

Hope

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



December 3, 2023

First 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. 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.

ORDER OF WORSHIP—10:30 am

Preludes Megan Amos, French Horn / Dr. Anthony Pattin, Piano

"Romance"	Saint-Saens
"Aria"	Purcell
"Praeludium"	Bach
"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"	Traditional

Ring of the Bell (Please stand)

Opening Hymn "Hark the Glad Sound" No. 239

Lighting the Advent Wreath—The First 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 first candle is called "The Prophet's Candle." Prophets like Isaiah shared God's message. God told the people to get ready for the promised Savior.

C: A light to shine in the darkened world. "Prepare," the prophets said, "the light of God is coming."

P: The prophets foretold the Savior would come. God's light would soon shine out to guide everyone. We light the first candle and pray this prayer:

C: "Dear Jesus, you're coming. Please help us prepare."
(Light the first candle)

Hymn of Advent "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" No. 254

*Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art,
Dear desire of ev'ry nation, joy of ev'ry longing heart.*

*Born thy people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king;
Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all-sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.*

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 your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

(Please be seated)

Announcements

Introduction

Stir up your power, and come! The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 64:1-9

This lament comes from a people who have had their hopes shattered. The visions of a rebuilt Jerusalem and a renewed people of God, spoken of in Isaiah 40–55, have not been realized. Instead, the people experience ruin, conflict, and famine. This lament calls God to account—to be the God who has brought deliverance in the past.

¹O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—

²as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!

³When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,

you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
⁴From ages past no one has heard,
 no ear has perceived,
 no eye has seen any God besides you,
 who works for those who wait for him.
⁵You meet those who gladly do right,
 those who remember you in your ways.
 But you were angry, and we sinned;
 because you hid yourself we transgressed.
⁶We have all become like one who is unclean,
 and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
 We all fade like a leaf,
 and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
⁷There is no one who calls on your name,
 or attempts to take hold of you;
 for you have hidden your face from us,
 and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.
⁸Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;
 we are the clay, and you are our potter;
 we are all the work of your hand.
⁹Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,
 and do not remember iniquity forever.
 Now consider, we are all your people.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: 80:1-7, 17-19 — Congregation responds in **BOLD**.

¹ 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: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

As the Christians in Corinth await the advent of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has already enriched them through spiritual gifts and will continue to strengthen them until the coming day of the Lord.

³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵ for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—⁶ just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—⁷ so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸ He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

Special Music

“Larghetto”

Mozart

(Please stand)

Gospel Acclamation





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 13.

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

GOSPEL: Mark 13:24-37

Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.

[Jesus said:] ²⁴“In those days, after that suffering,

the sun will be darkened,

and the moon will not give its light,

²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven,

and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.

²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

Gospel Response

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

(Please be seated)

SERMON

Bishop Beaudoin

Sermon Hymn

“Rejoice, Rejoice Believers”

No.244

The Offering

Offertory Music

“Do You Hear What I Hear?”

Dr. Joan Walldorf, Director

Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician

(Please stand)

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.**

PRESENTATION OF SPECIAL TITHE

Bishop Beaudoin, Mark Ackerman

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.

Lighting the Christmas Tree

P: Let us glorify Christ our light, who brings salvation and peace into our midst, now and forever.

C: Amen.

P: Fellow people of God, amid signs and wonders Christ Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea: his birth brings joy to our hearts and enlightenment to our minds. With this tree, decorated and adorned in our sanctuary, may we welcome Christ among us; may its lights guide us to the perfect light.

P: A Reading from Ezekiel 17: 22-24.

Thus says the Lord God:

I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar;

I will set it out. I will break off a tender one from the topmost of its young twigs;

I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain.

On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it,

in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit, and become a noble cedar.

Under it every kind of bird will live; in the shade of its branches will nest winged creatures of every kind.

All the trees of the field shall know that I am the Lord.

I bring low the high tree, I make high the low tree;

I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish.

I the Lord have spoken; I will accomplish it.

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

P: Let us ask God to send his blessing upon us and upon this sign of our faith in the Lord.

C: Lord, give light to our hearts.

P: That this tree of lights may remind us of the tree of glory on which Christ accomplished our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, give light to our hearts.

P: That the joy of Christmas may always be in our homes, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, give light to our hearts.

P: That the peace of Christ may dwell in our hearts and in the world, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, give light to our hearts.

P: Lord our God, we praise you for the light of creation: the sun, the

moon, and the stars of the night.

C: We praise you for the light of Israel: the Law, the prophets, and the wisdom of the Scriptures.

P: We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son: he is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace,

C: who fills us with the wonder of your love.

P: Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we illumine this tree. May the light and cheer it gives be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts. May all who delight in this tree come to the knowledge and joy of salvation. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

The lights of the tree are then illuminated.

P: May the God of glory fill our hearts with peace and joy, now and forever.

C: Amen.

"Tannenbaum" (*Sung by the Choir*)

Text: Ernst Anschütz, 1824—Melodie: Volksweise (traditional)

O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,
wie treu sind deine Blätter.

O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,
wie treu sind deine Blätter.

Du grünst nicht nur
zur Sommerzeit,

Nein auch im Winter, wenn es schneit.

O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,
wie treu sind deine Blätter.

"O Christmas Tree" (*Sung by the Congregation*)

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree

How steadfast are your branches!

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree

How steadfast are your branches!

Your boughs are green in summer's time

And through the snows of wintertime.

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree

How steadfast are your branches!

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree

Your boughs can teach a lesson.

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree

Your boughs can teach a lesson.
That constant faith and hope sublime
Lend strength and comfort through all time.
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree
Your boughs can teach a lesson.

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
How strong and true God made you!
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
How strong and true God made you!
You bid us all to faithful be,
To trust in God unchangingly.
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
How strong and true God made you!

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to
shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you
with favor, and grant you peace. In the name of the Father, and of
the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

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

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Dr. Anthony Pattin

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

ELDERS

Jeff Smith, Ted Hagedorn

READER

Toni Wilbarger

SOUND BOARD

Andrew Hodges



WELCOME TO OUR GUEST MUSICIAN Megan Amos

Megan Amos has been the principal horn player of the Toledo Symphony since 2019. Additionally, Megan is joining the Columbus Symphony for a temporary appointment as acting principal horn for part of the 2023-2024 season. In 2019, Megan was the grand prize winner of the Susan Slaughter Solo Brass Competition at the 2019 International Women's Brass Conference. In addition to the Toledo Symphony, Megan has appeared as a soloist with the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Perrysburg Symphony, and the Aspen Music Festival. In 2017, Megan did a solo tour in Moscow and St Petersburg, Russia as part of the Educational Bridge Project. Megan frequently performs with orchestras in the area including the Fort Wayne Philharmonic where she was the principal horn player from 2018-2019, the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Originally from York, Maine, Megan studied at the New England Conservatory from 2013-2017.

Megan's mentors include Jamie Sommerville and Adam Unsworth. Megan performs on the third horn made by the legendary Ukrainian-American horn maker, Jerry Lechniuk.

2023 POINSETTIA SALE

SPONSORED BY THE ALTAR GUILD



Fill in the form below to place your order for poinsettias to be used during worship at Christmas time. You can place this form with payment in the offering plate or mail it in to the church office. Payment must accompany orders. Checks payable to: **First St. John**

Deadline for placing orders is Sunday, December 10th.

Number of plants @ \$15.00 each _____ Enclosed: \$ _____

Color (circle one) Red White

Name _____

Phone _____

In Loving Memory of (Deceased) _____

In Honor of (Living) _____

CHRISTMAS COOKIE SALE FUNDRAISER

SPONSORED BY WELCA

Please consider helping WELCA with their Christmas Cookie Sale that will be held on December 10th after both services. To participate and help raise funds plan to bring your baked cookies on Saturday, Dec 9th between 10-12pm. All types of cookies, fudge, bars, or bark accepted. There is a sign-up sheet available in the lounge on a clipboard or complete the form below and place in the offering plate. All funds raised will be donated to the Property Management group to help with maintenance and repairs in the building. Contact Sue Ann Rogers for more information (419) 280-1310.

☒ I will plan to bake cookies for the fundraiser and bring them on Saturday, December 9th between 10-12pm.

Name _____

Phone _____

Type of Cookie or dessert:

Quantity: _____

*****Drop in the offering plate*****



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.



December 3, 2023

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Stay Awake!

Some envision the end of the world as annihilation in thermonuclear destruction or in a human race that chokes to death on its own fumes of progress. Some imagine a collision of the planets. Others view this event as the freezing of the world because the sun has burned out, or as the overheating of the world because solar energy has moved in too close. Still others look for a specific day or hour when the earth and its inhabitants will be no more.

For us and countless other believers, however, the words of today's gospel sound a clarion call. We are invited to watch for the signs of the times. As these signs begin to take place, we are looking for the blessed advent of our Lord and great redeemer, Jesus Christ.

However, the curtain has not yet been lifted on the last act of our human drama. It may be five minutes to midnight and the zero hour. But that hour has not yet struck. The symphony is still unfinished; the last movement is yet to be played.

Those last signs will come in one form or another, in one way or another. The events, once started, will not go away nor be dismissed. The end-time events described in the gospels will in their own way unfold upon the stage of human history. And there will be no turning back the clock to another day, week, or time.

By God's grace and mercy, we shall stand in that multitude without number before the throne and before the very face of God for the first time! When all else has passed away, we will welcome the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ who has indeed delayed his coming, but who now finally comes to receive us.

So that we do not miss anything, wait patiently and keep awake!