.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: 126** — Congregation responds in **BOLD**.

<sup>1</sup>When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,  
then were we like those who dream.  
<sup>2</sup>**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue  
with shouts of joy.  
Then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done  
great things for them."**  
<sup>3</sup>The Lord has done great things for us,  
and we are glad indeed.  
<sup>4</sup>**Restore our fortunes, O Lord,  
like the watercourses of the Negeb.**  
<sup>5</sup>Those who sowed with tears  
will reap with songs of joy.  
<sup>6</sup>**Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,  
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

## SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

*Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ's coming.*

<sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances;  
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit.  
<sup>20</sup>Do not despise the words of prophets, <sup>21</sup>but test everything; hold fast to  
what is good; <sup>22</sup>abstain from every form of evil.  
<sup>23</sup>May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit  
and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord  
Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

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 John Chapter 1.

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

## GOSPEL: John 1:6-8, 19-28

*John's gospel describes Jesus as the "light of the world." John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.*

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

<sup>19</sup>This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup>He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." <sup>21</sup>And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." <sup>22</sup>Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup>He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,

'Make straight the way of the Lord,'"

as the prophet Isaiah said.

<sup>24</sup>Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup>They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" <sup>26</sup>John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, <sup>27</sup>the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." <sup>28</sup>This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

### **Gospel Response**

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

*(Please be seated)*

### **J.A.M. CHRISTMAS PROGRAM**

*"A Christmas Nativity Play"*

*(see insert)*

*(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.

*(Please be seated)*

### **The Offering**

**Offertory Music** *"Is There Room at the Manger for Me?"*

FSJ Chancel Choir

Dr. Joan Walldorf, Director

Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician

### **Offering Prayer**

P: God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up  
from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty.  
Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all  
people, through Jesus Christ our Savior.

C: Amen.

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

P: Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

**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.

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: The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit ☩ remain upon you now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

### **Closing Hymn**

*"Go, Tell it on the Mountain"*

No.290

### **Dismissal**

P: Go in peace. Keep awake.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **Postlude**

Dr. Anthony Pattin

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

#### **ELDERS**

Tom Hartford, Dave Wilbarger

#### **READER**

Bob Haar

#### **SOUND BOARD**

Dave Wilbarger

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## **PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY**

**WE ARE IN NEED OF DONATIONS AS SUPPLIES ARE RUNNING LOW. PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING ITEMS OR SENDING A MONETARY DONATION!**

**Please purchase full size items.**

dish soap	shampoo, child	disposable razors
paper towel	laundry soap	toothbrush, adult
toilet paper	fabric softener sheets	toothpaste, adult
tissues	body lotion	sanitary pads
deodorant	body soap	band aids
shampoo, adult		

This is a list of the items that will provide a month's worth of hygiene supplies to families or individuals in our neighborhood to help them stay clean and healthy. We always welcome any donations from our congregation members.

**If you would like to donate items, please donate only full size products as sample sizes will not last a month.** If you would prefer a Pantry volunteer to do the shopping for you, we welcome monetary donations. Please make out checks to First St. John Lutheran Church and write Personal Needs Pantry on the memo line.





Your 2024 offering envelopes are ready for pick up in 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 IF  
YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY.**

**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 2024 offering envelopes  
until January 1, 2024. Thank You.***

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### **REMINDER**

If you want a contribution included on your 2023 financial statement, please turn it in by Sunday, December 24, 2023. NOTE: If you plan on mailing your last offering, please mail early in the week to make sure it gets here by Friday, December 22nd.

*December 17, 2023*

**THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

## **Jesus, the Light**

*Jesus bids us shine . . . You in your small corner,  
and I in mine. -Susan B. Warner (1819-1885)*

A common theme of the Advent season is that of growing light in the encroaching darkness of these days. People are instinctively drawn to this symbol of warmth and love. This season provides an opportunity to emphasize again the true light, which came into our world in the person of Jesus Christ. It is our joy to shine this light brightly into whatever corner or situation we find ourselves. The words of a Sunday school song of an earlier generation remind us we can do this: "you in your small corner, and I in mine."

The truth of that everlasting light is that it still shines and will never be extinguished. Lesser luminaries have come and gone. Despite the lack of peace and understanding between nations and people and all the complexities around us, the light, which came down to earth, is the life and staying power of God. John the Baptist came to testify to the light that was already needed in a world of darkness and fear. He boldly confessed faith in this light which was not his own, but which illuminated the Christ.

We carry Christ's light out with us from this service, back into an often indifferent world. And we, like John the Baptist, are not afraid, timid, or ashamed of Jesus Christ, the Holy One. The Light of the world. Together we will make a difference by the grace of God. We take this light into the world, "you in your small corner, and I in mine."