

**WORSHIP LEADERS**

Preacher: Pastor Barry

Liturgist: Pastor Snow

Pianist: Kristin Johnson

Contemporary Musicians (9:30)

Violinist: Ellen Degler

**December 14, 2025 8:00/9:30am**

**Third Sunday in Advent**

**PRE-SERVICE (9:30)**

**"We Are Waiting"**

**Taylor and Kline**

**WELCOME AND INVOCATION**

**OPENING HYMN**

**"Hark the Glad Sound"**

**LSB 349**

Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes,  
The Savior promised long;  
Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne  
And ev'ry voice a song.

He comes the broken heart to bind,  
The bleeding soul to cure,  
And with the treasures of His grace  
To enrich the humble poor.

He comes the pris'ners to release,  
In Satan's bondage held.  
The gates of brass before Him burst,  
The iron fetters yield.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,  
Thy welcome shall proclaim,  
And heav'n's eternal arches ring  
With Thy beloved name.

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**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

We praise you, O God, for this circle of light that numbers the days of preparation for Christ's coming again. As we light the third candle on this wreath, fill us with the joy that comes from You so that we may be lights shining in the darkness of our world.

**Give us the light of Your grace, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit, our hearts may be prepared to welcome Him with joy. We ask this through Christ, our Lord, whose coming is certain. Amen.**

As we light our Advent wreath, we wait in hope for the One who comes - Jesus, the light of the world.

**Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.**

## SONG

## "We Light the Advent Candle"

*Third candle is lit*

3 We light the Ad - vent can - dle And sing with cheer - ful  
heart. With joy, we spread the mes - sage— A  
bless - ing to im - part. Our joy is nev - er  
end - ing; The Son to us is send - ing. We  
wait with grow - ing light Till God makes all things right!

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## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

**But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

**Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

## INTROIT

Psalm 71:14-18, Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord always;  
**again I will say, Rejoice.**

I will hope continually  
**and will praise you yet more and more.**

My mouth will tell of your righteous acts, of your deeds of salvation all the day,  
**for their number is past my knowledge.**

With the mighty deeds of the Lord God I will come;  
**I will remind them of your righteousness, yours alone.**

O God, from my youth you have taught me,  
**and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.**

So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me,  
**until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Rejoice in the Lord always;  
**again I will say, Rejoice.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty and eternal God, Your kingdom is everlasting and Your promises are sure. Grant us grace to live with unfailing confidence, knowing that You will bring about that time when all of Your enemies are defeated and all of creation truly is at peace. This we ask for the sake of Jesus, our Savior and our King.  
**Amen.**

## OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 35:1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; it 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. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. No 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. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## RESPONSE (9:30) "Comfort, Comfort All My People"

*Songleaders sing the chorus once, then congregation sings the chorus.*

### **Chorus**

Comfort comfort all My people With the comfort of My Word  
Speak it tender to My people All your sins are taken away

### **Songleaders:**

*Though your tears be rivers running  
Though your tears be an ocean full  
Though you cry with the hurt of living  
Comfort comfort*

### **All:**

Every valley shall be lifted  
Every mountain shall be low  
Every rough place will be smoother  
Comfort comfort **Chorus**

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## EPISTLE

**James 5:7-11**

Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## SONG

### "Wait for the Lord"

*Sing twice.*

The musical score is written for two voices, Soprano and Bass, in G major (one sharp) and common time. The first system contains the lyrics 'Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.' The second system contains the lyrics 'Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!'. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a final double bar line at the end of the second system.

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

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## **HOLY GOSPEL**

**Matthew 11:2-15**

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the eleventh chapter.

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

When John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, "'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.' Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to You, O Christ.**

## **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

**HYMN OF THE DAY      "Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding"      LSB 345, vv. 1-4  
(Tune: LSB 691)**

Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding! "Christ is near," we hear it say.  
"Cast away the works of darkness, All you children of the day!"

Startled at the solemn warning, Let the earthbound soul arise;  
Christ, its sun, all sloth dispelling, Shines upon the morning skies.

See, the Lamb, so long expected, Comes with pardon down from heav'n.  
Let us haste, with tears of sorrow, One and all, to be forgiv'n;

So, when next He comes in glory And the world is wrapped in fear,  
He will shield us with His mercy And with words of love draw near.

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## **SERMON**

### **“Joy in Truth”**

**Pastor Barry**

## **SERMON REPONSE HYMN “Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord” LSB 352, vv. 1-4**

Let the earth now praise the Lord,  
Who has truly kept His word  
And at last to us did send  
Christ, the sinner's help and friend.

Abram's promised great reward,  
Zion's helper, Jacob's Lord—  
Him of twofold race behold—  
Truly came, as long foretold.

What the fathers most desired,  
What the prophets' heart inspired,  
What they longed for many\_a year,  
Stands fulfilled in glory here.

As Your coming was in peace,  
Quiet, full of gentleness,  
Let the same mind dwell in me  
Which is Yours eternally.

Text: Public domain

## **OFFERING**

**Musical Offering (9:30)**

**“Even So Come”**

**Tomlin, Cates, and Ingram**

## **APOSTLES' CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the Communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Dear heavenly Father, as we wait for the return of Christ, we often grow impatient. We are tempted to disdain our families, dismiss our friends, and deny our neighbors what they need. Our hearts are often far from peace and joy, but we pray that You would teach us to rejoice in the Lord always! Lord, in Your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer.**

Lord, in the midst of our rejoicing there is also sadness and struggle. Some among us are sick, injured, and recovering... Provide them with healing and calm their troubled hearts. In the midst of their suffering, teach them to rejoice in the Lord always! Lord, in Your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer.**

Lord, it is most challenging to rejoice when we are surrounded by death. Comfort those who grieve and mourn the death of loved ones... We remember the lives lost on this, the 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sandy Hook Elementary, as well as countless other places where mass casualties occur. Place the hope of resurrection before our eyes. Remind us that even in death, we are to rejoice in the Lord always! Lord, in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer.**

Lord, we thank You for the times of rejoicing. Today we rejoice because of your hedge of protection in our Schools, Churches, and communities... Help us to remember to rejoice in the Lord always! Lord, in Your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer.**

Lord, many are struggling with loneliness, especially at this time of year. Inspire Your Church to reach out in friendship and love to those who need it, that together we may all rejoice in the Lord always! Lord, in Your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer.**

Into Your hands, Lord Jesus, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your ever-present mercy.

**Amen.**



## LORD'S PRAYER

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.

## BENEDICTION

The Lord bless and keep you in the joy of Jesus, our Savior. The blessing of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be with you today and every day.

**Amen.**

## CLOSING HYMN

### "Prepare the Royal Highway"

LSB 343, vv. 1, 4

Prepare the royal highway;

The King of kings is near!

Let ev'ry hill and valley

A level road appear!

Then greet the King of Glory

Foretold in sacred story: **Refrain**

His is no earthly kingdom;

It comes from heav'n above.

His rule is peace and freedom

And justice, truth, and love.

So let your praise be sounding

For kindness so abounding: **Refrain**

### **Refrain**

Hosanna to the Lord,

For He fulfills God's Word!

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## SENDING

Go in peace, serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

**THANK YOU FOR WORSHIPING WITH ST. JOHN'S TODAY! If this is your first time at St. John's, we encourage you to fill out a CONNECTCard located on the Welcome Desk. We want an opportunity to get to know you.**

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## WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Acolytes: 8:00 Emma Johnson

Elders: 8:00/9:30 Pete Siedelman

Usher Team: 8:00 Josh Kulzer/9:30 Brian Dahlke

Welcome Team: 8:00 Gayle Degler, Evan Sutherland/9:30 Byron & Barbara Frye

Tech Crew: 8:00 Jason Eickhoff/9:30 Bennett McGlothlin

Coffee Hour: 9:30 Eva Medvedev

UPCOMING WEEK	
Monday, December 15	Men's Bible Study 6:30am
	Monday Night Meal 5:15pm
	AA 7:00pm
Tuesday, December 16	Auburn Chapel 10:30am
	Executive Council Meeting 6:30pm
Wednesday, December 17	Moms in the Word 9:30am
	Midweek Advent Worship 4:15/6:30pm
	Messengers of Praise Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm
	Contemporary Music Rehearsal 8:15pm
Thursday, December 18	K – 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Christmas Service 6:30pm
Friday, December 19	AA 6:30pm
Saturday, December 20	Bible and Bacon Men's Bible Study 6:30am
Sunday, December 21	Worship with Communion 8:00/9:30/10:45am
	* No Education Hour

## Celebrating Birthdays

12/14  
Becky Lutz  
12/15  
Jackie Oelfke  
12/16  
Jill Huwe  
Daniel Wittenberg

12/17  
Gretchen Dolan  
Christine Poppitz  
Deana Stillman  
12/19  
Caden Becker  
Tristan Lainhart  
Wade Mesenbring  
Simon Wiegert

12/20  
Robert Beach  
Julie Herrmann  
Rick Panning  
Colston Reinke  
Emily Saba  
Kreg Schmidt

### **Celebrating Anniversaries**

12/14 Paul and Ashley Trahms  
12/18 Jim and Leanne Backlund  
12/18 Jim and Sarah Dewaard

12/19 Tim and Joan Bode  
12/20 Bryon and Barbara Frye  
12/20 John and Mary Stuewe

### **Expectant Moms**

Brenda Simpson  
Izzy King

Nicole Stockey  
Kourtney Vipond

Katelyn Olson  
Amy Peterson

### **Prayers for Healing and Strength**

Jon Thom  
Julie Bruce  
Joel Landskroener

Sandy Sprengeler  
Holly Walters  
Marilyn Lenzen

Jolene Berg  
Joann Mueller  
Gary Anderson

### **Ongoing Prayers**

Carol Affeldt  
John Barney  
Merlin Bentz  
Jack Boman  
Jimann Campbell  
Julie Carver  
Marguerite Craighead  
Sunnie Deis

Anita Doss  
Sid & Merna Fjelstad  
Dennis Gaarder  
Bernie Gnan  
Ruth Harms  
Eugene Henke  
Carol Jones  
Len Kallsen

Gretchen Laubach  
Melinda Meuwissen  
Gina Niesche  
Steve Pond  
Austin Rannow  
Val Schlefsky  
Cliff Waller  
Ruth Ziegler

### **In Sympathy**

The family of Todd Nikolai, upon his passing

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# Advent and Christmas at St. John's

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## **Sundays in Advent**

December 14 & 21

8:00am, 9:30am, & 10:45am

## **Midweek Advent Worship**

December 17

4:15pm & 6:30pm

No Advent meals due  
to renovation

## **Christmas Services**

December 24 (Christmas Eve)

*Worship with Communion*

2:00pm, 4:00pm, & 10:00pm (candlelight)

December 25 (Christmas Day)

*Worship with Communion*

9:30am

## **New Year's Eve Service**

December 31

*Worship with Communion*

5:00pm

## **Sunday School & Day School Christmas Services**

1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Sunday School Service

*Sunday, December 14 at 11:00am*

K – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Christmas Service

*Thursday, December 18 at 6:30pm*

*(Streamed LIVE on our church website)*