

Third Sunday in Advent

December 17, 2023 – 10:30 a.m.

Worship with Congregational Christmas Program



ST. JOHN'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH



Welcome! *Today our congregation tells the story of Jesus' birth through our Christmas Program. Remembering that the Lord Jesus himself was born a child of Mary, we give thanks to God for the gift of life and salvation that is ours in him. As we approach the celebration of Jesus' birth, we invite you to worship our newborn King with us in special Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. Join your heart and voice in praising our Lord in today's worship service.*



Prayer before worship

Bless us, O God, with a reverent sense of your presence, that we may be at peace and may worship you with all our mind and spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Prelude

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (arr. Paul McKlveen)
St. John's Handbell Choir

Ringing of the Bells

Welcome

Blessing of the Advent Wreath

Each week we light a new candle on the Advent wreath.

L Blessed are you, God of our salvation; you promised that the One of peace would come from Bethlehem to feed your flock and make us live securely. As we light these candles, kindle in us the fire of your love, infuse in us the fruit of your Word, and empower us to lift up the lowly and to fill the hungry with good things; let your face shine on us and bless us that we may be saved.

G Amen.

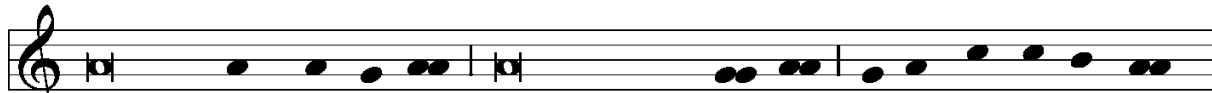
Kyrie



A In peace let us pray to the Lord.



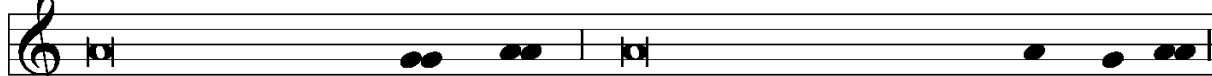
G Lord, have mer - cy.



A For the peace from a-bove and for our sal-va-tion let us pray to the Lord.



G Lord, have mer - cy.



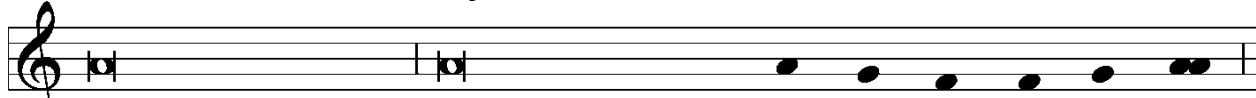
A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



and for the uni-ty of all let us pray to the Lord.



G Lord, have mer - cy.



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



let us pray to the Lord.

Invocation

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Prayer of the Day

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us pray:

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

¹The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations [...] ⁸For I the LORD love justice; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed. ¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.

L Thus says the Lord: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you.

C You have called us by name; we are yours.

First Song of Isaiah

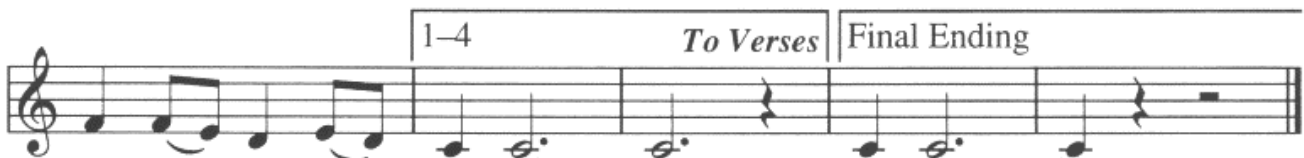
Refrain (Repeated at end)



Sure-ly, it is God who saves me; I will trust in Him and not be a -



fraid. For the Lord is my strong-hold and my sure de-fense, and



He will be my Sa - vior, Sa - vior.

Verses



1. There - fore you shall draw wa - ter with re - joic - ing



from the springs of sal - va - tion. And on that day you shall say, give



thanks to the Lord and call up - on his name;



2. Make his deeds known a-mong the peo - ples; see that they re-mem-ber that his



name is ex - alt - ed. Sing the prais-es of the Lord, for He has done great

To Refrain

things, and this is known in all the world.

3. Cry a - loud in - hab - i - tants of Zi - on,

ring out your joy, for the great one in the

To Refrain

midst of you is the Ho - ly One of Is - rael.

WORDS: From *The Book of Common Prayer*; MUSIC: Jack Noble White Copyright ©1977 by Charles Mortimer Guilbert as Custodian; *Used by permission*

Epistle Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Please join in reading aloud the highlighted portion of Scripture and consider committing this passage to memory in the week ahead.

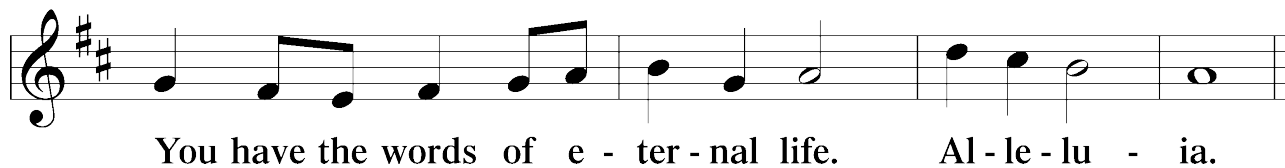
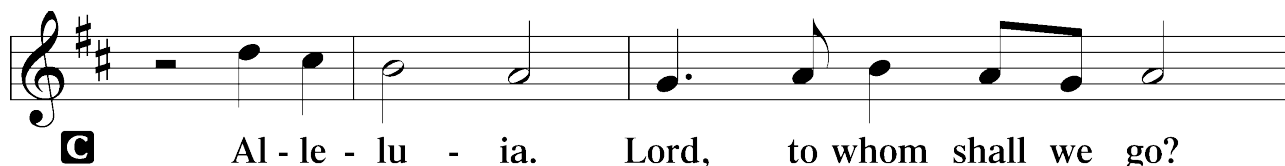
¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise prophecies, ²¹but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²²Abstain from every form of evil.

²³Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

L Thus says the Lord: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you.

G You have called us by name; we are yours.

Alleluia and Verse



Gospel Reading

John 1:6-8, 19-28

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the first chapter.



⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light [...]

¹⁹This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." ²²So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."

²⁴(Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) ²⁵They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, ²⁷even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."

²⁸These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

P Thus says the Lord: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you.

C You have called us by name; we are yours.

St. John's Handbell Choir

"Pastoral Symphony from 'Messiah'"
(G. F. Handel, arr. K.McChesney)

The Amazing Story of Christmas

A Celebration of the Savior's Birth

Welcome

(Narrator)

Welcome everyone to Bethlehem! One of the more amazing things about the Christmas story is that it didn't happen without the people who are in the story. God did not just swoop in and make this story happen all by God's self. Instead, there needed to be willing people to participate in the story. Mary, Joseph, shepherds, animals, and even the angels are obedient and follow through with what they are told to do. And so today, we will have an opportunity to do the same thing: By choosing to participate in the story, we will make the story happen. Hopefully, you all chose a costume when you entered worship today. As the story unfolds, we will invite characters at different times to come up front and stand in their position. There are no speaking roles, so please do not worry! All we ask is that you sing during the hymns, pay attention to the stage directions in your bulletin, and most importantly, enjoy the greatest story ever told!

Let us together open our eyes and ears, and experience the story of Christ's birth...

Part I: Mary and Joseph

Those who wish to portray Mary and Joseph are invited forward

"Mary Had a Baby"

	F	Dm	Bb	C		
1.	7	Mar - y had a ba - by,	Yes,	Lord!		
2.	7	What_ did she name Him?	Yes,	Lord!		
3.		She named the ba - by Je - sus,	Yes,	Lord!		
4.	7	Where_ was He born?_	Yes,	Lord!		
5.	7	Born_ in a man - ger,	Yes,	Lord!		
	F	Dm	Bb	C7	F	F7
	Mar - y had a ba - by,	Yes, my Lord!	7	Mar - y had a ba - by,		
	What_ did she name Him?	Yes, my Lord!	7	What_ did she name Him?		
	named the ba - by Je - sus,	Yes, my Lord!		She named the ba - by Je - sus,		
	Where_ was He born?_	Yes, my Lord!	7	Where_ was He born?_		
	Born_ in a man - ger,	Yes, my Lord!	7	Born_ in a man - ger,		
	Bb	F	Dm	Bb	C7	F
	Yes,	Lord!	The lit - tle child of Beth - le - hem was born for us.			

Narrator

Part II: The Animals

Those who wish to be doves, sheep, cows, or donkeys are invited to come forward.

"The Friendly Beasts"

Jesus, our Brother, strong and good,
Was humbly born in a stable rude,
And the friendly beasts around Him stood,
Jesus, our Brother, strong and good.

"I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown,
"I carried His mother uphill and down,
I carried His mother to Bethlehem town;
I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown.

"I," said the cow, all white and red,
"I gave Him my manger for His bed,
I gave Him hay to pillow His head;
I," said the cow, all white and red.

"I," said the sheep with curly horn,
"I gave Him my wool for His blanket warm,
He wore my coat on Christmas morn;
I," said the sheep with curly horn.

"I," said the dove, from the rafters high,
"I cooed Him to sleep that He should not cry,
We cooed Him to sleep, my mate and I;
I," said the dove, from the rafters high.

Thus all the beasts, by some good spell,
In the stable dark were glad to tell
Of the gifts they gave Emmanuel,
The gifts they gave Emmanuel.

Narrator

Part III: Angels

Those who wish to be angels are invited forward.

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"



Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born King;



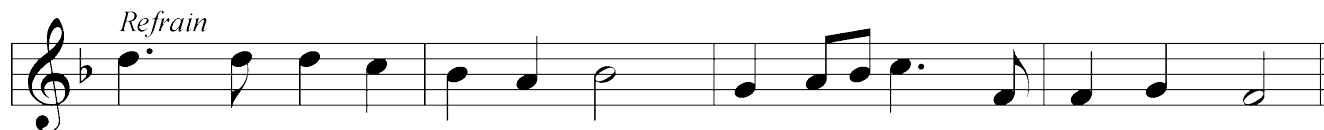
Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"



Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise, Join the tri - umph of the skies;



With the an - gel - ic host pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"



Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born King!"

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-88, alt.
Tune: Felix Mendelssohn, 1809-47
Text and tune: Public domain

Narrator

Part IV: Shepherds

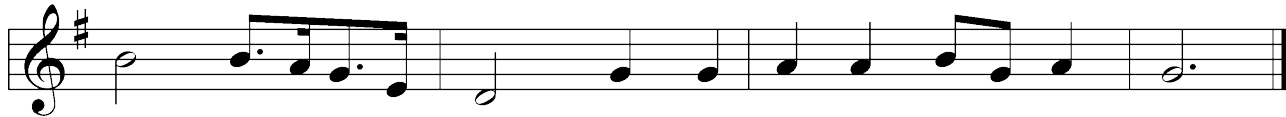
Those who wish to be shepherds are invited forward.

"Go Tell It on the Mountain"

Refrain



Go tell it on the moun - tain, O-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



Go tell it on the moun - tain That Je - sus Christ is born!



1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing O'er si-lent flocks by night,
2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled When lo, a - bove the earth



Be - hold, through-out the heav-ens There shone a ho - ly light.
Rang out the an-gel cho - rus That hailed our Sav - ior's birth.

Text (sts. 1-2): John W. Work II, 1873-1925, alt.
Text (ref) and tune: African American spiritual
Text and tune: Public domain

Narrator

Part V: Wise Persons and Star

Those who wish to be Wise Persons are invited forward.

"We Three Kings"

We three kings of Orient are:
bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star.

Oh, star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light!

Narrator

Part VI: The Gift in the Manager

"Away in a Manger"

1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed,
The lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky _____ looked down where He lay,
The lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.

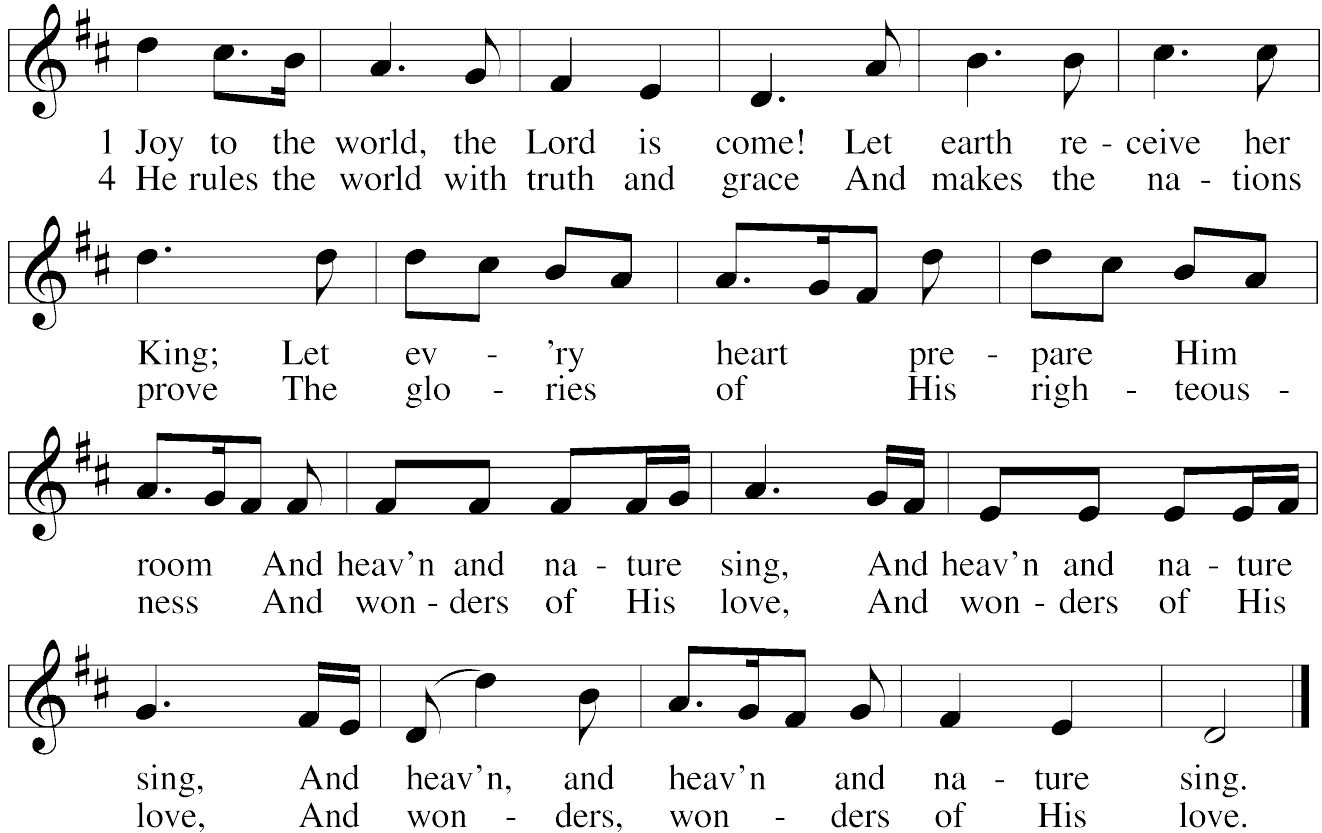
The image shows a musical score for the hymn "Away in a Manger". It consists of four staves of music in G major (one flat) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: "1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed,". The second staff continues: "The lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down His sweet head." The third staff continues: "The stars in the sky _____ looked down where He lay,". The fourth staff concludes: "The lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay." The music is simple and suitable for a children's choir or soloist.

Tune and text: Public domain

Part VII: Conclusion

Narrator

"Joy to the World"



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re-ceive her
4 He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the na-tions
King; Let ev-'ry heart pre-pare Him
prove The glo-ries of His righ-teous-
ness And heav'n and na-ture sing, And heav'n and na-ture
And won-ders of His love, And won-ders of His
sing, And heav'n, and heav'n and na-ture sing.
love, And won-ders, won-ders of His love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748
Tune: George Frideric Handel, 1685-1759, adapt.
Text and tune: Public domain

Farewell and Godspeed *Today we bid farewell and pray God's blessings upon Adam and Rachel Dancy and their children Andrew and Liliana who are relocating to Seoul, South Korea.*

Announcements

The End

- P** Waiting for the fulfillment of our hope in Christ's promised coming, we pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

Special prayer requests are announced followed by a brief silence for private prayer. During the Advent season each petition ends with the phrase: "Lord, in your mercy."

*Please respond by saying
"Hear our prayer."*

The prayers end with the words:

- P** Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ our Savior.

C **Amen.**

- P** Gather us all under the promise of your Son, who taught us to pray:

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.**

Blessing

- P** May God direct your ways in peace, make you abound in love for one another and for all, and strengthen your hearts until the coming of our Lord Jesus. Almighty God, Father, Son, ✠ and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Dismissal

- L** Go in peace. Christ is with you.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Closing Hymn

"The Advent of Our King" (LSB 331)



1 The ad - vent of our King Our prayers must now em - ploy,
2 The ev - er - last - ing Son In - car - nate deigns to be,
3 O Zi - on's daugh - ter, rise To meet your low - ly King,
4 As judge, on clouds of light, He soon will come a - gain



And we must hymns of wel - come sing In strains of ho - ly joy.
Him - self a ser - vant's form puts on To set His ser - vants free.
Nor let your faith - less heart de - spise The peace He comes to bring.
And His true mem - bers all u - nite With Him in heav'n to reign.

5 Before the dawning day
Let sin's dark deeds be gone,
The sinful self be put away,
The new self now put on.

6 All glory to the Son,
Who comes to set us free,
With Father, Spirit, ever one
Through all eternity.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676–1749; tr. John Chandler, 1806–76, alt.

Tune: Aaron Williams, 1731–76

Text and tune: Public domain

Postlude

"Carol of the Bells" (arr. K. McChesney)
St. John's Handbell Choir

Our Ministry Of Worship

Officiant/Preacher	Pastor Meehan
Welcome	Jennifer Hills, Director of Discipleship
Lay Assistant	Tish Nordvall
Organist/Pianist	David Leahey, Director of Music
Acolyte	Annabel Kremin
Ushers	Joe Godwin Paul Swicord
Altar Care	Andrea Godwin
AV Operators	Mark Gilbertson Larry McCormick
Welcome Host	Denise Canter
Nursery	Jan Swicord
Advent Candle Bearers	The Dancy Family



To **Give** to
St. John's Lutheran Church
scan this QR Code

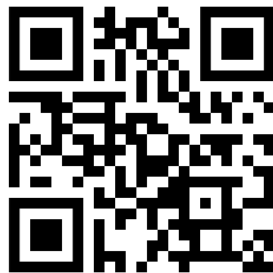




This weekend's altar flowers
are given in donation to the flower fund.



To **view** the current edition of
our electronic weekly newsletter,
Midweek Update,
scan this QR Code



Acknowledgments

Divine Service, Setting Two, *Lutheran Service Book* © 2006 Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Created by Lutheran Service Builder © 2006 Concordia Publishing House.

LSB Hymn License 200-2399. LS Builder Support NH 200-299.

Reprinted/Podcast/Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-701520. All rights reserved.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel – arr. Paul McKlveen (1996 Concordia Publishing House) All rights reserved.

Pastoral Symphony from "Messiah" - G. F. Handel, arr. K. McChesney (1993 Theodore Presser Co.) All rights reserved.

Carol of the Bells - arr. K. McChesney (1999 Lorenz Publishing Company) All rights reserved

.



St. John's Lutheran Church
5952 Franconia Road
Alexandria, VA 22310



A member congregation of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

St. John's Lutheran Church Staff

Pastor	Rev. John Meehan
Director of Discipleship	Jennifer Hills, DCE
Director of Music	David Leahey
Office Administrator	Michelle May
Finance Administrator	Jennifer Smith
Communication Specialist	Jacqueline Fuller

Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC) Staff

Director of ECEC	Amanda Parks
ECEC Administrator	Kari Wells

Contact Us

Office: 703-971-2210
ECEC: 703-971-3581
Website: www.sjlc.com

Emails

Pastor: pastor.meehan@sjlc.com
Director of Discipleship: jennifer.hills@sjlc.com
Director of Music: david.leahey@sjlc.com
Office: office@sjlc.com
Finance: finance@sjlc.com
Communication Specialist: jacqueline.fuller@sjlc.com
ECEC Director: ecec@sjlc.com
ECEC Administrator: ecec.admin@sjlc.com