

The Advent Season

December 24, 2017

God keeps the promise made to David, to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."

- Gathering -

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

Musical Meditation, Welcome and Announcements

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 – #240 Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah

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.*)

Hymn – #251 My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness (*sung in place of Psalm 89*)

Gospel Acclamation – Page 188

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

Sermon

Hymn of the Day – #257 (V. 1-4) O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Sacrament of Holy Baptism – Page 227 (*Logan Jerome Kohler*)

Hymn – #677 (V.1) This Little Light of Mine

Prayers of the People

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

- Meal -

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Offering

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.

Hymns – #266, #267

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!*)

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 ~

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 - Instead of David building a house (temple) for the Lord, the Lord promises to establish David's house (dynasty) forever. Centuries later, after the Babylonian exile, no king sat on the throne. Even then, however, the people of Israel remembered this promise and continued to hope for a king, the messiah, the Lord's anointed.

Romans 16:25-27 - Paul closes his letter to the Romans by praising God because in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ God has revealed the promised, divine plan of salvation for all humanity. Paul proclaims this gospel of Christ in order to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations.

Luke 1:26-38 - In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people (Mary) from little known places (Nazareth). This king will not be born to royalty in a palace, but to common folk in a stall. Here Luke highlights the role of the Spirit, a special emphasis in his gospel.

~ Worship Leaders ~

Presiding Minister	Pastor Joe Natwick	Thursday
Preaching Minister	Pastor Joe Natwick	Thursday
Presiding Minister	Pastor Lisa Lewton	Thursday
Assisting Minister.....	Tanna Reopelle	Thursday
Assisting Minister.....	Renee Boomgaarden	Sunday
Deacon.....	Jon Tangen	Sunday
Organist.....	Barb Arneson	Thursday
Organist.....	Barb Arneson	Sunday
Server.....	Courtney Roller	Thursday

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* ~

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		
<u>Christmas Day</u>	10:00 AM	Christmas Day Worship (<i>Office Closed</i>)

Tuesday, Dec 26	Office Closed	
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Wednesday, Dec 27	9:30 AM	Staff Meeting
	5:15-8:00 PM	NO Meal, Worship, Church School or activities

Thursday, Dec 28	7:00 PM	Worship
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Friday, Dec 29	6:30 AM	Men's Bible Study/Breakfast at Perkins
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Sunday, Dec 31	8:00 AM	Worship
	10:30 AM	Worship



WORSHIP LIFE At worship services this past week, these numbers reflect how many people were sent to *Live in Service to Christ*: Wednesday **157**, Thursday **77**, and Sunday **286**.

BAPTISM

On Sunday at the 9:00 AM service, we celebrate the baptism of **Logan Jerome Kohler**. His parents are Jed and Larissa Kohler. The sponsors are Gavin Myers and Rupa Patel.

BAPTISM

On Monday, Christmas Day, at the 10:00 AM service, we celebrate the baptism of **Signe Marie Greenwood**. Her parents are Geoff and Ashley Greenwood. The sponsor is Stephanie Fisher.

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 ~



**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.stjohnelc.org.

ST. JOHN HAS MANY OPPORTUNITIES!

If you are looking for ways to be more involved in your church, your community and the world around us in 2018, visit with Amy Graves, Director of Hospitality & Stewardship. There are many areas where volunteers are needed!



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@stjohnelc.org).

2018 ENVELOPES & FAMILY DIRECTORIES

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

FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY

January 16 - March 13 (Tues. @ 7:00 pm)

Begin 2018 with a financial plan! Financial Peace University will give you the knowledge you need to budget, save and plan for retirement. Sign up at www.stjohnelc.org today! The first eight registrations will receive all of the benefits of this class at a discount (cost \$50.00 / person or couple).

Subsequent registrants - \$129.00 / person or couple.



WELCOME COFFEE

January 14 @ 9:15 am (basement)

Interested in becoming a member of St. John? Come to the Welcome Coffee and find out more about St. John and ways we connect with the community of Dickinson and people around the world. New Member Sunday is on Feb. 11th during the 10:30 am worship.

For updates on schedules and programs, visit our website at www.stjohnelc.org.

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Why an Advent Wreath?

As Christians, we use symbols to express visually the basic tenets of our faith and as reminders of the pilgrimage of our life in Christ. Symbols can have heightened meaning for us when associated with particular seasons of that journey. One such symbol is the Advent wreath.

The Advent wreath has its roots in the pre-Christian practices of northern Europe. People sought the return of the sun in the dark time of the year (at the winter solstice) by lighting candles and fires. As early as the middle Ages, Christians used fire and light to represent Christ's coming into the world. Using this same symbolism, the Advent wreath developed a few centuries ago in Germany as a sign of the waiting and hopeful expectation of the return in glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The wreath, a circle, came to represent the eternal victory over death through Jesus Christ. The evergreens were a sign of the faithfulness of God to God's people, even in death, and the lighted candles were a reminder of the light of Christ brought into the world.

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