

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
229 South Broad Street
Jersey Shore, PA 17740
570-398-1676

Sunday, December 3, 2023
1st Sunday of Advent



Children's Church will meet upstairs in the youth Sunday School room at end of the hallway at 9:30 a.m. Please take your child there before worship begins.

Any youth who wants to participate in the children and **youth Christmas program on December 17th** should let Cathy Eisner, Pam Wehler or Molly Hollick know. We will be discussing this year's program during Children's church and encourage all youth to come and see what we have planned. We are in need of several readers for this year's program and hope that some of our older youth will help us out. Please stop by Children's Church to see what we have planned!

"This morning we are led in worship by, Mr. Gary Johnson, an Authorized Lay Worship Leader of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. Authorized Lay Worship Leaders have received extensive training so as to provide worship leadership and preaching, and also have been authorized by the bishop of the synod to preside at the Eucharist in specific situations.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is committed to ordained ministry as the primary means for filling the needs of this church for Word and Sacrament, but at this place in the church's pilgrimage, the church's inability to provide all congregations with full-time ordained pastoral ministry presents a challenge. On any given Sunday, congregations have needs that cannot be met by available ordained ministers. Therefore, because it is the bishop's responsibility to meet the Word and Sacrament needs of the congregations in this Synod, synodically authorized lay worship leaders are trained to meet this need. On behalf of the whole church, Bishop Collins is deeply gratified by the ministry of these servants of the Gospel."

Introduction to the day

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.

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

Prelude

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

The Advent Wreath. *One of the best-known customs for the season is the Advent wreath. The wreath and winter candle-lighting in the midst of growing darkness strengthen some of the*

Advent images found in the Bible. The unbroken circle of greens is clearly an image of everlasting life, a victory wreath, the crown of Christ, or the wheel of time itself. Christians use the wreath as a sign that Christ reaches into our time to lead us to the light of everlasting life. The four candles mark the progress of the four weeks of Advent and the growth of light. Sometimes the wreath is embellished with natural dried flowers or fruit. Its evergreen branches lead the household and the congregation to the evergreen Christmas tree. In many homes, the family gathers for prayers around the wreath.

First Week of Advent

Praise to you, O God, our salvation who is near.
You hold us in our waiting and keep us awake to the world.
You show up in our lives at unexpected times.
Bless us as we light this candle to keep vigil for your arrival.
We trust that even though we do not know the day or the hour,
You hurry to gather all people to your peace. **AMEN.**

Light One candle to Watch for Messiah 240

*Light one candle to watch for Messiah:
Let the light banish darkness.
He shall bring salvation to Israel,
God fulfills the promise*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

The assembly stands.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who opens the heavens
and draws near to us with salvation.

Amen.

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance.
Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Everlasting God,
you love justice and you hate wrongdoing.
We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness
that make us reluctant to work against oppression.
We are complicit in systems of exploitation.
We choose comfort over courage.
We are careless with creation's bounty.
Look upon us with mercy.
Turn our hearts again to you.
Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways
for the sake of our waiting world. Amen.
Hear these words of assurance:
God clothes you with garments of salvation
and covers you with robes of righteousness.
In the tender compassion of † Jesus Christ,
your sins are forgiven.

God's covenant is eternal,
and God's blessing rests upon us all.
Amen.

GATHERING SONG: *Fling Wide the Door* 259

GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also, with you.

KYRIE setting 10 p. 203

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.
Amen.

The assembly is seated.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

L: A reading from Isaiah.

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.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

¹Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.
²**In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,
stir up your strength and come to help us.**
³Restore us, O God;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.
⁴**O LORD God of hosts,
how long will your anger fume when your people pray?**
⁵You have fed them with the bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.
⁶**You have made us the derision of our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**
⁷Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.
¹⁷**Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,
the one you have made so strong for yourself.**
¹⁸And so will we never turn away from you;
give us life, that we may call upon your name.
¹⁹**Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.**

L: A reading from First Corinthians

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.

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

4I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, 5for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—6just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—7so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. 8He will

also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands.

Gospel Acclamation p.205

Alleluia! Lord and Savior; open now your saving word.

Let it burn like fire within us; speak until our hearts are stirred.

Alleluia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

P: The holy gospel according to St. Mark

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.”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

SERMON

The assembly stands.

HYMN OF THE DAY: *My Lord, What a Morning* 438

THE NICENE CREED p. 104 in the front of the hymnal

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A: With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

A brief silence.

Call your church into holy fellowship as we await the restoration of all things. Reenergize your faithful people to live with hope and compassion, especially those who serve as missionaries near and far. Center us on your promise to come among us and make all things new. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: All creation signals your presence, O God: the vastness of the cosmos, the turn of the seasons, and living things that both rest and flourish. Rekindle our commitment to care for the earth. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Let the nations tremble at your holy presence, that justice and liberation prevail in all corners of the earth. Restore peace to nations in conflict, teach righteousness to corrupt leaders and systems, and bring stability to areas facing uncertain futures. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Enrich the spirits of all who feel hopeless, fearful, or despairing. Stay close to those who await healing or relief (*especially*). Deliver all in any need. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Be with those who keep awake at night: nurses working overnight shifts, caregivers of newborns and aging adults, stargazers, those who are anxious, or those who are traveling. Reveal to all that the dark can be a place of calm and comfort filled with your presence. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Gracious God, we uplift the ministry of International Leaders through the ELCA. Through scholarships, these women participate in short and long term academic training that is then used for their home countries, churches and communities in providing leadership roles for development. Bless them in these endeavors. Merciful God

C: receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: You have sent out your angels and gathered your faithful people from every time and place, calling them into one fellowship of saints. Bless the witness of those who dwell in your eternal presence (*especially Francis Xavier, whom we commemorate today*). Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

P: Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy. **Amen.**

The assembly is seated.

CHOIR ANTHEM Celtic Advent Song

A TIME OF SILENT MEDITATION

The assembly stands.

OFFERING PRAYER

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. **Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING P.206 *(in the beginning of the hymnal)*

Dialogue

Preface by the Pastor

Holy Holy Holy p. 207

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Words of Institution

THE LORD'S PRAYER P 145 *(in the beginning of the hymnal)*

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: In this meal, righteousness and peace meet together.
Come, take your place at the table.

COMMUNION

When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say
The body of Christ, given for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.
and each person may respond **Amen.**

Communion Song *Lamb of God p. 208*

SONG AFTER COMMUNION *Jesus, Name Above All Names*

(repeat twice)

*Jesus, name above all names, beautiful Savior, glorious Lord,
Emmanuel, God is with us, blessed Redeemer, living Word*

The assembly stands.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Generous God,
in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together.
Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim
your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.
Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

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. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG: *Soon and Very Soon 439*

DISMISSAL

P; Go in peace. Keep awake.

C: Thanks be to God.

Announcements

We welcome our visitors and ask that you sign a Visitor Attendance and Holy Communion Card that is located in the pew rack. We ask that cards be returned via the offering plate during the receiving of the offering. We practice “open Communion” here at St. John meaning that all who believe in the “real presence” of Christ are welcomed to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. We offer two choices for Holy Communion, wine or grape juice. Those worshipers desiring grape juice are asked at the communion rail to place their right hand over their heart after receiving “The Body of Christ.”

Remember in prayer: Rowan Aldridge, Jim Allen, Christine and Dave Barner, Agnes Cryder, Don Delaney, Helen Delaney, Mary Ellen Dougherty, Joanne Fisher, Dawn Fryer, Dina George, Dawn Hauser, Barb Hoffman, Myrtle Long, Mick Miller, Bob Moriarity, Penny Parks-Dean, Cora Pelletier, and all of our shut-ins.

We also remember in prayer Family Promise; Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and Rev. Michael Burk Presiding Bishop Pro Temp --ELCA; Bishop Craig A. Miller - USS; for our Companion Synods in Liberia and Ansbach-Wurzburg, Germany, and for peace in Ukraine and Israel.

We pray for the safety of our military troops around the world including Mark Baier, Isaac Boring, Jade Cordrey, Ben Cramer, Trevor and Nehemiah Eberhart, Patrick Hamlin, Paul Laidacker, Steven Moore, Maddison Myers, Tyler O’Neal, Adam Shaffer, Jeremy and Haley Naugle Sorrell, Richie Speicher, Aaron Stabley, Paul St. James, Kevin Titus, and Jenna White. We also lift up in prayer their families who strive to keep a normalcy in the family and continue on often with added stress.

Special thanks to this weeks’ helpers: Lector –Kathy Brundick; Assisting Ministers --Deb Heydrich and Ron Brundick; Head Usher –Lon Myers; Teller –Cozette Stoltzfus; Bulletin Sponsor –Joyce Hudson; Children's Church --Molly Hollick.

Next week’s helpers: Lector –Darlene Bilby; Assisting Ministers Bill Ely and Ken Dougherty; Head Usher – Lon Myers; Teller –Cozette Stoltzfus;; Bulletin Sponsor – Joyce Hudson; Children's Church --Pam Wehler; Flowers -- Carson.

The flowers are to the glory of God and in loving memory of Nancy Wolfe who knew "to love thy neighbor" by Jean Smithbauer.

The Sanctuary Candle in November is in memory of my parents and husband by Joyce Hudson.

The Lutheran Church Women's **Prayer Chain** is a vital ministry of St. John Lutheran. Anyone in need of prayers is asked to contact any of the following persons Gloria Ely – 570-873-3597 Joyce Braucht - 570-398-2852. We are working on **updating the prayer chain**. Please fill out a **blue flyer** and put in the offering plate in you wish to participate. All are welcome!

This bulletin and more can be found on our church website: www.stjl.org.

Any youth who wants to participate in the children and **youth Christmas program on December 17th should** let Cathy Eisner, Pam Wehler or Molly Hollick know. We will be discussing this year's program during Children's church and encourage all youth to come and see what we have planned. We are in need of several readers for this year's program and hope that some of our older youth with help us out. Please stop by Children's Church to see what we have planned!

CHRISTMAS COOKIES ARE NEEDED FOR THE BAZAAR! Please bring the cookies to the social room between 1:00-5:00 p.m. on Friday, December 8. Bazaars set up is at 5:00 p.m.

Youth planning on attending **Hershey Lights** at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 9, please contact Cathy Eisner soon so tickets can be purchased!

Advent/Christmas Offering Each year the Advent/Christmas Offering is received during the Advent/Christmas season and given to two mission projects that will benefit people in need. This year ¼ of offerings received will go to United Churches of Lycoming County which helps a lot of local people and ¾ will go to Mission Support to help spread the love of Jesus Christ to people around the world. Your gifts are greatly appreciated. Advent/Christmas envelopes are in the pews.

CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTMAS DINNER is after worship on Sunday, December 17. Please bring a casserole to share and your own place settings. Meat and beverage will be provided.

Youth desiring to go to Camp Mt. Luther for the annual Grow in the Snow Synod Youth Event March 8 & 9, see Pastor Aucker to register. This is for Middle School and High School Youth.

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH- The Upper Susquehanna Synod is offering to send High School youth to Winterfest in Lancaster January 5-7. Winterfest gathers 200 youth from Central Pennsylvania together for worship, spiritual formation, and fellowship. There will be live music, bouncy houses, worship services and plenty of opportunities to grow in your faith. If you're interested in participating, please email cml@campmountluther.org by December 1st.

CHRISTMAS EVE at 10 o'clock there is a half hour of **special music**. If you would like to perform and share your talent, please see organist Becky Ward.

The angel tree kids will be on the Christmas tree in the tower today and the gifts need to be back to the church on Sunday, December 3rd. Any questions see Lynette Yost or Carol Yost.

Calendar

Sunday, December 3, 2023 1st Sunday of Advent
Angel Tree gifts need to brought in by today!
8:30 a.m. Adult Sunday School
9:30 a.m. Worship Service with Children's Church
10:30 a.m. Youth make Gingerbread Houses

Tuesday, December 5, 2023 noon -- JOY Christmas Luncheon
6:00 p.m. Council

Wednesday, December 6, 2023 6:30 Choir

Thursday, December 7, 2023 4:00 p.m. Pack Boxes

Friday, December 8, 2023 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Food Distribution

Saturday, December 9, 2023 10:00 a.m. BAZAAR
2:00 p.m. Youth to Hershey Lights

Sunday, December 10, 2023 2nd Sunday of Advent
8:30 a.m. Adult Sunday School
9:30 a.m. Worship Service with Children's Church
2:00 p.m. Catechism



Just a reminder of upcoming events:

Dec. 3 – Youth and young at heart make Gingerbread houses after worship in the Sunday School room.

Dec. 9 – Women of St. John Annual Bazaar. Starting at 9 am. Youth leave for Christmas at Hershey Park at 2:00 pm.

Dec. 17 – Children's Christmas Program and Congregation Christmas Dinner after worship. Youth go Christmas Caroling at 5:00 p.m.

December 24 - Celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas

9:30 a.m. Advent Worship at St. John Lutheran

4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship at St. John Lutheran

7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship at St. James Lutheran

10:00 p.m. Special Music at St. John Lutheran

10:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship at St. John Lutheran

Let us pack the church on Christmas Eve! Invite everyone you encounter to join us at one of the Christmas Eve Services.