

Welcome to Worship

at

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
reconciling in Christ congregation



December 15, 2024

10:30 am

Interim Pastor: The Rev. Mike Button

Director of Music: Jessica Madow

330 Ferry Street; Easton, PA 18042-4500

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Statement of Welcome

*There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female;
for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. — Galatians 3:28*

As a community of God striving to be open to all people, we at St. John's Lutheran Congregation believe that the gospel is God's gift to all people, to be shared unconditionally. We welcome all to join us as we struggle to better understand the mysteries of God's teachings. We are challenged by Christ to care for, to love, to understand, and to listen to each other, regardless of race, age, gender, marital status, physical and mental abilities, sexual/affectional orientation, national origin, or economic status. We celebrate together our unity as God's people.

St. John's Lutheran Congregation is a place for each person to shine in their own unique gifts.

Statement of Mission

St. John's Lutheran Church is a downtown, community-oriented, congregation of Christians. We worship God, strive to welcome, and wholly accept everyone, and reach out with and in God's love.

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Communion is a time we invite all baptized Christians who believe that our Lord Jesus is truly present in the bread and wine of the Sacrament. If this is your belief, there are instructions to follow at the time of Communion later in the bulletin.

Service Notes:

- (asterisk) indicates, please stand as you are able.
- Page # indicates the front of the hymnal is used . . .
- Hymn # indicates the back of the Hymnal is used . . .

Hymn Book Abbreviations:

ELW – Evangelical Lutheran Worship Book
WOV – With One Voice
ACS – All Creation Sings

Gathering

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

Welcome

Prelude *“People, Look East”* (French Carol)
James Heck, violin and Amelia Fink, rainstick

***Confession and Forgiveness**

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, alive in the world,
reviving creation, arriving soon.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one
another. *Silence is kept for reflection.* God of mercy,

**C: We confess that we have sinned. We trust earthly powers
and human authority alone. We grow fearful. We cling to false
comforts.**

P: God of might,

**C: We confess that we have sinned. We have turned away
from our neighbors. We have trusted false promises.**

P: God in our midst,

**C: We confess that we have sinned. We plead: come to us.
Bring your mercy to birth in us.**

P: A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of God through † Christ Jesus, whose day draws near.

C: Amen.

***Gathering Hymn**

ELW # 242 *“Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn”*

***Greeting**

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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**

- page 98

***Lighting the Advent Wreath: Third Sunday of Advent**

P: We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath that marks our days of preparation for Christ’s advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord’s coming in glory. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may serve our neighbors in need. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

C: Amen.

The third candle is lit.

*Advent Hymn

ELW #257 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (ver. 5-6)

5 O come, O Key of David, come,
and open wide our heav'nly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery. *Refrain*

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*

*Prayer of the Day

A: 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.

C: Amen

Children's Chat

Word

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

First Reading

Zephaniah 3:14-20

¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷ 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 ¹⁸ as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it.

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ 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.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Responsive Reading:

Isaiah 12:2-6

² 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.

³ **With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.**

⁴ 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.

⁵ **Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously;
let this be known in all the earth.**

⁶ 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

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

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

*** Gospel**

Luke 3:7-18

P: The Holy Gospel according to Luke, the 3rd chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

⁷ 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? ⁸ 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. ⁹ 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.”

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” ¹¹ In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.”

¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” ¹³ He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” ¹⁴ 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.”

¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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.”

¹⁸ 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.

Sermon — The Reverend Mike Button

***Hymn of the Day**

ACS # 901 *“Now the Heavens Start to Whisper”*

***Nicene Creed**

C: 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: Let us pray. God who reforms, fill your church with courage to do your will. Empower your people in taking risks that bear fruit. Raise up leaders who will proclaim the good news. Lord, in your mercy,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: God who creates, you hold in balance diverse ecosystems. Encourage efforts to protect wild lands from devastation. Care for animals and people in the path of destructive fires, storms, and other disasters. Lord, in your mercy,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: God who embraces, help us notice the places where your people are hurting or sick including *those we mention on our prayer list . . . and those we name aloud or silently in our hearts . . .* Show your compassion and remember your people in love. Lord, in your mercy,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: Rescuing God, restore your people who are in any need. Heal all who are suffering Provide comfort and strength, and nurture sustained wholeness for the future. Lord, in your mercy,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: God who abides, you dwell among the people of this congregation. Deepen our relationships with one another and make us aware of the diverse talents and gifts present here. Lord, in your mercy,

C: Receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: God who consoles, we thank you for the time we have had with loved ones who have died. Comfort us with the promise of everlasting life in you. Lord, in your mercy,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ.

C: Amen

** The Sharing of the Peace*

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Meal

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

(Ushers now proceed to the Altar to receive the offering plates...)

Offertory

“Come, Messiah, Come”

by Lynn Shaw Bailey & Becki Slagle Mayo
Sung by the Wittenberg Choir

*Presentation of Gifts

(Ushers now bring the offering plates forward.)

*Offertory Hymn

ACS# 905

“We Are Waiting for Jesus”



1 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
2 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.



We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.



Sun of jus - tice, shine up - on us; we are trust - ing in your prom - ise.
Lov - ing Shep - herd, walk be - side us; stir our hearts, and gent - ly guide us.



We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

A: Let us pray. 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** - page 107

*** Preface** (*Leader continues . . .*)

***Holy, Holy, Holy** - page 108

***Thanksgiving at the Table** (*Leader continues . . .*)

***Lord's Prayer** - page 112

***Lamb of God** - page 112

***Invitation to Communion** - page 112

Holy Communion - *If you are baptized and believe that it is the real blood and body of Christ, we welcome you at the Lord's table.*

**At the invitation of the usher, please proceed to the front to receive communion. Communion is also available in your pew, please let an usher know. Gluten free wafers and grape juice are available upon request.*

Communion Hymns

ELW #483 *“Here Is Bread”*

ELW #482 *“I Come with Joy”*

ELW # 477 *“I Received the Living God”*

*Table Blessing

*Post Communion Hymn *“Now Lord . . .”* - page 113

*Prayer after Communion

A: Let us pray. 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.

Announcements

*Blessing

P: God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light, God, our hope for the journey, † bless and keep you now and forever.

C: Amen.

*Sending Hymn

ELW # 253 *“He Came Down”*

*Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Thank you to our Worship Volunteers . . .

Worship Assistant–Chris Orem

Ushers – Barbara Horinko / Lois Anne Calloway

Reader – Karla Lake

Advent Candle Lighter – Larry Transue

Altar Guild – Barbara Horinko / Sylvia Orem

Video Team – Pete Lake

This Week at St. John's December 15th – December 22nd

Today (12/15/24) – Third Sunday of Advent, 10:30 am

Today (12/15/24) – Following Worship: Property Meeting, Office

Today (12/15/24) – Gallery Holiday Show, 12-3:00 pm

Monday (12/16/24) – Choir Rehearsal, 1:00 pm

Wednesday (12/18/24) – Bible Study 11:00 am – Hospitality Room

Wednesday (12/18/24) – Advent Dinner 6:00 pm / Worship – 7:00 pm
@ St. Andrew's Lutheran Church

Saturday (12/21/24) – Membership, Hospitality Room

Sunday (12/22/24) – Sunday School / Adult Forum – 9:00 am

Sunday (12/22/24) – Fourth Sunday of Advent, 10:30 am
(Sunday School Christmas Program)

Sunday (12/22/24) – Gallery Holiday Show, 12-3:00 pm (show closing)

Tuesday (12/24/24) – Christmas Eve Worship, 7:00 pm

Wednesday (12/25/24) – Christmas Day, Church Office Closed

Thursday (12/26/24) – Church Office Closed

*Thank you, Jim Heck and Amelia Fink for sharing
their special music with us today*

Week 47, 12/1/24 Attendance - 57

Last Sunday's Envelope / Plate Offering	\$2,369.00
Weekly amount needed to reach our Budget:	\$2,126.00
Year to Date Envelope / Plate Offering:	\$100,945.00
Behind Budget	-\$3,229.00



**Join us for Prayer Group . . .
The 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of the
Month @ 11:00 am in the
Hospitality Room.**

Prayer List: Chuck, Clark, Don, Joe, Kara,
Christine, Bill, Michael, Shelley, Jan, Paula,
Keith, George, Lois Anne, Carolyn, Charles, Julia,
John, Kirk, Donald, Terry, Lenny, Emily, Bill,
Mary, Bucky, Jim, Shirley, Jeff, Karla, Debbie,
Pastor Orem, Peggy, Tony, George, Arlene, Joan,
Karen, Our Homebound Family & Friends, the St.
John's Call Committee, Our Future Pastor, and
the Family and Friends of Jane Thomas.

Bible Study is Back . . . Topic: The New Testament

(Bible Study will meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the Month.)

Third Sunday of Advent: *Lord Jesus Christ, as Mary and Joseph awaits joyfully Your coming, may we stay aware of the joy You bring into our lives. We want to find You in everyday moments and come with hearts of gratitude to Your humble manger on Christmas. Amen.*



Midweek Advent Worship:

*Join us for a light Soup Supper at 6:00 pm,
followed by Worship at 7:00 pm*

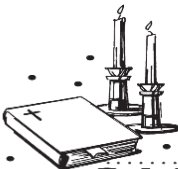
**December 18th—St. Andrew's
Lutheran Church**

Don't miss out - Sunday School Christmas Program

— next Sunday, December 22nd, during worship!

***Come One, Come All
Tuesday, December 24th, 2024
7:00 pm***

*"When they saw the star,
they rejoiced with exceeding
great joy." - Matthew 2:1*



Christmas Eve
CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

It's the Season for Baking

The Membership Committee is looking for bakers to donate 1 to 2 dozen of your favorite Christmas cookies. Cookies will be gift-packaged for our homebound members.

Donations due to the church by Friday, Dec. 20th.

Please see the sign-up sheet in the Narthex.

Thank you! Merry Christmas.

The Gallery at St. John's "Holiday Show"

**December 1st–22nd, 2024
12:00 – 3:00 pm**



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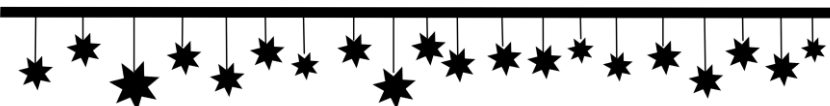
- 1. "Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn" (ELW #242, Text & Music: Marty Haugen © 1983 GIA Publications, Inc.)*
- 2. "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (ELW #257, Text: Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum, Koln, 1710; tr. composite © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.)*
- 3. "Now the Heavens Start to Whisper" (ACS #901, Text: Mary Louise Bringle © 2006 GIA Publications, Inc.; Music: Welsh melody arr. © 2020 Augsburg Fortress.)*
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***St. John's is looking for Volunteers
to visit Our Homebound Members this
Holiday Season.***

Please contact the church office if interested.



Our response:

Lutheran Disaster Response works with its partners to provide immediate relief, such as water, food, clothing, and other needs. Since many hurricanes also require a long-term response, Lutheran Disaster Response provides support on the long road to recovery with disaster case management, construction management, attention to unmet needs, and emotional and spiritual care.

What you can do: Pray

Please pray for the safety of communities impacted by hurricanes, including people in their paths and any emergency services personnel who are responding. May God's healing presence give them peace and hope in their time of need. Pray that God will deliver comfort to those who mourn and strength to those working diligently to rescue survivors.

Give:

Your gifts will support disaster-impacted communities. Gifts to "Hurricane Response" will be used in full (100%) to assist those affected by hurricanes, until the response is complete.

Mail your donation:

Make checks payable to: Lutheran Disaster Response
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
ELCA Gift Processing Center
P.O. Box 1809
Merrifield, VA 22116-8009

Or put your donation in the offering plate marked "Disaster Response"