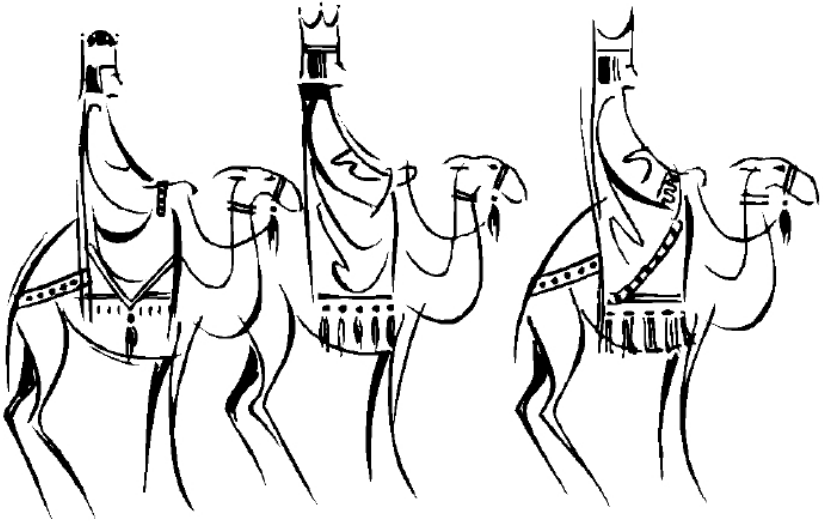


Welcome to Worship

at

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



Eve of the Epiphany

January 5, 2025

10:30 am

Interim Pastor: The Rev. Mike Button

Director of Music: Jessica Madow

330 Ferry Street; Easton, PA 18042-4500

Phone: 610-258-6119

E-mail : Admin@stjohnseaston.org

www.stjohnseaston.org

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.

~

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 *“We’ll Walk in the Light”* (trad.)

*Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, whose steadfast love is everlasting.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another . . . God-with-us,

C: We confess that we have turned away those seeking shelter, claiming there is no room when we have plenty. We have made power and wealth our idols, while you show us true glory: a baby in a manger. We have overlooked the shepherds, expecting good news in prettier packaging. Too often, we have valued violence instead of your peace. Turn us from our ways to your ways. Grant us the grace to begin again. Free us from all that keeps us bound, and forgive our sin, through Jesus Christ, who gives himself for us. Amen.

P: Hear the good news and rejoice! You are God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, † forgiven in Christ, and freed to respond in joy.

C: Amen.

*Gathering Hymn

ELW # 303 *“Brightest and Best of the Stars”*

*Greeting

- page 98

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

*Canticle of Praise

- page 99

*Prayer of the Day

A: Let us pray. O God, on this day you revealed your Son to the nations by the leading of a star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives, and bring us at last to the full vision of your glory, through your Son, Jesus Christ our 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

Isaiah 60:1-6

¹ Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

² For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you.

³ Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴ Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.

⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

⁶ A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come.

They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Responsive Reading:

Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14

¹ Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the king's son;

**² that he may rule your people righteously
and the poor with justice;**

³ that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.

**⁴ Let him defend the needy among the people,
rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.**

⁵ May he live as long as the sun and moon endure,
from one generation to another.

**⁶ Let him come down like rain upon the mown field,
like showers that water the earth.**

⁷ In his time may the righteous flourish;
and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be no
more.

**¹⁰ May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles pay tribute,
and the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.**

¹¹ May all kings bow down before him,
and all the nations do him service.

**¹² For the king delivers the poor who cry out in distress,
the oppressed, and those who have no helper.**

¹³ He has compassion on the lowly and poor,
and preserves the lives of the needy.

**¹⁴ From oppression and violence he redeems their lives,
and precious is their blood in his sight.**

Second Reading

Ephesians 3:1-12

¹This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—²for surely you have already heard of the commission of God’s grace that was given me for you, ³and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, ⁴a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. ⁵In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: ⁶that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God’s grace that was given me by the working of his power.

⁸Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, ⁹and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; ¹⁰so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

¹¹This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

***Gospel Acclamation**

“Alleluia”

- page 102

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 2nd chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ² asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.”

³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶ ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon – The Reverend Mike Button

***Hymn of the Day**

ELW # 308 *“O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright!”*

(vv. 1-4)

***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. Your glory fills the earth. Bless the work of all who engage in dialogue with people of other traditions and faiths. Bridge our differences with a shared mission of revealing your boundless love to the world. God of grace,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: Restore the glory of creation. Send rain to water-parched lands. Revive ecosystems and habitats threatened by a changing climate, and protect the peoples and creatures who live in them. God of grace,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: Give the rulers your justice and reveal your righteousness to those who govern. Frustrate the plans of tyrants and oppressors. Encourage the work of community organizers and activists who speak out against injustice. God of grace,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: Help those who have no helper. Draw near to those who have no one to advocate for them or those who feel forgotten. Deliver those who call to you including *those we mention on our prayer list . . . and those we name aloud or in our hearts . . .* Precious are they in your sight. God of grace,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: Liberate this congregation from a yearning for the past that forgets the future. Fuel in us a passion for discovery. Give us the boldness to dream and to imagine our ministries in new and different ways. God of grace,

C: Receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: We give thanks for your holy ones who now rest in your radiant glory. Make us, with them, sharers in the boundless riches of Christ, our hope and promise. God of grace,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: We commend these prayers to you, O God, trusting your grace made known to all, through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

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 “*When a Star Is Shining*” (ACS #915)

Sung by the Wittenberg Choir

***Presentation of Gifts**

(Ushers now bring the offering plates forward.)

***Offertory Hymn**

ACS# 914 “*Jesus, the Light of the World*” (v. 4)

4 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace! Je-sus, the Light of the world;
Hail the Sun of righ-teous-ness! Je-sus, the Light of the world.
Refrain
We'll walk in the light, beau-ti-ful light, come where the dew-drops of mer-cy are bright.
Shine all a-round us by day and by night, Je-sus, the Light of the world.

***Offertory Prayer**

A: Let us pray. God of heaven and earth, from the beginning, you have called forth life, in which you take delight. The trees, the fields, and the seas sing for joy. Bless now these gifts, received from your bounty, that we may join the chorus of creation to tell of your salvation from day to day.

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 # 593 ***“Drawn to the Light”***

ELW # 306 ***“Come, Beloved of the Maker”***

ELW # 301 ***“Bright and Glorious Is the Sky”***

***Table Blessing**

*Post Communion Hymn

ACS #984 *“May the God of Hope Go with Us”*

May the God of hope go with us ev - 'ry day,
to a world in need with news of joy and peace.
May the God of jus - tice speed us on our way,
bring - ing light and hope to ev - 'ry land and race.
Pray - ing, let us work for peace; sing - ing, share our
joy with all; work - ing for a world that's new,
faith - ful when we hear Christ's call.

*Prayer after Communion

A: Let us pray. Merciful God, we thank you for Jesus, who is our heavenly food. Strengthened by this goodness, send us forth to announce your peace, comfort the afflicted, and share the good news of great joy.

C: Amen.

Sending

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

Announcements

*Blessing

P: The God of love, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, lavish you with grace, illumine your path, and increase your joy, today and always.

C: Amen.

*Sending Hymn

ELW # 815 *“I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light”*

*Dismissal

P: Go in peace. The Word of God dwells in you richly.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Thank you to our Worship Volunteers . . .

Worship Assistant–Jim Heck

Ushers – Nancy Ducey / Connie Garr

Reader – Cindy Black

Altar Guild – Sue Glenn / Sharon Rabuck

Video Team – Brad Thomas

This Week at St. John's January 5th – January 12th

Today (1/5/25) – Eve of the Epiphany, 10:30 am

Today (1/5/25) – Finance Meeting - Office

Monday (1/6/25) – Choir Rehearsal, 1:00 pm

Wednesday (1/8/25) – Prayer Group, 11:00 am – Hospitality Room

Sunday (1/12/25) – Sunday School / Adult Forum, 9:00 am

Sunday (1/12/25) – Baptism of Our Lord, 10:30 am

Sunday (1/12/25) – Membership Meeting – Office
Spiritual Life - Chapel

Week 52, 12/29/24 Attendance - 39

Last Sunday's Envelope / Plate Offering	\$2045.00
Weekly amount needed to reach our Budget:	\$2,126.00
Year to Date Envelope / Plate Offering:	\$106,774.00
Behind Budget	-\$3,778.00

Prayer List: Chuck, Vicki, Clark, Joe, Kara,
Christine, Michael, Shelley, Jan, Paula,
Lois Anne, Carolyn, Charles, Julia, Terry, Jeff,
Debbie, Pastor Orem, Peggy, Tony, George,
Arlene, Joan, Karen, Our Homebound Family &
Friends, the St. John's Call Committee, and Our
Future Pastor . . .

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



Mark your Calendars . . .

Annual Congregational Meeting
January 26th, following worship.

~ Committee Reports due
January 12th
to the church office. ~

The Gallery at St. John's . . .

The St. John's Gallery would like to thank everyone who participated and bought art from the Gallery this year. We look forward to some great shows next year.

—*The Fine Art's Committee*

.....

Tuesday, January 21st, 1-4:00 pm

Join us for a "Painting & Drawing Session"
in the Gallery with a live model.

Members of the congregation are welcome to join .
(a fee will be charged per artist.)

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

Join us:

1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the Month

@ 11:00 am

in the Hospitality Room

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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"

