



ST. JOHN'S

LUTHERAN † CHURCH

501 Chestnut Street
Emmaus, PA 18049
Phone: 610-965-9885
www.stjohnsemmaus.org

St. John's is a congregation of the Lehigh Mission District, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Third Sunday of Advent December 11, 2022

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

- MINISTERS The Baptized People of St. John's
- PASTOR The Rev. Jeffrey S. Carstens
- MUSIC MINISTRY DIRECTOR Timothy M. Ginder
- PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR Denise Mill
- PRESCHOOL TEACHER ASSISTANT Mary Racek
- OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR Barbara E. Walck
- BOOKKEEPER Anna Galante
- CUSTODIAN Brian P. Dunton
- PASTOR EMERITUS The Rev. Fred S. Foerster

WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! We pray that as God speaks to us in worship we will be nurtured in Christian faith and equipped for our life of serving love and justice in the world.

St. John's Prayer Chain members pray for your concerns confidentially each day for a week. Request prayers by contacting the Church Office (info@stjohnsemmaus.org or 610-965-9885) or coordinator Faith Drescher (fdresch@ptd.net or 610- 966-5321).

Let us pray . . .

for our ELCA and our Presiding Bishop, The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton
for our Northeastern PA Synod and our Bishop, The Rev. Christopher deForest
for our Lehigh Mission District and our Dean, The Rev. Nelson Quinones.

*“Be rooted in Christ that Christ may dwell in your hearts
through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love.”*

Ephesians 3:17

C=Congregation

A=Assisting Minister

P=Presiding Minister

GATHERING

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

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PASSING OF THE FRIENDSHIP REGISTER

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

P Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

The assembly kneels or stands. Silence is kept for reflection.

P Gracious God,
have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

P God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. Amen.

BLESSING AND LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH
The assembly stands to sing the Advent Song.

ADVENT SONG Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah Hymn 240
(Verse 3)

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah



- 1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
He shall feed the flock like a shep - herd, gent - ly lead them home - ward.
Lift your heads and lift high the gate - way for the King of glo - ry.
He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954
Music: TIF IN VELDELE, Yiddish folk tune
Text © 1984 Fortress Press, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

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A Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. Your prophets spoke of a day when the desert would blossom, and waters would break forth in the wilderness. Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath. Strengthen our hearts as we prepare for the coming of the Lord. May he give water to all who thirst, for he is our light and our salvation. Blessed be God forever.

C **Amen.**

The assembly stands to sing.

GATHERING SONG

“There’s a Voice in the Wilderness”

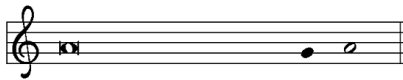
Hymn 255

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.**

KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



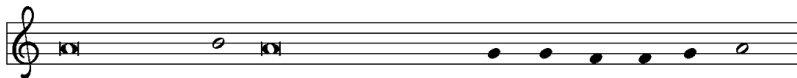
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de-fend us, gra-cious Lord. A - men.

Refrain
Assisting minister



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.

All



1 Wor- thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow - er and rich - es and wis - dom and



strength, and hon - or and bless-ing and glo - ry are his.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.



2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless-ing and hon - or and glo - ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Final refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain



has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.

WORD

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

FIRST READING

Isaiah 35:1-10

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

¹The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.

³Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
"Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you."

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

⁶then the lame shall leap like a deer,

and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
⁷the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

After the reading:

A The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

RESPONSIVE READING:

Psalm 146:5-10

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down. (Ps. 146:8)

⁵Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,
whose hope is in the LORD their God;
⁶**who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;**
who keeps promises forever;
⁷who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger.
The LORD sets the captive free.

⁸**The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;**

the LORD loves the righteous.

⁹The LORD cares for the stranger;

the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

¹⁰**The LORD shall reign forever,**

your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!

SECOND READING

James 5:7-10

In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

⁷Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

After the reading:

A The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The assembly stands to welcome the gospel.



P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 11:2-11

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

²When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.'

¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

After the reading:

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to you, O Christ.**

The assembly is seated.

SERMON

Silence for reflection

Pastor Jeff Carstens

The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.

HYMN OF THE DAY

“All Earth is Hopeful”

Hymn 266

NICENE CREED

P With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

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

P As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope.

Gracious God, we rejoice in the gifts of your Spirit. Equip the global church to magnify your love and peace in every land. We pray for the work of the Lutheran World Federation and ELCA Global Mission. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Abundant God, we rejoice in your creation. Revive lands we have squandered and depleted. Make gardens flourish in cities and neighborhoods. Cleanse polluted air and water so living things may breathe, drink, and praise you. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Righteous God, we rejoice in your justice. End racism and oppression. Deliver all who are unjustly imprisoned or persecuted. Reconcile nations and peoples in conflict. Help us pray for our enemies. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Healing God, we rejoice in your compassion. Comfort any in distress because of worry, illness, or loss. Strengthen and protect health care workers, rescue teams, crisis counselors, and all who risk themselves to keep others safe. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Abiding God, we rejoice in your company. Give us calm and patient hearts as we gather with family and friends. Keep us mindful of those for whom this season is not happy. Console the grieving and surround them with loving support. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Faithful God, we rejoice with Mary, Mother of our Lord, and with all the saints, that your mercy endures for all generations. Look with favor on those who have died and lead us to joyfully sing of your everlasting promises. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of our longing, you know our deepest needs. By your Spirit, gather our prayers and join them with the prayers of all your children. In Jesus' name we pray.

C Amen.

PEACE

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace saying "Peace be with you" or similar words.

An Offering of Song may be presented by the choir at this time.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. And al - so 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.

P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.
You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,
through whom you will also make all things new
in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.



Ho - san-na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes



in the name of the Lord. Ho - san-na in the high - est.

P On 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.

P Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

C **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.**

COMMUNION

P God's love is poured out in Christ for you. Open yourselves to receive it.

C **Thanks be to God!**

The assembly is seated.



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the



sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

All baptized Christians are welcome to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. We believe and teach that in the Holy Communion the crucified and risen Christ is present, giving his true body and blood as food and drink. This real presence is a mystery.

Those who for reasons of health do not drink wine, commune fully when receiving only the bread. In partaking of either element (bread or wine), the whole Christ is received. Children who have not yet received first communion instruction are welcome at the altar to receive a blessing.

To receive the Sacrament, please follow the directions of an usher to the front of the church via the center aisle. Receive the host from the pastor. Step to the side and take an empty cup from the tray, then receive the wine from the Communion Assistant. Return to your pew via the side aisle, placing your used cup in the waste basket.

Persons who are not able to come to the altar are invited to sit in the first pew on the pulpit side where the Pastor will commune you. Please notify an usher.

During this period of online worship, we invite you to participate in communion in your own home as the Pastor shares communion with you.

COMMUNION HYMN

“Rise, O Sun of Righteousness”

Hymn 657

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
C **Amen.**

PRAYER

A Faithful God,
in this meal you have remembered your mercy,
bringing heaven to earth in the body and blood of Christ.
As we wait for the day when all your promises will be fulfilled,
sustain us and strengthen us by this holy mystery.
Guide us toward your promised future,
coming to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

C **Amen.**

SENDING

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

BLESSING

P God the eternal Word,
who dwells with us in Jesus,
and who holds us in the grace of the Holy Spirit,
✠ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

THREE-FOLD AMEN



SENDING SONG “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (verse 5-6)

Hymn 257

DISMISSAL

A Go in peace. Christ is near.
C **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

Liturgical Texts and Music

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