

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

Sunday, December 12, 2021

Third Sunday of Advent

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY**

*Christ's presence in our midst in the wonder of the holy supper is cause for singing. The nearness of the God in prayer, in every circumstance, is cause for rejoicing. The coming of one "more powerful" than John, even with a winnowing fork in hand, is good news—and cause for exultation—for us who are being saved. Great joy is the tone for the third Sunday of Advent.*

### **SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS**

#### **PRELUDE**

#### **LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH**

P: Holy are you, God of the brokenhearted and oppressed;  
    you promised to send your chosen one who gives a garland  
    instead of ashes to those who mourn;  
    who brings down the powerful and lifts the lowly.  
And we light these candles, open our lips to testify to the true light  
    coming into the world who enlightens everyone.  
Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the desert.  
Reveal your truth to us, and fill our mouths with shouts of joy  
    that declare the great things you have done for us.

**C: Amen**

**Light One candle to Watch for Messiah 240 (verse three)**

*Light two candles to watch for Messiah; let the light banish darkness.  
Lift your heads and lift high the gateway for the King of glory.*

#### **Litany for Advent:**

P: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

**C: Stir up your power, O Lord, and bring your light to dwell among us.**

P: For unto us a child is born; unto us a Son is given.

**C: Stir up your power, O Lord, and make us run to you with the eagerness of children.**

P: A voice cries in the wilderness, prepare you the way of the Lord.

**C: Stir up your power, O Lord, and grant us the courage to raise our voices for those who are voiceless.**

P: And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

**C: Stir up your power, O Lord so that we may shine the light of your glory to all we encounter.**

P: Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning?

**C: Stir up your power, O Lord, and open our ears to the cries of the poor and oppressed among us.**

P: They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

**C: Stir up your power, O Lord, and grant us strength and endurance for the race we must run.**

P: Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the ends of the Earth.

**C: Stir up your power, O Lord, and open our hearts to sing your praise in all that we say and do.**

P: And He will come to Zion as redeemer, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression.

**C: Stir up your power, O Lord, and turn us from transgression to redemption. Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.**

P: Stir up your power, O Lord, that we may live as light in the darkness.

**C: The Spirit of the Lord, God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.**

P: Stir up your power, O Lord that we may feel your spirit resting upon us; and grant us a heart for the poor.

**C: For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth.**

P: Stir up your power, O Lord, that we may help bring about a new earth in your name.

**C: Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Come, Lord Jesus! Amen**

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

### **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

*The assembly stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,

who alone does wonders,

who lifts up the lowly,

who fills the hungry with good things

**Amen**

P. Let us confess our sins trusting in the tender mercy of our God

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

**God for whom we wait,**

**In the presence of one another, we confess our sin before you.**

**We fail in believing that your good news is for us.**

**We falter in our call to tend your creation.**

**We find our sense of self in material wealth.**

**We fear those different from ourselves.**

**We forget that we are your children and turn away from your love.**

**Forgive us, Blessed One, and assure us again of your saving grace. Amen.**

P: God in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you!

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, ✠ your sins are forgiven.

You are children of the Most High,

inheritors of the eternal promise, and recipients of divine mercy.

God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace  
**Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG: *Joy to the World* 267**

**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 P. 139**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray.

**Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; 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.

**FIRST READING: Zephaniah 3:14-20**

*The prophet Zephaniah's message is mostly one of judgment for sin. This reading, however, which comes from the conclusion of the book, prophesies joy for Judah and Jerusalem. Judgment has led to repentance, and God's salvation is at hand.*

<sup>14</sup>Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;  
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,  
O daughter Jerusalem!

<sup>15</sup>The LORD has taken away the judgments against you,  
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;  
you shall fear disaster no more.

<sup>16</sup>On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:  
Do not fear, O Zion;

do not let your hands grow weak.

<sup>17</sup>The LORD, your God, is in your midst,  
a warrior who gives victory;

he will rejoice over you with gladness,  
he will renew you in his love;

he will exult over you with loud singing  
<sup>18</sup>as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,

so that you will not bear reproach for it.  
<sup>19</sup>I will deal with all your oppressors  
at that time.  
And I will save the lame  
and gather the outcast,  
and I will change their shame into praise  
and renown in all the earth.  
<sup>20</sup>At that time I will bring you home,  
at the time when I gather you;  
for I will make you renowned and praised  
among all the peoples of the earth,  
when I restore your fortunes  
before your eyes, says the LORD.

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **PSALM Isaiah 12:2-6**

<sup>2</sup>Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid,  
for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might, and has become my salvation.  
<sup>3</sup>**With joy you will draw water  
from the wells of salvation.**  
<sup>4</sup>And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the LORD, call on God's name;  
make known the deeds of the LORD among the nations; proclaim that this name is exalted.  
<sup>5</sup>**Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously;  
let this be known in all the earth.**  
<sup>6</sup>Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion,  
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

### **Second Reading: Philippians 4:4-7**

*Despite being in prison, Paul is remarkably upbeat as he writes this letter. Here, he urges his friends in Philippi to trust God with all their worries and concerns with the hope that they will experience God's joy and peace.*

<sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup>Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup>Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

*The assembly stands.*

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION p.142**

*Alleluia Lord to whom shall we go?  
You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia, Alleluia.*

P: The holy gospel according to Luke.

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

**GOSPEL: Luke 3:7-18**

*John the Baptist heralds the mighty one who is coming. John teaches that preparation for God's reign is not a matter of identity but of bearing fruits of merciful justice, radical generosity, and vocational integrity.*

<sup>7</sup>John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup>Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>9</sup>Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

<sup>10</sup>And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" <sup>11</sup>In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." <sup>12</sup>Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" <sup>13</sup>He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." <sup>14</sup>Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

<sup>15</sup>As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, <sup>16</sup>John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup>His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

<sup>18</sup>So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

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

*The assembly is seated.*

**SERMON**

**HYMN OF THE DAY: *Hark! a Thrilling Voice Is Sounding* 246**

**THE NICENE CREED**

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.  
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,**

eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.

**For us and for our salvation**  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,**  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,\*  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.**  
**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**  
**We look for the resurrection of the dead,**  
**and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

A: In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

*A brief silence.*

A: Holy God, renew your church and raise up leaders who announce your good news. Grant peace to congregations and seminarians in the midst of transition. Guide the work of candidacy and call committees. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

A: Creating God, your Spirit brought forth the earth and all that is in it. Breathe life into us, that we are inspired to live in harmony with one another and the planet. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

A: Shepherding God, you lead your people in paths of righteousness. Raise up prophets in our own day who warn against captivity to greed and point us to the freedom found in generosity. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

A: Nurturing God, you come near in times of worry and need. Cradle us in your arms, that we trust you and are not afraid. Attend to any who are hungry, imprisoned, or ill this day (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

A: Rejoicing God, you exult over us in singing. Enliven the song of this assembly and bless the ministry of church musicians (*especially*). With instruments and dance, join our voices to the song of all creation. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

A: Gracious God, we remember today the chaplains and staff who are part of Seafarer's International. As they distribute the gift satchels to the merchants waiting in harbor, may the sailors know they are not alone on the sea. Keep them safe in the waters as they long to return home again to their families. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered*

A: We give you thanks for your servants who showed us your goodness and grace (*especially*). By the power of your Spirit, keep us steadfast in faith until we make our home with you. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

P: God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.

**Amen.**

## **Responding in Love**

**Our Offerings** *This is our response to God's grace.*

*This ministry is funded by those who call St. John home and are excited about what God is doing through this ministry. If you are new to church, please don't feel any obligation to give. As much as we welcome your gifts for the Lord's work in this place, we care a whole lot more about you than money. We're just thrilled you're here. Offering plates are located in the front and back of the church.*

## **Our Offering of Music**

**CHOIR ANTHEM** *The First Noel/Pachelbel's Canon*

## **OFFERTORY**

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit with me.*

*Cast me not away from your presence and take not your Holy Spirit from me.*

*Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with your free Spirit.*

## **OFFERING PRAYER**

A: God of our waiting and watching,  
we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives  
to the service of all your people.

Prepare the way before us  
as we meet you in this simple meal,  
through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace.

**Amen.**

**GREAT THANKSGIVING P.144** *(in the beginning of the hymnal)*

**Dialogue**

**Preface by the Pastor**

**Holy Holy Holy**

**THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Holy God, the Beginning and the End,  
Our Salvation and our Hope,  
We praise you for creating a world of order and beauty.  
When we brought on chaos cruelty and despair,  
You sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy.  
At this end of the ages  
Your Son Jesus came to bring us your love  
And to heal the entire suffering world.

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.

Remembering, therefore,  
his life, death, and resurrection,  
we await his coming again in righteousness and peace.

Send your Spirit on us  
and on this bread and wine we share:  
strengthen our faith, increase our hope,  
and bring to birth the justice and joy of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,  
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,  
in your holy Church, both now and forever. **Amen**

**LORD'S PRAYER**

**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.

#### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P: Come to Christ's banquet.  
Feast on God's gift of grace.

#### **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 You Take Away p.146*

#### **HYMNS TO SING QUIETLY, HUM OR MEDITATE ON DURING COMMUNION**

256 Comfort, comfort Now My People  
259 Fling Wide the Door  
266 All Earth Is Hopeful

#### **SONG AFTER COMMUNION** *Jesus, Remember Me*

*Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.*  
*Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.*

#### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

A: Most High God,  
you have come among us at this table.  
By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word,  
sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all,  
through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest.

**Amen.**

#### **SENDING**

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

#### **BLESSING**

P: The God of hope  
fill us with all joy and peace in believing,  
so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
through Christ Jesus for whom we wait. **Amen**

#### **SENDING SONG:** *People Look East 248*

## **DISMISSAL**

P: Go in peace. Christ is near.

**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,, Dave Barner, Mike Cervinsky, Jacob Crane, Agnes Cryder, Don Delaney, Mary Ellen Dougherty, Charlie Dunne, David Mitchell, Bob and Phyllis Moriarity, Ryan Mundrick John Truax, and all of our shut-ins; the safety of our military troops around the world (Mark Baier, Isaac Boring, Jake Cordrey, Ben Cramer, Patrick Hamlin, Paul Laidacker, Kenny Leitch, Steven Moore, Maddison Myers, Tyler O’Neal, Adam Shaffer, Richie Speicher, Aaron Stabley, Paul St. James, Jenna White); Family Promise. Bishop Eaton, our Presiding Bishop; and Bishop Collins, Bishop of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. For our Companion Synod in Liberia and Ansbach-Wurzburg, Germany; and for the New Love Center as it seeks to build a new food hub.

Special thanks to this week’s helpers: Lector – Darlene Bilby; Assisting Ministers –Bill Ely, Jr., Ken Dougherty; Head Usher – Lon Myers; Teller – Dawn McCloskey; Bulletin Sponsor – Cozette Stoltzfus; Children’s Church – Cathy Eisner

Next week’s helpers: Lector – Shane Snyder; Assisting Ministers – Gary Johnson, Karen Aucker; Head Usher – Lon Myers; Teller – Dawn McCloskey; Bulletin Sponsor – Betty Allen; Flowers – Dittmer; Children’s Church—Molly Hollick

The Sanctuary Candle is sponsored in memory of Rick and loved ones by Bob, Jean Ann, and Shane Snyder

The altar flowers are given in memory of Herbert and Mary Lou Ripka by Jim and Diane Carson. We invite you to use the **Advent/Christmas envelopes in the pews** to make a donation. Council designated \$600 to go to United Churches of Lycoming County and the balance to Mission Support. Mission Support funds the work of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ to people in our synod and around the world. Your generous support to the Advent/Christmas offering is greatly appreciated.

**CHRISTMAS CONGREGATION DINNER** is next Sunday after service. Please bring your own table setting and a dish to share. The meat and beverage is provided! Joyous Fellowship!

**We are making GingerBread Houses! Come one come All!** - We invite all the youth to come make gingerbread houses on Sunday, December 19 at 11:00 a.m. in the upstairs Sunday School department. Pizza will be served. Parents are welcome to stay and help.

## **Our Moravian Star**

Originating in the Moravian boarding schools in Herrnhut, Saxony, Germany in the 1830's as an exercise in geometry, the stars were carried throughout the world by missionaries and other church workers. Now, from the Himalayas to the Caribbean, the star proclaims the hope of Advent.

Whatever its form, the star reminds us of God, who caused the light to shine out of darkness and of the light which is the life of humanity. It reminds us of the promise of Abraham that his descendants would be more numerous than the stars; we are reminded of the star that pointed to the "great and heavenly light from Bethlehem's manger shining bright." The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. This is the message of the Advent star, which also points to Jesus, who said, "I am the bright and Morning Star." It is the star of promise, the star of fulfillment, and the star of hope.

At St. John, our star, which is a 35 inch, 62 point star, was manufactured by the Brubaker family in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania.

The 2022 Flower calendar has been posted on the upstairs bulletin board. The Sanctuary Candle sign-up sheet and the Bulletin Sponsors sheets are in the downstairs hallway.

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

Sarah Davidson - 570-398-0659

Joyce Braucht - 570-398-2852

In November, Mr. Mark Cooley from Cooley **Organ** Company came to replace leather and do other work on the **pipe organ**. That cost us \$1,199. Mr. Cooley has worked on our organ for many years. Originally, he worked for the Moller Company that built our **pipe organ**. Mr. Colley believes the last time he came to do any major cleaning of the organ was in 2015. Imagine what your attic or cellar would look like after six years of dust and cobwebs. That's our **organ**. He did what he could, but we need an extreme cleaning where some ranks (pipes) would be removed so there is access to other ranks for cleaning and repairs. To do a complete cleaning and repairs which may take 5-6 days with his two helpers would cost \$4400-\$5000. We were really blessed as we have received \$2900 in Fall Cash Sunday offerings. If anyone would like to make an end-of-the-year donation to completely clean and repair the **Moller pipe organ**, your gifts would be appreciated. Note on your check "**organ repairs.**"

**Annual Reports** - A reminder to the chairs of all ministries of St. John Lutheran – your annual reports must be submitted to the office by January 15 to be included in the annual report to the congregation at the annual congregation meeting on February 6, 2022.

***THIS WEEK'S EVENTS***

Sunday, December 12 , 2021

- 9:30 a.m. Sunday School Starts
- 9:30 a.m. Nave Worship Service *3rd Sunday of Advent*
- 2:00 p.m. Catechism

Wednesday, December 15, 2021

- 10:00 a.m. Worship at Trinity Episcopal Church
- 11:30 a.m. Fellowship Time at Restless Oaks
- 6:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Friday, December 17, 2021

- 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Food Distribution

Sunday, December 19, 2021

*4th Sunday of Advent*

- 9:30 a.m. Sunday School Starts
- 9:30 a.m. Nave Worship Service
- 10:30 a.m. Christmas Dinner – bring a covered dish to share and your dish settings. Meat will be provided.

11:00 a.m. Children/Youth make gingerbread houses in upstairs Sunday School room. Parents are invited to come and help.

**Christmas Eve Worship – December 24**

- 4:00 p.m. – Worship at St. John Lutheran
- 7:00 p.m. – Worship at St. James Lutheran
- 10:00 p.m. – Special Music at St. John Lutheran
- 10:30 p.m. – Worship at St. John Lutheran

