

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

Sunday, December 19, 2021

4th Sunday of Advent

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY**

*Cradle and cross are inextricably connected on the fourth Sunday of Advent. Between a lovely tribute to the little town of Bethlehem and Mary's magnificent song of praise, the letter to the Hebrews reminds us in no uncertain terms that Christ's advent is for "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." It is the kind of tension in which the church always lives as when in holy communion—with high delight—"we proclaim the Lord's death."*

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

#### **PRELUDE**

#### **CHRISTAS AT SKOKIE JUNCTION** (a play by Gary Johnson)

*Mary, Did You Know?* Gracie Welshans and Gary Johnson

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

P: Holy are you, God of steadfast love and faithfulness;  
you promised to make a covenant with your chosen ones,  
to establish the throne of your servant David forever.  
As we light these candles, open our hearts to the mystery of the incarnation  
revealed to your servant Mary and plant your word in us that it may grow and prosper.  
Show us your favor, O Rock of our salvation.  
Reveal your love to us, and strength us for service in your name.

**C: Amen**

#### **Light One candle to Watch for Messiah 240 (verse 4)**

*Light four candles to watch for Messiah:*

*Let the light banish darkness.*

*He is coming, tell the glad tidings.*

*Let your lights be shining!*

#### **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: *Savior of the Nations, Come* 263**

**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. 138**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray.

**Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us  
from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, 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.

**FIRST READING: Micah 5:2-5a**

*The prophet Micah, having pronounced judgment upon Judah, speaks of a future shepherd-king who, like David, will come from the small town of Bethlehem. (Ephrathah refers to the area around Bethlehem.) This king will restore Israel and bring peace. New Testament writers understood this passage to be referring to Jesus.*

<sup>2</sup>But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
who are one of the little clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
one who is to rule in Israel,  
whose origin is from of old,  
from ancient days.

<sup>3</sup>Therefore he shall give them up until the time  
when she who is in labor has brought forth;  
then the rest of his kindred shall return  
to the people of Israel.

<sup>4</sup>And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,  
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.  
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great  
to the ends of the earth;  
<sup>5a</sup>and he shall be the one of peace.

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Luke 1:46b-55**

<sup>46b</sup>My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
<sup>47</sup>my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
<sup>48</sup>**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.**  
**From this day all generations will call me blessed:**  
<sup>49</sup>you, the Almighty, have done great things for me  
and holy is your name.  
<sup>50</sup>**You have mercy on those who fear you,**  
**from generation to generation.**  
<sup>51</sup>You have shown strength with your arm  
and scattered the proud in their conceit,  
<sup>52</sup>**casting down the mighty from their thrones**  
**and lifting up the lowly.**  
<sup>53</sup>You have filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away empty.  
<sup>54</sup>**You have come to the aid of your servant Israel,**  
**to remember the promise of mercy,**  
<sup>55</sup>the promise made to our forebears,  
to Abraham and his children forever.

**Second Reading: Hebrews 10:5-10**

*The author of Hebrews uses the image of religious sacrifice to convey the significance of Christ's coming. Through obedient acceptance of God's will, Christ allows his own body to become the greatest sacrifice of all, one through which we are made a holy people.*

<sup>5</sup>Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,  
"Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,  
but a body you have prepared for me;  
<sup>6</sup>in burnt offerings and sin offerings  
you have taken no pleasure.  
<sup>7</sup>Then I said, 'See, God, I have come to do your will, O God'  
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me)."  
<sup>8</sup>When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings  
and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), <sup>9</sup>then he added,  
"See, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. <sup>10</sup>And  
it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ  
once for all.

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 1:39-45 [46-55]**

*Elizabeth, John's mother, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, are two women filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. In Elizabeth's inspired greeting and Mary's song of praise we hear of a saving God who remembers, scatters, lifts up, and fulfills all things.*

<sup>39</sup>In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup>where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup>When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup>and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup>And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? <sup>44</sup>For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup>And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." [

<sup>46</sup>And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

<sup>47</sup>and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup>for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

<sup>49</sup>for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup>His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup>He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

<sup>52</sup>He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;

<sup>53</sup>he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup>He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,

<sup>55</sup>according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

P: The gospel of the Lord.

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

*The assembly is seated.*

## SERMON

### HYMN OF THE DAY: *Canticle of the Turning* 723

#### 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: Nurturing God, you give us life and care for our every need. Use the church's gifts and ministries for your service, bringing your word to all who seek your transforming grace. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

A: Creator God, you proclaim your boundless love for all that you have made. Renew barren lands, polluted waters, and melting ice caps. Make us servants of your creation that brings forth abundant life. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

A: Righteous God, you bring down the mighty and lift up the lowly. Strengthen those who seek justice. Bless the work of community organizers, activists, journalists, and all who call our attention to imbalances of power. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

A: Compassionate God, you proclaim your love and mercy. Show your lovingkindness to teen parents and those who are pregnant. Comfort any struggling with infertility and those who await test results, are in treatment and hospice care, and others in need (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

A: Gracious God, you fill the hungry with good things. Bless the feeding ministries of this congregation and community. Guide us to share your bounty with those who hunger or live in poverty. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

A: Holy Spirit, we ask for your guiding and empowering presence with the lay evangelists of the Lutheran Church in Liberia who have started their final session of training at the Louis T. Bowers Lay Leaders and Ministers Training Center in Totota, Liberia. These evangelists have left their families, their farms, and their congregations to come and learn so they can better serve the church and God. Comfort them when they are lonely. Give them energy and enthusiasm for learning. May they grow spiritually and academically in their studies at the Training Center. We give you thanks for their commitment and zeal for the ministry. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

A: Faithful God, you stir up the hearts of those who love you. We give you thanks for those who, like Mary, were courageous in their witness (*especially*). Give us such courage until that day when you fulfill all things. 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.**

## **Our Offering of Music**

### **CHOIR ANTHEM** *Almost There*

### **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**

**266 All Earth Is Hopeful**  
**272 Lo, How a Rose'Er Blooming**  
**279 O Little Town of Bethlehem**

### **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: *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came 264***

## **DISMISSAL**

P: Go in peace. Christ is near.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

*We extend our sympathies to the family of Leila Hiller who died on December 9, 2021. The funeral was on Saturday, December 18, 2021, here at St. John Lutheran*

## ***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, Julie Saar, Bill Saar 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 – Betty Allen; Children's Church – Cathy Eisner

Next week's helpers: Lector – Deb Heydrich; Assisting Ministers – Joyce Braucht and Carl Schaefer; Head Usher – Lon Myers; Teller – Dawn McCloskey; Bulletin Sponsor – Betty Allen; Children's Church – Holly Dittmer; Flowers --

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 celebration of all children by Bob and Holly Dittmer.

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.

**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.**"

"DAVID" playing at Sight and Sound !! August 6, 2022 -- Children 10 and under \$125.00; Adults \$190.00. Fare includes bus, play, meal, tip for driver and fund raiser for Luke Antolick. Payments may be made during the course of the year! Thank You! Joyce Braucht.

**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 19, 2021

9:30 a.m. Sunday School Starts

9:30 a.m. Nave Worship Service

*4th Sunday of Advent*

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

Wednesday, December 21, 2021

10:00 a.m. Worship at Trinity Episcopal Church

6:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Friday, December 24, 2021

*Christmas Eve*

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

Sunday, December 26, 2021

*1st Sunday of Christmas*

9:30 a.m. Sunday School Starts

9:30 a.m. Nave Worship Service

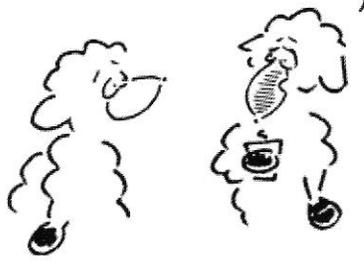
SO MARY WALKS IN  
THE DOOR AND,  
JUST LIKE THAT,  
ELIZABETH KNOWS!?

IT SAYS THAT  
MARY "GREETES  
HER..."



WWW.AGNUSDAY.ORG

WE DON'T KNOW  
WHAT MARY  
SAID...



PROBABLY,  
"JESUS!"

YEAH,  
PROBABLY.



LUKE 1:39-55

© WETZSTEIN 21.12.15

The flowers on the organ are donated in memory of Leila Hiller.