

The Advent Season

December 17, 2017

"Rejoice always," begins the reading from First Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. "All God's children got a robe," go the words of the spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes that make us feel happy just to put on. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God's party.

- Gathering -

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

Musical Meditation, Welcome and Announcements

Legacy of Faith Campaign Update: Faith Simonieg, WND Synod Assistant to the Bishop

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who comes to wake us from sleep, whose light has overcome the darkness. **Amen.** Let us prepare the way of the Lord by confessing our sin against God and neighbor.

Lord God, we confess that we live as though the light never defeated the darkness.

We've kept the birth of Jesus confined to the Christmas season. We do not yearn for his coming each moment in our waiting hearts.

Forgive us for being content to bumble around in the darkness. Help us to expect the light of Christ in our homes, even when our busy days wear us down. Help us to expect the light of Christ in the world, even when we hear news reports of violence and division. Help us to rejoice in the light, so your good grace can illuminate the darkened places of our world through people like us. Amen.

Hear the good news. In the first century, God disrupted the world and overcame the darkness for good. Hope, Peace, Joy, Faith, and Love are yours. In ☩ Jesus Christ your sins are forgiven. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn – #248 People, Look East

Greeting and Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy

Prayer of the Day – see insert

- Word -

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

Scripture Readings – see insert (*Response: Thanks be to God.*)

Gospel Acclamation – Page 188

Gospel (*before reading: Glory to you, O Lord. after: Praise to you, O Christ!*)

Sermon

Hymn of the Day – #606 Our Father, We Have Wandered

Advent Credo

Prayers of the People

Sharing the Peace (*Response: And also with you.*)

- Meal -

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Offering Moment: Senior High Mission Trip

Offering *Special Music by the Handbell Choir: “Prelude on Divinum Mysterium”*

Offertory Hymn – #245 (v. 1-2) Creator of the Stars of Night

(Sung to the tune of #803 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross)

Offering Prayer

Great Thanksgiving and Holy, Holy, Holy – Page 190

Lord’s Prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily
bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the
kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

Lamb of God – Page 191

Distribution of Bread and Wine

All who believe in the redeeming power of Christ’s love are welcome at the Lord’s Table.

Special Music by the Handbell Choir: “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”

Hymns – #815, #631

Blessing and Post-Communion Prayer

- Sending -

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

Closing Blessing

Sending Hymn – #242 (v. 1 & 4) Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

Dismissal - (*Response: Thanks be to God!*)

Advent Credo by Daniel Berrigan, S.J. in Testimony: The Word Made Flesh, Orbis Books, 2004

ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Dickinson, North Dakota

www.stjohnelc.org (701)225-6747

Mission Statement: “Living in Service to Christ”

Welcome to Worship at St. John!

If you are worshipping for the first time, we hope you feel joyfully welcomed! Worship is the most important thing we do together: Gathering in God's Name, Hearing God's Word, Sharing in the Holy Meal, and then Sending You to Shine Christ's Light in the World.

We believe worship brings abundant life and freedom to you and to your neighbor. There are four worship services offered each week at St. John, providing a variety of ways to worship. We encourage you to try them all to find the right fit for you.

**To learn more about worship and St. John's story,
click on the GET TO KNOW US page at www.stjohnelc.org**

~ To Assist You at Worship ~

- *If you are considering becoming a member at St. John*, we ask that you begin by visiting with a pastor and attending a *new member coffee*, held four times each year. For details, click on the MEMBERSHIP link on the GET TO KNOW US page at www.stjohnelc.org.
- *Personal amplifiers for the hearing impaired are available*. Please ask an usher.
- *Children's worship bags* are in the narthex and the Commons Area.
- *Childcare*: Children are always welcome in worship, but if a parent feels that little hands, feet and voices are making it difficult for others to worship, the nursery is staffed during the 10:30 a.m. service. If a child needs a shorter break, there is wiggle room and a glider chair in the narthex.
- *Holy Communion* is celebrated at each worship service. The table is open to all who believe in the redeeming power of Christ's love. You may stand or kneel and receive the bread and wine. If you prefer a gluten-free wafer or grape juice, simply ask the person serving.
- *The decision about when a child should commune is made by the parent*. We encourage families to visit with a pastor to learn about the sacrament before communing for the first time. Children communing should extend their hands. Children not communing are invited to fold their hands.
- *Coffee is served* in the Commons Area before Sunday worship services.
- St. John is a member congregation of the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America** and part of the **Western North Dakota Synod**. St. John is a corporate member of Badlands Ministries Bible Camp and St. Luke's Nursing Home. ELCA and LCMS congregations in western and eastern North Dakota own Lutheran Social Services of N.D., a private, nonprofit social services agency.

~ Introductions to the Readings ~

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 - Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of the Lord, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 - Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ's coming.

John 1:6-8, 19-28 - John's gospel describes Jesus as the "light of the world." John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.

~ Worship Leaders ~

Presiding Minister	Pastor Lisa Lewton	Thursday
Presiding Minister	Pastor Joe Natwick	Sunday
Preaching Minister.....	Pastor Lisa Lewton	Sunday
Assisting Minister.....	Jenny Rea	Thursday
	Dream O'Brien	8:00 AM
	Abigail Moberg	10:30 AM
Deacons.....	Dan Pender	8:00 AM
	Linda Splichal	10:30 AM
Organist.....	Cheryl Hewson	Thursday
	Cheryl Hewson	Sunday
Servers.....	William Lindvig	Thursday
	Beau Krueger & Ezra Taray	8:00 AM
	Charley Rathgeber & Lane Richard	10:30 AM

YOUR 2017 PLEDGE – By Pastor Lisa

You may assume pastors have stewardship of finances all figured out, at least when it comes to the offering. But I caught my mistake a couple weeks ago when my husband and I discussed our 2017 pledge. Looking at the numbers, I began to say, "It looks like we owe – wait! That's not what I mean!"

Our pledge does not mean we *owe* money to the church. Your offering statement is never a bill, and you do not *owe* the remainder of your pledge if you have not yet completed it. You are *Abundant and Free with Money*, which means you are *free* to give for the sake of your neighbor because of the good grace first given to *you* in Jesus Christ.

- If you have not completed your 2017 pledge because of financial hardship, remember you do not *owe* the church. The church is a place of mercy and grace, and your pastors are here to accompany you when life is overwhelming.
- If you have not yet completed your pledge because perhaps you forgot, there is still time.
- If you have a question about your pledge, please contact Finance Administrative Assistant, Pam Weidner at 225-6747 or Weidner@stjohnelc.org.

In this place, we are always receiving grace because all that was owed has been forgiven *for you* by the mercy of God in Christ.

~ This Week at St. John ~

Monday, Dec 18	5:00 PM 7:00 PM	Scouts Scouts
Tuesday, Dec 19	8:30 AM 6:30 PM 7:00 PM	Lutheran World Relief Quilting Executive Council Meeting Council Meeting
Wednesday, Dec 20	9:30 AM 5:15 PM 6:00 PM 7:00 PM	Staff Meeting Fellowship Supper Christmas Church School Program Faith Experience
Thursday, Dec 21	6:00 PM 7:00 PM	Circle 4 Christmas Party at Perkins Worship Longest Night Worship at CHI- St. Alexius Hospital
Friday, Dec 22	6:30 AM	Men's Bible Study/Breakfast at Perkins

Sunday, Dec 24	9:00 AM	Worship (<i>Advent</i>)
<u>Christmas Eve</u>	3:00 PM	Worship (<i>Nursery staffed. Broadcast on KDIX radio</i>)
	5:00 PM	Worship
	9:00 PM	Worship (<i>Candlelight Service</i>)

Monday, Dec 25
Christmas Day 10:00 AM Christmas Day Worship (*Office Closed*)

Tuesday, Dec 26 Office Closed



WORSHIP LIFE At worship services this past week, these numbers reflect how many people were sent to *Live in Service to Christ*: Wednesday **174**, Thursday **51**, and Sunday **357**.

RIDE-SHARING & PARKING

We are grateful for a vibrant congregation of worshippers! To help all of us access the building as easily as possible, consider the following tips:

- If you have *no* trouble walking, consider parking a little farther away to leave the closer spaces for people with young children, and for those who may have a little more trouble walking from their cars to the church?
- We encourage you to carpool. If you would like a ride to make it easier for you to get to church, the church office may be able to find someone to drive you. Please ask.

~ SERVE & CONNECT ~

SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS

Sun. Dec. 17th @ 4:00 pm (St. John)

This lovely celebration of the Christmas season consists of bible lessons and carols led by the Bell Choir, Senior Choir, local musicians and clergy. This service originated in England in 1918 at King's College at Cambridge University, and is still celebrated around the world today!



"THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM"
Children's Christmas Program
Wed., Dec. 20th @ 6:00 pm

See the journey to Jesus' birth in a whole new way! Come at 5:15 pm for supper in the basement, and then enjoy the story told through our Church School students.

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

Thurs., Dec. 21st @ 7:00 pm (CHI Hospital Chapel)

This service gives us permission to acknowledge the difficulty of the longest night of the Christmas season for those who are overwhelmed by grief. Scripture, Holy Communion, candle-lighting and singing appropriate to the season are all a part of this healing service.



LEGACY OF FAITH
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The Giving Tree is up in the Narthex, giving us a reason to celebrate what

St. John does for the community! **There are currently 34 hearts on the tree** - each heart representing \$10,000 pledged. We need 16 more hearts to complete this campaign of generosity!

Please take a brochure from the pew or from the Giving Tree sign (narthex) to read about this Campaign, and prayerfully consider making a pledge. You may return your pledge card in the offering plate, or pledge online – click on the GIVE button.



THANK YOU FOR PLEDGING!

~ If you have made your pledge for 2018 – thank you!

- ~ If you are considering making a pledge, please be prayerful. Do not hesitate to ask one of your pastors or a council member about how gifts are stewarded at St. John, or how you might determine how much to give.
- ~ If you are a member of St. John and did not receive a pledge card in the mail, we apologize. Please let a pastor know.
- ~ If you prefer not to make a pledge, please contact Pam Weidner, Finance Administrative Assistant at 225-6747, or return your pledge card indicating no pledge.

You can return your pledge by filling out a pledge card or go online at www.stjohnc.org.

END OF YEAR CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions must be received by the church office by Dec. 31st - or postmarked prior to Dec. 31st – to be included in 2017.

If you wish to “prepay” your 2018 pledge, use the special envelope in your booklet, or choose the “prepayment” contribution online. This will indicate the funds be utilized in 2018, but will posted for tax purposes as a contribution in 2017.

Questions? Contact Pam Weidner, Financial Admin. Assistant (weidner@stjohnc.org).

2018 ENVELOPES & FAMILY DIRECTORIES

Please pick up your envelopes and directories from the tables located in the Commons area.

ST. JOHN ANGEL TREE

Thank you to everyone who provided Angel Tree gifts this year! St. John filled the wishes on 81 angels – giving joy to those in need during this holiday season.