

Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 22, 2024 – 10:30 a.m.

Congregational Christmas Program and Holy Baptism



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. (Please see worship schedule on page 15.) 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.

Welcome

Prelude

"Ave, Ave the Angels Sang" (Robert Lau)
Choir of St. John's

Ringing of the Bells

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their baptism

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

C Amen.

P The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;

C And his gospel is peace.

P You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off;

C Fear not, for I am with you;

P Be not dismayed, for I am your God;

C I will strengthen you, I will help you,

P I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

C 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. His gospel is peace!

Please turn and face the back of the Sanctuary.

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.

C Amen.

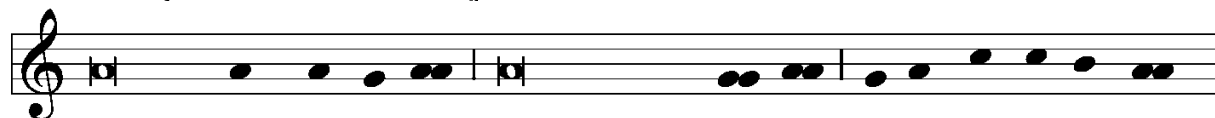
Kyrie



A In peace let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



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



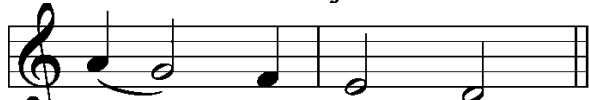
C Lord, have mer - cy.



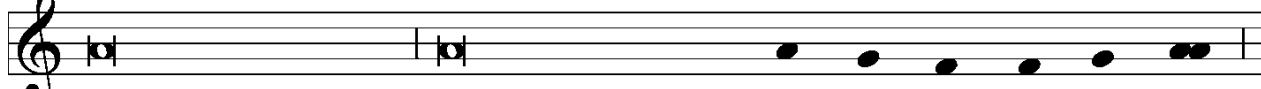
A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



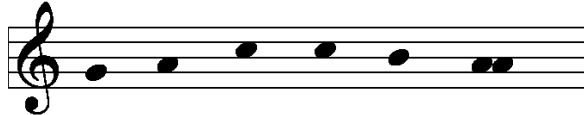
and for the uni - ty of all let us pray to the Lord.



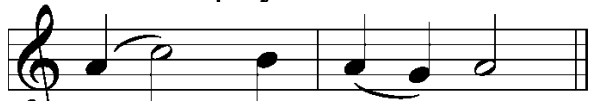
C Lord, have mer - cy.



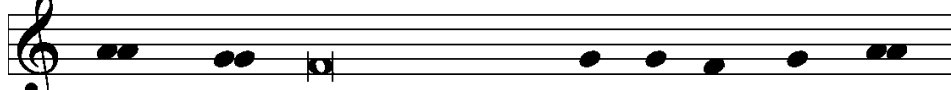
A For this holy house and for all who offer here their wor - ship and praise



let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



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



C A - men.

Advent Hymn

“Awake, Awake, and Greet the New Morn” (WOV 633)

(Advent 4)



1	A - wake!	a - wake,	and	greet	the new	morn,	for
2	To us,	to all	in	sor - row	and	fear,	Em -
3	In dark - est	night	his	com - ing	shall	be,	when
4	Re - joice,	re - joice,	take	heart	in the	night,	though

an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing. Sing out your joy, for
 man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is
 all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so
 dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall
 soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.
 qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;
 qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.
 crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.

Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -
 mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -
 Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in
 Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less

geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and
 kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to
 won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and
 sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and

lives now in - side us for ev - er.
 shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.
 weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.
 bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

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

Michah 5:2-5a

² But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. ³Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.

⁴And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. ⁵And he shall be their peace.

Gospel Reading

Luke 1:39-56

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

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

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, ⁴⁰ and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, ⁴² and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³ And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be^[a] a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

⁴⁶ And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹ for he who is mighty has done great things for me,

and holy is his name. ⁵⁰ And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; ⁵² he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; ⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵ as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever."

⁵⁶ And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

Baptismal Song

"Once Led to Your Font" (*stanzas 1 and 2*)

1 Once led to your font to die and to live called
2 Ad - dressed by your word, caught tight and set free. re -

down to the wa - ter for wash - ing, O God, lead us out to
shaped by our Sav - ior's em - brac - ing, O God, lead us out, and

serve and to give, sent forth from the bath for the liv - ing.
speak by our deeds, sent forth with your word for the na - tions.

Once Led to Your Font: A Keyboard Collection, Mark Sedio, ISBN 0-8006-7785-4
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- P** Holy Baptism today is given for Vianne, child of Marcel and Diana Rindt.
Serving as her sponsors are Lara and John Yamada.

Presentation of Baptismal Candidate

- R** *We present Vianne to receive the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.*

The Address

The pastor speaks to those assembled for Baptism

- P** In Christian love you have presented this child for Holy Baptism. You should, therefore, faithfully bring her to the services of God's house, and teach her the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. As she grows in years, you should place in her hands the Holy Scriptures and provide for her instruction in the Christian faith, that, living in the covenant of her Baptism and in communion with the Church, she may lead a godly life until the day of Jesus Christ. Do you promise to fulfill these obligations?

- R** *I do.*

The Thanksgiving

The pastor pours the water to be used for Holy Baptism into the font

- P** The Lord be with you.
C **And also with you.**
P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

The Flood Prayer

This prayer, written by Martin Luther, acknowledges God's saving acts throughout history by means of water.

- P** Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father: We give you thanks, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and you created heaven and earth. By the gift of water you nourish and sustain us and all living things.
- C** **By the waters of the flood you condemned the wicked and saved those whom you had chosen, Noah and his family. You led Israel by the pillar of cloud and fire through the sea, out of slavery into the freedom of the promised land.**
- L** In the waters of the Jordan your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Spirit. By the baptism of his own death and resurrection your beloved Son has set us free from the slavery to sin and death, and has opened the way to the joy and freedom of everlasting life.
- C** **He made water a sign of the kingdom and of cleansing and rebirth. In obedience to his command, we make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**
- P** Pour out your Holy Spirit, so that those who are here baptized may be given new life. Wash away the sin of all those who are cleansed by this water and bring them forth as inheritors of your glorious kingdom.
- C** **To you be given praise and honor and worship through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.**

The Renunciation

Candidates for Baptism and sponsors join together in renouncing the works of Satan.

- P** I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the Church, the faith in which we baptize. Do you renounce all the forces of evil, the devil, and all his empty promises?
- R** *I do.*

The Profession of Faith

Candidates for Baptism, their sponsors, and the congregation join together in affirming their belief in the triune God.

- P** Do you believe in God the Father?
- C** **I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**
- P** Do you believe in God the Son, Jesus Christ?
- C** **I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at**

the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

P Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

C **I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy, catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.**

The Washing

The pastor baptizes the candidate(s) with these words:

P Vianne, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Laying on of Hands

The pastor lays hands on the head of the baptized and prays for the Holy Spirit's work in their life:

P God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we give you thanks for freeing your sons and daughters from the power of sin and for raising them up to a new life through this holy Sacrament. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon Vianne: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence.

C **Amen.**

The Sealing *The pastor marks the sign of the cross on the forehead of the baptized with oil prepared for this purpose. As the sign of the cross is made, the pastor says:*

P Vianne, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.

C **Amen.**

A lighted candle is given to the baptized with these words:

P Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

P Finally, let us pray for the parents of this child:

O God, giver of all life, look with kindness upon Vianne's parents, Marcel and Diana. Let them ever rejoice in the gift you have given them. Make them teachers and examples of righteousness for their child. Strengthen them in their own Baptism so they may share eternally the salvation you have given to them, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen.**

The Welcome

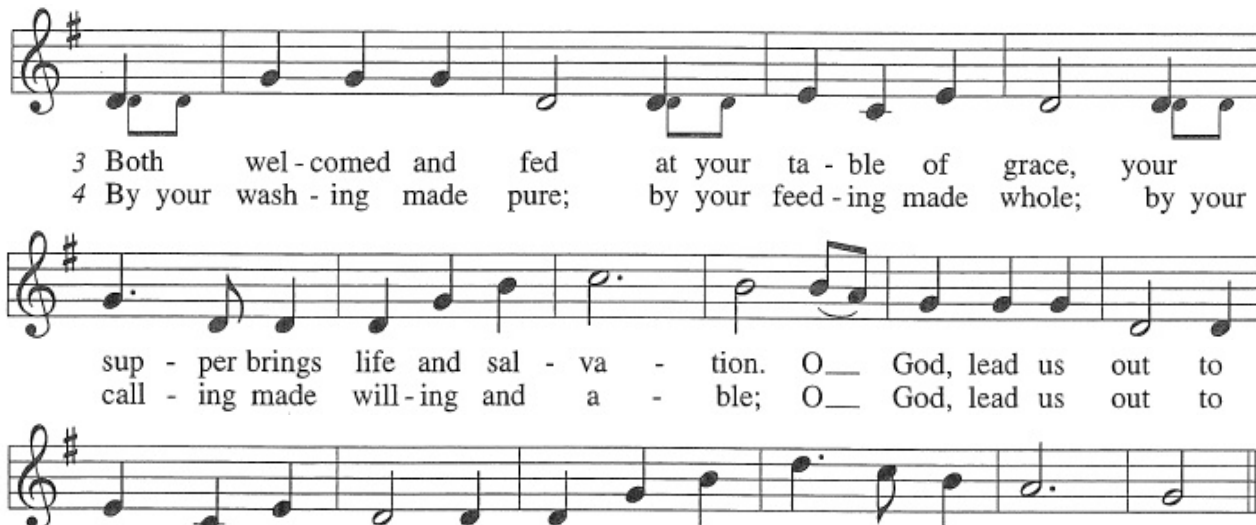
Those who have been baptized turn and face the congregation as these words are spoken:

L Through Baptism, God has made this child a member of the priesthood we all share in Christ Jesus, that we may proclaim the praise of God and bear His creative and redeeming Word to all the world.

G **We welcome you into the Lord's family. We receive you as a fellow member of the body of Christ, child of the same heavenly Father, and worker with us in the kingdom of God.**

Response

"Once Led to Your Font" (stanzas 3 and 4)



3 Both wel - comed and fed at your ta - ble of grace, your
4 By your wash - ing made pure; by your feed - ing made whole; by your
sup - per brings life and sal - va - tion. O__ God, lead us out to
call - ing made will - ing and a - ble; O__ God, lead us out to
nou - rish and cheer, sent forth from your meal for cre - a - tion.
make your world ring with ech - oes of bath, word, and ta - ble.

Words: Mark Oldenburg © 1996 Augsburg Fortress
Tune: GE MIG EN DAG, Danish folk melody

This hymn text was written by Mark W. Oldenburg, Steck-Miller Professor of the Art of Worship at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, for use at the consecration services of Nancy Gable, ELCA roster of Diaconal Ministry.

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Prayers of the People

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.

G **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.**

Children’s Christmas Anthem

“Angels We Have Heard on High”
(French trad. “Gloria”)

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!	7
2.	7	What	did she	name Him?	Yes,	Lord!	7
3.	7	She	named the	ba - by	Je - sus,	Lord!	She
4.	7	Where	was He	born?	Yes,	Lord!	7
5.	7	Born	in a	man - ger,	Yes,	Lord!	7

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”

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 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.</p> | <p>4 “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.</p> |
| <p>2 “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.</p> | <p>5 “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.</p> |
| <p>3 “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.</p> | <p>6 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.</p> |

Narrator

Part III: Angels

Those who wish to be angels are invited forward.

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"



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



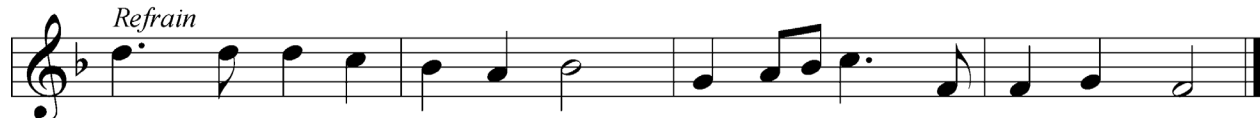
Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"



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"



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!

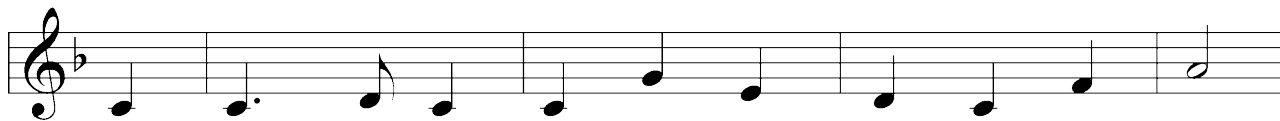
Narrator

Part VI: The Gift in the Manger

“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.

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 -

room And heav'n and na - ture sing, And heav'n and na - ture
ness 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

The End

Blessing

P May God direct your days 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.

G Amen.

Dismissal

L Go in peace. Christ is with you.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

“Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending” (Kenneth T. Kosche)



Many thanks to Beth Rempe, and our Sunday Morning Children’s Ministry, for teaching our children sign language. Also, a huge thank you to Mark Bacon for donating the guitar this morning. Mark is a member of St John’s and resides in Kentucky.

Mark is a faithful online viewer each week.

We’re glad you chose to worship with us at this special service.

Please join us for these special worship services:

Tuesday, December 24 (Christmas Eve)

Christmas Eve Children’s Service – No Holy Communion at 5:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Holy Communion at 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 25 (Christmas Day)

Worship with Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, December 29 (First Sunday after Christmas)

Lessons and Carols of Christmas - No Holy Communion at 10:30 a.m.

Tuesday, December 31 (New Year’s Eve)

Worship with Holy Communion at 5:00 p.m.

Our Ministry Of Worship

Officiant/Preacher

Pastor Meehan

Lay Assistant

Angie Stiens

Organist/Pianist

David Leahey, Director of Music

Acolyte

Sophie Wilson

Ushers

Jim Lofgren

Barbara Pate

AV Operators

Mark Gilbertson

Andrea Godwin

Welcome Host

Debbie Haugan

Advent Candle Bearers

The Greif Family



To **Give** to St. John's
Lutheran Church



This weekend's **altar
flowers** are given by
donations to the flower
fund.



To **view** and
subscribe to the
Midweek Update



Acknowledgments

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Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending - Kenneth T. Kosche (PICARDY) (2004 MorningStar Music Publishers)



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

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
ECEC Director: ecec@sjlc.com
ECEC Administrator: ecec.admin@sjlc.com