

December 13, 2020

9:30 AM Worship

Third Sunday in Advent

**Welcome to Worship
at
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church**

As we resume in-person worship, please know that we will need to be flexible with worship and we will make adjustments as necessary as the pandemic continues. Thank you in advance for your flexibility and understanding!

Please keep in mind:

- We ask that you not attend in-person worship if you have had a fever, cough, runny nose, have been in contact with anyone who has COVID-19 or have traveled outside the state of PA in the last two weeks.
- We will practice social distancing. The ushers will direct you to your seat and dismiss folks pew by pew at the end of worship. Once seated, please do not move about the sanctuary.
- The bathroom across from Pastor Becky's office is available for all to use in emergency situations only. Please follow guidelines posted on the bathroom mirror.
- Masks are required, following CDC recommendations. If you need a mask, we can provide one for you.
- If you bring your offering with you to worship, please place it in the offering baskets located at the door when you enter worship or when you exit worship.
- We ask that you take your bulletin with you or recycle it in the blue bin at the door when you exit worship.
- When communion is celebrated, please dispose of your trash using the trash can at the door when you exit.
- As we move through our worship, there will be no congregational singing. Hymn verses are provided for your prayerful reflection as the hymn is played. Any bolded congregational responses are for the entire congregation to respond with as we move through our worship service.

Online Worship continues through Zoom. The link for worship is available on the website and in the weekly email.

If you have questions or concerns, please speak with either Pastor Becky, Erika Haldeman (chair of Worship and Music and the Return to Church Taskforce) or Colleen Carlin (council president).

WORSHIP NOTES

Advent is one of the shortest seasons of the church year but it is rich with meaning and symbolism. The color is blue and symbolizes our waiting and watching - and the themes of hope, peace, joy and love. Join us in worship and watch as we light a new candle each week, as the light grows brighter and brighter, while we wait and prepare for the coming of the Light of the World, Jesus Christ, to be born.

PRAYER LIST

The following names have been added to the prayer list: Alex Kunkel, Bob Moran, Betsy Rodger, Robin Seasock, Paige Seasock, Peyton Seasock, Nancy Terpoilli, Brian Allebach, Glen Van Dyke, Charles Krupp, Donna DiDio, RuthAnn Jadick, Jean Leister, Kenny Nace, Tom Ciesielka, Abigail and Eric Hails, Sonny Carson, Frank Puskoskie, Patricia Wheeler, Ann Brown Hager, Alyssa Gegan, Steve Sanko, David Mounts, Cathy Sweeney, Ann Lewis, Barb Klees, Carolyn Iris, and Melissa Snyder.

Names are kept on the prayer list for three weeks unless specifically requested by the family or for those struggling through long-term illness or treatment. If you would like to add a name to the prayer list, please contact the church office at 215-234-4888 or stj.stown@verizon.net.

+ GATHERING +

CHRISTMAS CAROL SING

WELCOME

GREETING

St. John's is a community that is

Ignited by Spirit, Growing in Love.

We begin our worship in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

CONFESSION

Blessed be God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever. **Amen.**

Together let us honestly and humbly confess that we have not lived as God desires.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Loving and forgiving God,

we confess that we are held captive by sin. In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger; we have not loved our neighbor; we have not been Christ to one another. Restore us, O God. Wake us up and turn us from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.

People of God, hear this glad news: by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free—free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love, comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

HYMN ELW 239 Hark, the Glad Sound!

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

Our glad hosannas, Prince of peace,
your welcome shall proclaim,
and heav'n's eternal arches ring
with your beloved name.

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING LITANY – Joyce Foesig

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed.

To bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners.

To proclaim the year of the LORD'S favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.

To provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. **For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.**

We light the third candle on the Advent wreath as a reminder of God's call for us to be people who seek out justice, not just for ourselves, but for all people.

Light third candle.

Let us pray. We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord's coming in glory. Enlighten us with your grace that we may serve our neighbors in need. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

ADVENT SONG O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;
O Sun of justice, now draw near.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadow put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

FIRST READING – Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.

¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;

²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;

³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

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 wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being 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 with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING: John 1:6-8, 19-28

John's gospel describes Jesus as the "light of the world." John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for 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.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ADVENT CREED

We believe in God the Father, creator of heaven and earth.

**The one who is full of patience,
who is not afraid of silence,
who does not need to fill each moment with activity and noise.
The one who is beyond bluster and flurry,
and who does not jostle for attention.**

We believe in God the Son, Savior of creation,

**who slipped into Bethlehem one night, mostly unnoticed,
who lived thirty years without headlines or hurry,
who frequently took time alone with his patient Father,
who waited for the right time to become the suffering servant,
who stood quietly before the noise of his accusers,
whose silence overpowered their words,
who died, then rose again on a quiet Sunday morning.**

We believe in God the Holy Spirit,

**who strengthens, empowers, renews and refreshes,
sometimes arriving with obvious power,
sometimes with the quiet breath of a whisper.**

We believe in one God

**who patiently waits for us,
and who longs for us to do the same.**

PRAVERS OF THE PEOPLE

We pray for your salvation.

Mighty Savior, come and save us.

God beyond all things, God dwelling among us now, receive these prayers for the sake of Jesus Christ, who came, who comes, and who is coming now and forever.

Amen.

MUSICAL OFFERING It Came Upon the Midnight Clear – arr. Allebach

Kate Allebach, soprano

+ MEAL +

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also 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 God thanks and praise.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

During the words of institution, you are invited to hold the elements for communion up as the pastor raises the bread and wine.

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.

The congregation will receive the bread and wine/juice in your homes together.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Gracious and abundant God, you have done great things for us, and we rejoice. In this bread and cup you give us life forever. In your boundless mercy, strengthen us and open our hearts to the world's needs, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

+ SENDING +

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting,
the long-expected Savior fill you with love,
the unexpected Spirit guide your journey,
now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING SONG ELW 267 Joy to the World

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE Joy to the World – arr. Hopson

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THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

TODAY

9:30 AM Worship - 3rd Sunday in Advent

1-2 PM Angel Tree gift drop off (at back entrance to the church)

Mon 12/14

7:30 PM Council Meeting (Zoom)

Sat 12/19

9-11 AM Food Collection at the back door

Sun 12/20

9:30 am Zoom Worship - 4th Sunday in Advent

Sponsorships for December 13

The flowers on the altar are given in memory Christine Herbst by Willie Herbst and family.

The flowers at the base of the altar are given in memory of Abby Mae Stauffer by Willie Herbst and family and the Stauffer family.

The bulletins are given with in appreciation for the past efforts of the Bazaar/Cookie Walk Committee.

The boutonnières are given in honor of the birthday anniversary (12-13) of Lynsey Quinn, a gift from her parents, Ralph and Justine and sister, Meagan.

ADVENT WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS

As we continue worshipping in this season of Advent, we are inviting YOU to help with worship - from the comfort of your home!

Our December 20th Advent worship be child-focused. The sermon will be the reading of a children's book followed by brief reflections. We invite our children who can read to help lead the different parts of the service, like they would at the 7 PM Christmas Eve Family Service. There are big and small parts - if you have a preference, please indicate that when signing up.

Contact the church office or sign up (see weekly email) online.

COMMUNITY MEAL

On Monday, January 4, St. John's will host the First Monday Meal of 2021 at Pennsburg UCC. This meal will be drive through, like it was back in August. As we continue to live into this pandemic, our community is relying even more on these meals. Volunteers will be needed in two shifts – the first shift, from 3:00-5:00 PM, will do food prep in the kitchen at Pennsburg UCC with the second shift serving those who show up from 5:00-6:30 PM. All volunteers will be masked and gloved.



Donations of certain items for the meal will be available on Sign Up Genius and general monetary donations can also be shared to offset the cost of items that will be purchased for the meal.

To sign up for a volunteer time slot, please visit the Sign Up Genius page below:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B084FA8AD2CAAFD0-community2>

To sign up to donate food items needed for the meal, please visit the Sign Up Genius page below:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B084FA8AD2CAAFD0-community1>

Any monetary donations to offset additional costs of the meal can be sent payable to St. John's Lutheran Church. Please put COMMUNITY MEAL in the memo line of your check.

If you have any questions, please contact Jamie Ernst (215-960-8340)

ANGEL TREE GIFT DROP OFF TODAY 1-2 PM

All gifts must be returned to St. John's today; wrapped and with the gift tag securely attached. A gift drop-off time will be held from 1-2 PM at the back entrance of church.

If this drop off time does not work for you, please contact the church office to arrange an alternate drop off time! And thank you for bringing Christmas cheer to some of the residents at Pennsburg Manor and to one local family!

SEND IN YOUR PICTURES!

As part of our Christmas celebrations, we invite you to submit pictures of your nativity set - ceramic, wooden, homemade, family heirloom, even a Fisher Price set. If it has meaning for you and is part of your celebration of the holiday, we'd like to include it in a slideshow for Christmas Eve worship.



All pictures must be submitted by Friday, December 18 to be included in the slideshow. Email pictures to Pastor Becky at pastorbecky74@gmail.com and include any pertinent information about the nativity set.

We are also looking for pictures for our **Epiphany celebration**. We invite you to send in pictures of *your kings* (spouse, you, children, grandchildren, pets, etc) dressed as kings. All pictures should be emailed to the church office (stj.stown@verizon.net) by Sunday, January 3. Please include names of those pictured.



CHRISTMAS CAROL SING

Join us Sunday, December 20th at 9:15 for a Christmas Carol Sing prior to the start of the worship service. Janet will play some of your favorite hymns and you are invited to sing along loud and clear from the safety of your home.

STAR WORD REFLECTIONS

Did you pick a star word in January of 2020 Has that word shaped this last year in ways you'd be comfortable sharing within worship?

Pastor Becky is looking for individuals who are willing to share their star word reflections (1-3 minutes) as part of a pre-recorded service for January 3, 2021. If you'd be willing to participate, please email Pastor Becky (pastorbecky74@gmail.com).

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS NEEDED

When we resume in-person worship that is also live-streamed through Zoom, we will need two new teams to support our worship. The two groups are defined below. If you feel that you could offer your gifts and skills to either team, please contact Vikki Shelor in the church office (stj.stown@verizon.net or 215-234-4888).

- **Zoom Hosts** – the Zoom host is the person who oversees the Sunday morning worship Zoom. This person will admit folks into worship from the waiting room, make sure that participants are muted prior to the start of worship, record the online Zoom service and then advancing the Powerpoint that is used to guide our online worshippers through the service.
- **AV Team** – the responsibilities for our audio team have grown with the addition of live-streaming worship. Once our new live-stream system is fully installed, we will be training people to run both the audio and visual aspects of our in-person and online Sunday worship.

Training will be offered for both teams and a willingness to be in-person for Sunday worship is necessary.

Christmas Eve Worship

3 PM Online Worship

Connect on Zoom for this Christmas Eve worship service
see the weekly email for the zoom link

6:30 PM Live Nativity

Drive-thru, no contact live nativity with live animals

7:30 PM Outdoor Worship

Stay in the safety of your car, tune in to the service on your car radio,
sing, worship, share communion and celebrate Christ's birth.

*Watch for a separate email blast with volunteer needs
for Christmas Eve worship and nativity!*

The First Sunday of Christmas

December 27th

Worship will be a pre-recorded service of Lessons and Carols featuring our young adults. The service will be available on St. John's website beginning Saturday, December 26th.

The Second Sunday of Christmas

January 3rd

Worship will be a pre-recorded service focusing on our 2020 star words. Join us as we reflect on God's presence and promise in 2020 and look forward to a new year of faithfulness and hope in 2021.

Epiphany Sunday

January 10th

In preparation for our Epiphany celebration, we invite you to send in pictures of your kings: your family, your children/grandchildren, pets, etc. dressed as kings.

OPEN LINK FOOD PANTRY FOOD COLLECTION

Please bring your donations at the following times:

Saturday—9-11 AM at the back entrance— Dec 19

ALSO, the following items are really low at the pantry right now:

Feminine Hygiene Products

Dish Soap

Hand Soap

If you don't feel comfortable going to the store, monetary donations are always welcomed and then we can do the shopping for you! Place donations for Open Link Thanksgiving Collection in an envelope – make checks payable to Open Link.

Thank you for helping the people in our local community!

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S LOVE

Worship Attendance 12/6/2020 - Zoom - 58 households		
Giving Amounts	Total received between 11/23 -12/5/2020	Amount Needed between 11/23-12/5/2020
General Fund	\$7,104.50	\$10,918
Building Fund	\$509.50	
<p><i>Weekly average is based on the 2020 budget. A weekly building fund amount needed is no longer reported as the building fund has been used for the mortgage, which has been paid off. All other building expenses are included in General Fund budget and giving. The above numbers include electronic giving. Mint duty is being done every other week for the time being.</i></p>		

Capital Campaign Activity Update	
Capital Campaign Contributions Pledged	\$ 260,000.00
Capital Campaign Contributions received between 11/23-12/5/2020	161.00
Capital Campaign Contributions received to date	\$ 248,411.40



*Ignited by Spirit
Growing in Love*

SERVING TODAY IN WORSHIP

Reader - Mike Herm

ST. JOHN'S LEADERSHIP

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Colleen Carlin, President

Bob Conrad, Property

Erin Eisenhart, Worship and Music

Kristie Faust, Communications and Marketing

Matt Hoh, Vice President/ Staff Support

Elaine Keller, Secretary/ Faith Formation

Noreen Kelly, Finance

Barry Long, Member Engagement

Kathy Weidner, Outreach

Rev. Rebecca L. Schanely, Pastor

(pastorbecky74@gmail.com, 215-234-4580)

Vikki Shelor, Office Administrator (stj.stown@verizon.net)

Janet Aldinger, Director of Music (jeald@yahoo.com)

Michele Peart, Bookkeeper

Julie Hovanec, S.S. Superintendent

Bob Ernst, Facilities Manager

Michael Herm, Treasurer

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