

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

Sunday, December 10, 2023
2nd 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.

Introduction to the day

John 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.

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.*

Second Week of Advent

Lighting two candles

Praise to you, O God who gives us courage to start again.

You fasten righteousness around your waist

and baptize with the Holy Spirit's fire.

Bless us as we mirror your mighty fire in these simple flames,

and teach us to mirror your justice in the paths we prepare.

We ask that peace abound, until none hurt or destroy over all the earth. **Amen**

Light One candle to Watch for Messiah 240 verse 2

Light two candles to watch for Messiah:

Let the light banish darkness.

He shall feed the flock like a shepherd,

Gently lead them homeward.

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: *Come, Thou Long-expected Jesus 254*

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 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.

Amen.

The assembly is seated.

WORD

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

L: A reading from Isaiah.

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.

¹Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.

²Speak 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.

³A voice cries out:
"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴Every 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.

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

⁶A voice says, "Cry out!"
And I said, "What shall I cry?"
All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

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

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

⁹Get 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!”
¹⁰See, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.
¹¹He 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.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

L Let us read the Psalm responsively by verse

Psalm: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

¹You have been gracious to your land, O LORD;
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.
²**You have forgiven the iniquity of your people
and blotted out all their sins.**
⁸I will listen to what the LORD God is saying;
for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to you.
⁹**Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you,
that your glory may dwell in our land.**
¹⁰Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
¹¹**Faithfulness shall spring up from the earth,
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.**
¹²The LORD will indeed grant prosperity,
and our land will yield its increase.
¹³**Righteousness shall go before the LORD
and shall prepare for God a pathway.**

L: A reading from Second Peter

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.

⁸Do 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. ⁹The 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. ¹⁰But 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.

¹¹Since 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, ¹²waiting 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? ¹³But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

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

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 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.

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

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

³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.’”

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

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

SERMON

The assembly stands.

HYMN OF THE DAY: All Earth is Hopeful 266

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.

Send forth your faithful people with words of promise and forgiveness. Teach your church to be bold in revealing your good news in word and in deed. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Reveal your majesty in mountain peaks, flowing rivers, and blossoming wilderness roads. Heal the earth where it longs for renewal (*especially*). Bring wholeness to the earth and all its creatures. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Turn the hearts of the nations toward righteousness and peace. Increase cooperation for justice between countries, commonwealths, political parties, and diplomatic leaders. In times of prosperity, direct leaders to be generous for the sake of all. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Comfort your people with tender words of love and healing. Surround all who are grieving, all who know depression or anxiety, or all who feel lonely or forgotten. Be a steadfast presence when all else feels uncertain. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Grant holy patience to all who are waiting this season (*especially*). Give hope to those seeking employment. Bring reassurance to people awaiting new diagnoses or treatments. Protect expectant parents. Watch with those who keep bedside vigil. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Eternal Father, strong to save, we lift up in prayer the well-being of seafarers--the brave and unsung crew members who confront the dangers of the high seas year-round, far from their home countries and families. We thank you for the Lutheran chaplains at Seafarers' International House in New York who provide hospitality to these ships' crews as well as the offering of Christmas-at-Sea gift bags during the Advent and Christmas seasons. Bless their work Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: With you a thousand years is like a day. Bless the memory of the saints from ages past and the anticipation of saints yet to be born. Inspire us to live with faith as we await your new heaven and new earth. 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.

C: Amen.

The assembly is seated.

CHOIR ANTHEM *Advent Canticle*

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: *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry*

DISMISSAL

P; Go in peace. Keep awake.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

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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 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;

Next weeks’ helpers: Lector –Shane Snyder; Assisting Ministers --Karen Aucker and Gary Johnson; Head Usher –Lon Myers; Teller –Cozette Stoltzfus; Bulletin Sponsor –Joyce Hudson; Children's Church --Cathy Eisner; Flowers -- Johnsons.

The flowers are to the glory of God and in loving memory of Herb and Mary Lou Ripka by Diana and Jim Carson.

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.

Youth are collecting **gloves and socks for Care Closet**. Please bring them and hang them on the clothes line!

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.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING! All youth and anyone who is interested is invited to go caroling on Saturday, December 16. We will meet at 803 Thompson Street (Molly Hollick's house) at 5 pm to go caroling at Manor Care and visit shut-ins and members who are nearby. Then we will return to the house and have refreshments afterwards.

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.

Calendar

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

Wednesday, December 13 2023 6:30 Choir

Saturday, December 16 5:00 p.m. Youth Caroling

Sunday, December 17, 2023 1st Sunday of Advent
8:30 a.m. Adult Sunday School
9:30 a.m. Worship Service with Children's Church Program
10:30 a.m. Congregational Christmas Dinner



Just a reminder of upcoming events:

Dec. 16 Christmas Caroling at 5:00 p.m.

Dec. 17 – Children’s Christmas Program and Congregation Christmas Dinner after worship.

Dec. 20 -- Fellowship Time at 11:30 a.m. Restless Oaks

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.