

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
Sunday, November 29, 2020
First Sunday of Advent

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

(Please observe silence during the prelude.)
The assembly stands.

Lighting the Advent Wreath

Use this blessing when lighting the first candle.

P: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.
You call all nations to walk in your light
and to seek your ways of justice and peace,
for the night is past, and the dawn of your coming is near.
Bless us as we light the first candle of this wreath.
Rouse us from sleep, that we may be ready to greet our Lord when he comes
and welcome him into our hearts and homes for he is our light and our salvation.
Blessed be God forever.

C: Amen.

(Sing) Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah

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

Litany for Advent:

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.
Stir up your power, O Lord, and bring your light to dwell among us.

For unto us a child is born; unto us a Son is given.
Stir up your power, O Lord, and make us run to you with the eagerness of children.

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

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

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth.

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

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

GATHERING SONG *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (ELW 257)

(hum or sing softly with mask on)

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

6 O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer; O Sun of justice, now draw near.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight. Refrain

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

C: 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.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 64:1-9

L: A reading from Isaiah.

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 read responsively

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.**

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

L: A reading from 1 Corinthians.

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.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia. Alleluia.

GOSPEL: Mark 13:24-37

P: The holy gospel according to Mark.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

SERMON

Silence for meditation

HYMN OF THE DAY *Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers* (ELW 244)

(Hum or sing softly with mask on)

1 Rejoice, rejoice, believers, and let your lights appear;
the evening is advancing, and darker night is near.
The bridegroom is arising and soon is drawing nigh.
Up, pray and watch and wrestle; at midnight comes the cry.

4 Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear;
arise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this benighted sphere.
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see
the day of earth's redemption that sets your people free!

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

CHOIR ANTHEM – *Hold on to Hope*

OFFERING PRAYER

A: God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE by Pastor

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

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 all the 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.

C: 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: Even as we watch and wait, Christ is here.
Come, eat and drink.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Please come forward to receive the "body of Christ" by holding out your hands in a cup like fashion as far as you can. The Pastor will drop the wafer into your hand, saying "the body of Christ given for you," and you respond "Amen," then go to the left or right and receive the "blood of Christ" from a pre-filled glass. The glasses will be separated so you don't touch one another. Take the glass and the communion assistant standing in the choir loft will say, "the blood of Christ shed for you." There will be a separate tray of glasses with grape juice for those who prefer grape juice.

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 the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.**

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: God for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

SENDING

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

BLESSING

P: The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting,
the long-expected Savior fill you with love,
the unexpected Spirit guide your journey,

✝ now and forever.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Postlude

Please leave your offering in the offertory plate located at each exit of the church.

Sight and Sound offering a Christmas Special



Voices of Christmas will be offered on December 4, 11, and 18 at 7:00 p.m. \$15.
Total running time 80 minutes. Internet connection required.

Announcements

Remember in prayer: Rowen Aldridge, Luke Antolick, Mary Bower, Bob Braucht, Cindy Cummings, Dawn Hauser, Dave Kuehl at Encompass Health, Ralph Lehman, Sara Leighow, Caleb Leone, David Mitchell, Bob and Phyllis Moriarity, Kathy Neal, Rev. Donald and Ruth Nice, Jack Rishel, Joann Rishel, Ben Saar, Jane Shaffer, Rev. Gary Shumway, John Truax, Jillian Waldman, and all of our shut-ins; the safety of our military troops around the world (Mark Baier, Jade Cordrey, Paul Laidacker, Kenny Leitch, Maddison Myers, Tyler O'Neal, Adam Shaffer, Aaron Stabley, Paul St. James, Jenna White); Everyone affected by the fires on the West Coast; Family Promise and the homeless in our counties. Bishop Eaton, our Presiding Bishop; and Bishop Collins, Bishop of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. For our Companion Synod in Liberia and Ansbach-Wurzburg, Germany; our sister church, St. Wunibald in Heidenheim, Germany and for the New Love Center as it seeks to build a new food hub.

The flowers are given to the Glory of God and in memory of Mitch Hollick by the Hollick family.

Special Thanks to this week's helpers: Lectors – Pam Wehler; Assisting Ministers - Karen Aucker and Dawn McCloskey; Acolyte –; Communion Assistants-; Head Usher - Dawn McCloskey; Tellers- Shane Snyder and Dawn McCloskey; Bulletin sponsor - Cynthia Breon;

Next week's helpers: Lectors –Kathy Brundick; Assisting Ministers -Deb Heydrich and Ron Brundick; Acolyte –; Communion Assistants -; Head Usher -Lon Myers; Tellers-Lon Myers and Gina Johnson; Bulletin sponsor -Jim and Lisa Ely;

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

Advent in Palestine

During the Advent season we often talk a lot about the Holy Land of the past without talking much about the Holy Land of the present. What is going on in Bethlehem today? How are we called to accompany our Palestinian siblings in love, joy, hope, peace, and justice? What does this mean for our own advent journey? Join ELCA Young Adults and ELCA Peace Not Walls starting Nov 30 for an Advent Pilgrimage in Palestine. Over the course of the 4 weeks of Advent young adults from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land will lead us on this pilgrimage through story, education, and theological reflection. Every Monday of Advent we will share a video reflection and every Wednesday of Advent we will share a written blog post, accompanied by discussion questions and actionable items you can use with small groups.

[Register here](#) to receive Advent Pilgrimage in Palestine resources by email and/or to register for our opening educational webinar on Monday, November 30 8:30-9:30pm EST.

Bible Study - Due to the pandemic we are suspending Bible study. Please continue studying the Advent study: *A Wonderful Life* that we handed out earlier.

Chancel Choir is FUN! Choir invites you to join us—make a joyful noise unto the Lord and have great fellowship! Choir practices are held on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. Choir members are asked / required to wear a mask or shield at all times. We'd love for you to join us!

Giving Plus+ Download the "Giving Plus+" app from your app store for your cell phone. This feature is also available on our web site. Enter your email, make up a password, and walk through the choices to give the church an electronic donation by check or debit/credit card. People were asking if they could give electronically by debit/credit card. Now this feature is available. If you have any questions, contact Pastor Aucker.

Give+ Text: Simply send a text message to 570-865-1101 with the amount you would like to contribute. Within a few minutes, you'll be sent a text with a link to register. Click on the link and enter your cardholder name and credit or debit card information. Once your registration is complete, you will receive a text verification and a receipt of your donation via email.

"Grab-a-Tab" - The youth of St. John would like to ask for donations of little tabs from beverage, soup and dessert cans. It doesn't matter what color the tab, just grab them and deliver them to the church office. This project will benefit the Ronald McDonald House of Danville. "Grab-a-Tab" program allows people of all ages to join in the effort of providing a "Home-away-from-Home" to children with cancer or other serious illnesses and their families.

Christmas Toy Shop -Gently Used and New Toys at no charge to parents. In the loving spirit of Christmas, the Oval United Methodist Church is providing Christmas toys for your young ones. Saturday, December 5, 2020 8:00 a.m. -10:00 a.m. Have toys to donate? Please provide clean and complete toys. Drop off at Oval UM Church basement from November 30 - December 4, 2020 **Donations not needed to shop Oval United Methodist Church, 6796 SR 44 Hwy, Jersey Shore * 570-745-3197.

St. John Endowment - We are in search of a volunteer to serve on the St John Endowment fund for a period of three years starting January 1. If you would be willing to serve on the Endowment committee contact Chuck Gottschall.

Angel Tree - The Angel tree can be found in the 2nd level Elevator Room. Please take an angel. The gifts need to be returned to the church on Sunday Dec 6. **Unwrapped, but please attach the angel to the gift** so we know which gift goes to which child. Any questions contact Lynette Yost or Carol Yost.

Christmas in Bethlehem

Restrictions are a bit different in the West Bank, which means there are plans for a small (45 person) worship service on Christmas Eve at the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church near Manger Square. This is an annual event, held in German, English, and Arabic, and typically attended by several hundred people, both local and international. Of course we're all very sad that things won't feel the same. Here's the GOOD NEWS: we will be live-streaming the service for all to watch! The service will take place on 24 December 24 at 10:00 a.m.

THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

Sunday, November 29, 2020

9:00 a.m. Nave Worship Service - Choir Anthem

7:00 p.m. AA meeting

First Sunday of Advent

Tuesday, December 1, 2020

7:00 p.m. Council

7:30 p.m. A.A. and N. A. meetings

Wednesday, December 2, 2020

10:00 a.m. Prayer/Communion at Trinity Episcopal

6:30 p.m. Choir

Sunday, December 6, 2020

9:00 a.m. Nave Worship Service - Choir Anthem

2:00 p.m. Catechism

Sunday school room reserved

7:00 p.m. AA meeting

Second Sunday of Advent