

**To those who are  
visiting today:**

Welcome to St. John Lutheran Church! We are delighted to have you here.

If you do not have a church home, you are cordially invited to join the St. John parish family.

**Sound amplifying devices,**

which are electronically connected to our speaker system, are available to those who have a hearing impairment. The units are light-weight, cordless, and simple to operate.

Please speak to an usher if you would like to use one.



The Rev. Joshua Ball  
Pastor  
(586) 749-5286

The Rev. Anthony Keilani  
Assistant Pastor

Mr. Erwin Aufdemberge  
Director of Parish Music

**Prayers as you await the beginning  
of the Divine Service are found  
inside the front cover of the hymnal.**

**The Psalms in the front section of  
the hymnal will also aid your  
pre-service meditation.**

# **St. John Evangelical-Lutheran Church**

62657 North Avenue Ray Township, Michigan 48096  
(586) 749-5286

*The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod*

**Web site:** www.stjohnray.com **E-mail:** pastor@stjohnray.comcastbiz.net

***The Festival of the Holy Innocents  
December 28, 2025***

## **Welcome, Visitors to St. John Lutheran Church!**

### ***Concerning the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion:***

The Lord's Supper is the true Body and Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ for repentant sinners to eat and drink.

In addition, receiving this blessed Sacrament of the Altar is a public expression that you are one with the faith that is believed, taught, and confessed by that congregation. St. John Ev.-Lutheran Church is a member congregation of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LC-MS.) Our pastors and congregations subscribe to the Confessions contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 as the correct interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, and faithful proclamation of the Christian faith. Therefore, communicant members in good standing of LC-MS congregations, and churches in altar and pulpit fellowship with the LC-MS, are invited to commune at St. John.

Not all Christians believe in communion practice of this kind, however we ask your kindness in respecting our practice. We rejoice at the faith of all who belong to our Lord's Church, and are glad that you are here with us today.

Adult and youth catechism instruction is always available, without obligation.

### ***The Sign of the Cross, kneeling and other Church Customs***

The hymnal places a cross , at certain points in the service where you may cross yourself. This is a very ancient and good – but *optional* – symbol and custom among Lutherans and many other Christians. Two examples are at the Invocation (“In the Name of the Father and of the , Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”) and in the final sentence of the Nicene Creed.

*What does making the sign of the cross mean?*

It means “I belong to the true, living God: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit”, for the sign of the cross is His sign. On the cross, God the Son willingly died in our place to pay for all our sins. God's sign was placed on your forehead and heart at Holy Baptism to “mark you as belonging to Christ the crucified.”

Please kneel where indicated *if you are able* (or stand with head bowed.)

Kneeling is a sign of humility and thanksgiving before God. Martin Luther encouraged Lutherans to follow the ancient custom of kneeling for these words in the Nicene Creed: “came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man.” Why? This outward action shows our humility and thanksgiving that God has made Himself our Brother by becoming a true Man. Those words in the Creed are, therefore, marked [▼▲] for those who desire to kneel. You could also bow your head at those words.

*Another ancient and good custom* is bowing the head whenever the name “Jesus” is spoken during the Divine Service. This is an outward way to give honor and glory to our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.

**The Calendar for the Week:**

<b><u>Today:</u></b> 12/28	9:00 am <b>Divine Service</b>	Altar Server: Ron Heimke	Crucifer: Ezra Ball
<b><u>Monday:</u></b> 12/29	No Monday service until January 12		
<b><u>Wednesday:</u></b> 12/31	6:00 pm <b>New Year's Eve Divine Service</b>	Altar Server: Ron Heimke	Crucifer: Ezra Ball
<b><u>Next Sunday:</u></b> 1/4/26	9:00 am <b>Divine Service</b> 10:30 am Sunday School & Bible Study	Altar Server: Andrew Upton	Crucifer: Ezra Ball
<b><u>Monday:</u></b> 1/5	No Monday service until January 12		
<b><u>Tuesday:</u></b> 1/6	6:00 pm <b>Feast of Epiphany Divine Service</b>	Altar Server: Andrew Upton	Crucifer: Ezra Ball

**Attendance** *Wednesday 12/17:* 36 *Last Sunday:* 74 *Monday:* 13

**Offering** 12/17: Current: \$308 Advent: \$245

12/21: Current: \$2,067 Advent: \$100 Missions: \$7 Building Fund: \$27

*To meet our 2025 budgetary requirements, an average weekly collection of \$3,635 is required.*

**In today's readings: The Holy Innocents, Martyrs.** "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children" (Jer. 31:15). Herod rages and sends to kill all boys two years and younger (Matt. 2:16), desperate to destroy the newborn King of kings. The Church remembers these innocent victims as martyrs. They died for the One who came to die for them. This dark commemoration bears witness to the cruelty of sinful men and the world's hatred of Christ who has sanctified our fragile life even from His conception and birth. But the boy who escaped Bethlehem's bloody streets unscathed went on to face thorns, nails and spear for them and for us. He is the Lamb whose name is written with the Father's name on the foreheads of His baptized saints (Rev. 14:1). By His death He has redeemed an inheritance for Himself and brought peace at last by His blood. On the fourth day of Christmas, we sing "the new song" of the Lamb, of Christ the true martyr, whose death testifies that our redemption is won. We "follow the Lamb wherever He goes" (Rev. 14:4), for He will bring our tears to an end.

**You can prepare for next week's Divine Service by reading:** Genesis 46:1-7; 1 Peter 4:12-19; Matthew 2:13-23.  
Suggested Book of Concord reading: Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration XI:48-49.

**New Year's Eve Divine Service**

This Wednesday at 6:00 p.m.

Begin the new year in Christ, who makes all things new.

**Anthem Notes:** "O Jesu So Sweet" with a text from the 17th Century is a beautiful chorale arranged by J. S. Bach. Examples from the text: "For sinners you became a child"; "With God we now are reconciled"; "O keep us faithful, strong, and true."

**Offering Envelopes for 2026** are available in the Narthex. Please pick yours up today. Many thanks to Bob Werderman, our Financial Secretary, for preparing the envelope boxes.

*The Feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord*

*Tuesday, January 6*

*Divine Service at 6:00 p.m.*



**Confession & Absolution** is available by scheduling an appointment with Pastor Ball. The rite for individual, private confession comes from Luther's Small Catechism and is found in our hymnal on Pages 292-293.

**Sacred Music for the 12 Days of Christmas.** Listen 24/7 at [lutheranpublicradio.org](http://lutheranpublicradio.org), TuneIn, Amazon Echo, Google Home, Apple HomePod and the Lutheran Public Radio mobile app.

**December / January Calendar**

- ◆ New Year's Eve Divine Service. Wednesday, December 31 at 6:00 p.m.
- ◆ Feast of Epiphany Divine Service. Tuesday, 1/6 at 6:00 p.m.
- ◆ Monday Evening Divine Services resume on January 12 at 6:00 p.m.

, In Nomine Jesu ,

**The Preparatory Office**

Please stand when the bells are rung. You may give reverence to our Lord by turning to face His cross as it comes down the center aisle and by bowing as it passes.

**Processional Hymn: #376** *Once in Royal David's City*

**The Invocation, Confession and Absolution** *Please stand*

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the , Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Congregation: Amen.**

Pastor: Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God, our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

P: Our help , is in the name of the Lord, **C: Who made heaven and earth.**

P: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, **C: and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

*Please kneel — Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.*

P: O almighty God, merciful Father,

**C: I, a poor miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor sinful being.**

*The pastor stands:*

P: Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the , Son and of the Holy Spirit. **C: Amen.**

**The Liturgy of the Word**

**The Introit** *(Please stand)*



**The Antiphon:** *(Revelation 7:14b)*

Cantor: These are the ones coming out of the great tribu- | lation.\*  
They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood | of the Lamb.

**Psalm:**

Cantor: In You, O LORD, do I take refuge; let me never be | put to shame;\*  
in Your righteousness de- | liver me.

**All: For You are my rock and my | fortress;\***  
**and for Your name's sake You lead me and | guide me.**

Cantor: Into Your hand I commit my | spirit;\*  
You have redeemed me, O Lord, | faithful God. *(Psalm 31:1, 3, 5)*

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**And to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**As it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**Is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

**The Antiphon - (as above)**

**The Kyrie**

Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up - on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

## The Gloria in Excelsis (Glory to God in the Highest)

P Glory be to God on high: and on earth peace, good - will toward  
 men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we wor - ship Thee,  
 we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee, for Thy great glory.  
 O Lord God, heav'n-ly King, God the Fa-ther Al - mighty.  
 O Lord, the only begotten Son, Je - sus Christ;  
 O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
 that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy up - on us.  
 Thou that takest away the sin of the world, re - ceive our prayer.  
 Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy up -  
 on us. For Thou only art holy; Thou on - ly art the Lord.  
 Thou only, O Christ, with the Ho - ly Ghost,  
 , art most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

## The Salutation and Collect of the Day

P The Lord be with you. , And with thy spir - it. Let us pray...

P: Almighty God, the martyred innocents of Bethlehem showed forth Your praise not by speaking but by dying. Put to death in us all that is in conflict with Your will that our lives may bear witness to the faith we profess with our lips; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

, A - - - men.

## The Old Testament Reading: Exodus 1:8-22

*After the reading:*

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

## The Gradual

Cantor: Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the | wicked.\*

For You, O Lord, | are my hope.

All: Upon You have I leaned from be- | fore my birth;\*

You are He who took me from my | mother's womb.

Cantor: My mouth is filled | with Your praise,\*

and with Your glory | all the day. (*Psalm 71:4a, 5a, 6a,b, 8*)

## The Epistle Reading: Revelation 14:1-5

*After the reading:*

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

## The Alleluia and Verse – *Please stand*

All: Alleluia. Precious in the sight | of the LORD\*

is the death of His saints. Alle- | luia. (*Psalm 116:15*)

## Announcement of the Holy Gospel: St. Matthew 2:13-18

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. \_\_\_ the \_\_\_ chapter. , , ,



☐ Glo - ry be to Thee, O Lord.

## Response to the Gospel

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.



☐ Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

## The Nicene Creed: Confessed by all

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation ▼ came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man; ▲ and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy \*Christian and Apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life , of the world to come. Amen.

\*The ancient text reads: one holy *catholic* and apostolic Church.

Hymn: #517 Vs: 1, 9, 3 *By All Your Saints in Warfare*

## The Preaching of the Gospel

Hymn of the Day: #389 *Let All Together Praise Our God*

The Prayer of the Church - *Please kneel*

## The Offering

### *The Liturgy of the Holy Eucharist*

*Please stand when the offering is brought forward.*

## The Offertory



Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right spir - it with - in me.



Cast me not a - way from Thy pres - ence, and take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it from me.



Re - store un - to me the joy of Thy sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with Thy free spir - it.

## The Preface



A - men.



\* The Lord be with you.

And with thy spir - it.



Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up un - to the Lord.



Let us give thanks un - to the Lord, our God.

It is meet and right so to do.

## The Proper Preface

It is good, right, and salutary ... evermore praising You and saying:

## The *Sanctus* (*Holy, Holy, Holy*)

*It is appropriate to kneel for the Sanctus and to remain kneeling until the distribution.*



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth;



heav'n and earth are full of Thy glo - ry. Ho - san - na,



ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is He,

bless-ed is He, bless-ed is He, that com-eth in the name of the Lord.

Ho-san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san-na in the high - est.

**The Our Father** [*Chanted by the Pastor*]

Pastor: 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;

**All:**

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the  
 glo - ry for - ev - er and ev - er. A - men.

**The Verba Christi** (*The Words of Christ by which He instituted the Blessed Sacrament*)

**The Pax Domini** (*The Peace of the Lord*)

The peace of the Lord be with you al - ways.  
 A - men.

**The Agnus Dei** (*Lamb of God*)

O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the sin of the  
 world, have mer-cy up - on us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that  
 tak-est a-way the sin of the world, have mer-cy up - on us.  
 O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the sin of the  
 world, grant us Thy peace. A - men.

**The Holy Communion — Hymns sung during distribution of the Sacrament:**

#438 *A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth*

#725 *Children of the Heavenly Father*

*Prayers for before and after receiving the Sacrament are found inside the front cover of the hymnal.*

### The Nunc Dimittis

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant de - part in peace ac - cord - ing to Thy word,  
 for mine eyes have seen Thy salviati which Thou hast pre - pared be - fore the face of all people,  
 a light to light - en the Gen - tiles and the glo - ry of Thy peo - ple Is - ra - el.  
 Glo - ry be to the Father and to the Son and to the Ho - ly Ghost; as it was in the beginning,  
 is now, and ev - er shall be, world without end. A - men.

### The Thanksgiving

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,  
 and His mercy endureth for - ev - er.

### The Post-Communion Collect

P: O God the Father, the fountain and source of all goodness, who in loving kindness sent Your only-begotten Son into the flesh, we thank You that for His sake You have given us pardon and peace in this Sacrament, and we ask You not to forsake Your children but always to rule our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that we may be enabled constantly to serve You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

A - men.

### The Salutation and *Benedicamus*

The Lord be with you.

And with thy spir - it.

Bless we the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

### The Benediction

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance on you and , give you peace.

A - men, a - men, a - men.

### Silent Prayer

**Recessional Hymn: #375** *Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising*  
 , *Soli Deo Gloria* ,