

**December 10, 2023**

**9:00 a.m.**

**Third Sunday of Advent, Year B**

---

***St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, ELCA***

**Reverend Maggie Westaby**

**5304 N 44<sup>th</sup> Ave**

**Wausau, Wisconsin 54401**

**Web Address: [stjohnwausau.org](http://stjohnwausau.org)**

**E-mail: [pastor.maggie.westaby@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.maggie.westaby@gmail.com)**

**Email: [stjohnwausau@msn.com](mailto:stjohnwausau@msn.com)**

**Office: (715) 675-6950**

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, † One God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation.

**Amen.**

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

*Shepherd's Candle & Candle of Joy.*

God of Infinite Love,

May all see the Advent wreath as a symbol of your never-ending love. May the wreath be a place to acknowledge the blessings you give to us; the blessings of hope, peace, joy, and love. And on this third Sunday of Advent, we pray specifically for joy. Joy that comes when the desert blooms, and joy that shimmers even in our hardest times. May your joy blossom inside all of us, and may all of creation rejoice in Christ.

**Amen.**

*Light One Candle To Watch For Messiah Verse 3.*

### Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah



1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.  
2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.  
3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.  
4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.  
He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd, gent - ly lead them home-ward.  
Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.  
He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954  
Music: TIF IN VELDELE, Yiddish folk tune  
Text © 1984 Fortress Press, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Old habits and new wrongs wear ruts through our lives and relationships. But God is able to restore us. Like water coursing through a desert, the waters of baptism flow through us, reminding us that we belong to God and are raised to new life. Clinging to this promise, let us confess our sin.

*(Silence is kept for reflection)*

Merciful God,

**You love justice; why, then, do we persist in wrongdoing? You have given us the gift of your Spirit; why, then, do we quench the Spirit among us? You have sent the light into the world; why, then, have we loved darkness rather than light? Forgive us. Restore us. Till and tend to us as your garden until righteousness and praise spring up. Amen.**

In Jesus Christ, God has done great things for us! Even if we have gone out in tears, God brings us home shouting for joy. Thanks be to God: in the name of Jesus † Christ we are forgiven!

# Morning Has Broken

1 Morn - ing has bro - ken like the first morn - ing; black - bird has  
2 Sweet the rain's new fall, sun - lit from heav - en, like the first  
3 Mine is the sun - light! Mine is the morn - ing, born of the

spo - ken like the first bird. Praise for the sing - ing! Praise for the  
dew - fall on the first grass. Praise for the sweet - ness of the wet  
one light E - den saw play! Praise with e - la - tion, praise ev - 'ry

morn - ing! Praise for them, spring - ing fresh from the Word!  
gar - den, sprung in com - plete - ness where God's feet pass.  
morn - ing, God's re - cre - a - tion of the new day!

Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881–1965  
Music: BUNESSAN, Gaelic tune; arr. hymnal version  
Text © Miss E. Farjeon Will Trust, by permission of David Higham Associates.  
Arr. © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Abundant God,

In the places of our lives, and in the places of the world that are dry and dusty, we ask that you pour out the power of your Spirit. May it be a soaking rain, permeating every inch of creation, so that your Word may blossom in our lives and in the world. Through Jesus Christ, our way in the wilderness.

**Amen.**

## **READING: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11**

<sup>1</sup>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;<sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;<sup>3</sup>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.<sup>4</sup>They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.<sup>8</sup>For 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.<sup>9</sup>Their 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.<sup>10</sup>I 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.<sup>11</sup>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.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **READING: Psalm 126**

When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream.

**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy. Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."**

The LORD has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

**Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses of the Negeb.**

Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.

**Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

## READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

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

<sup>23</sup>May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



Al - le-lu - ia! Lord and Sav - ior: o - pen now your sav - ing word.



Let it burn like fire with - in us; speak un - til our hearts are stirred.



Al - le - lu - ia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

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

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

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

<sup>19</sup>This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” <sup>20</sup>He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” <sup>21</sup>And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” <sup>22</sup>Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” <sup>23</sup>He said,

“I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’” as the prophet Isaiah said.

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

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

## For the Beauty of the Earth

1 For the beau - ty of the earth, for the beau - ty of the skies,  
2 For the won - der of each hour of the day and of the night,  
3 For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's de - light,  
4 For the joy of hu - man love, broth - er, sis - ter, par - ent, child,  
5 For each per - fect gift of thine, peace on earth and joy in heav'n;

for the love which from our birth o - ver and a - round us lies:  
hill and vale and tree and flow'r, sun and moon and stars of light:  
for the mys - tic har - mo - ny link - ing sense to sound and sight:  
friends on earth and friends a - bove; for all gen - tle thoughts and mild:  
for thy - self, best gift di - vine, to our world so free - ly giv'n:

*Refrain*

Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sac - ri - fice of praise.

Text: Follitt S. Pierpoint, 1835-1917, alt.  
Music: DIX, Conrad Kocher, 1786-1872

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Respond to “Merciful God,” with “receive our prayer.”

## PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

## INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

At this time of year, the abundance of some and the needs of many stands in marked contrast. May Christ’s heart rejoice and the needs of others be tended to, through our offering.

### Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful *Offering Song*



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that



we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of



all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble



with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

Text: John W. Arthur, 1922-1980

Music: Ronald A. Nelson, b. 1927

Text and music © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.



## OFFERING PRAYER

God of all goodness,

by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts. May they be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior.

**Amen.**

## GREAT THANKSGIVING DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

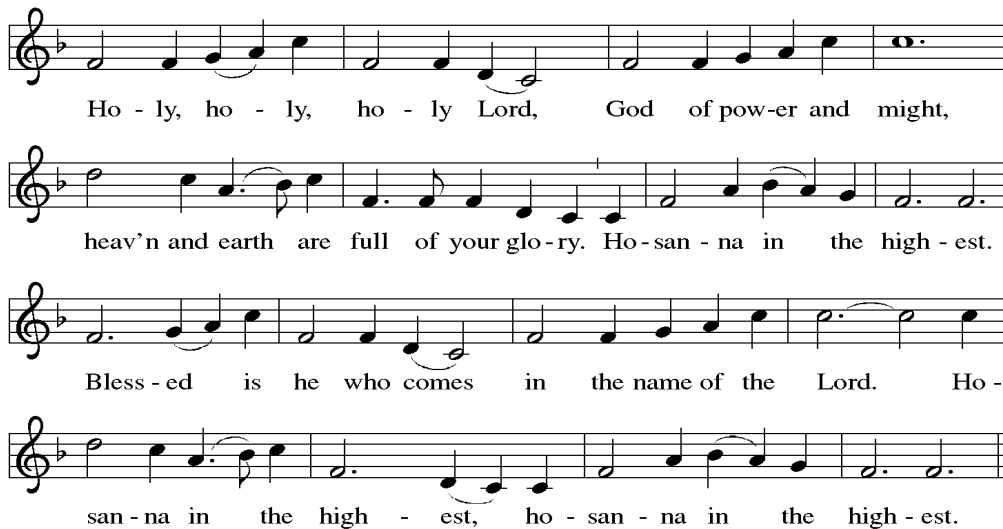
**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san - na in the high - est.  
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -  
san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

## 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.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

As we journey through this sacred season of Advent, a time of anticipation and reflection, we gather today in the spirit of joy. Joy that was first made flesh on a silent night and holy night. Come share in this joy! Taste and see that God is good. Amen.



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the



sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

# You Satisfy the Hungry Heart

## *Gift of Finest Wheat*

*Refrain*

You sat - is - fy the hun - gry heart with gift of fin - est wheat.

Come give to us, O sav - ing Lord, the bread of life to eat.

- 1 As when the shep - herd calls his sheep, they know and heed his voice;
- 2 With joy - ful lips we sing to you our praise and grat - i - tude
- 3 Is not the cup we bless and share the blood of Christ out - poured?
- 4 The mys - t'ry of your pres - ence, Lord, no mor - tal tongue can tell:
- 5 You give your - self to us, O Lord; then self - less let us be,

so when you call your fam - 'ly, Lord, we fol - low and re - joice.  
 that you should count us wor - thy, Lord, to share this heav' n - ly food.  
 Do not one cup, one loaf, de - clare our one - ness in the Lord?  
 whom all the world can - not con - tain comes in our hearts to dwell.  
 to serve each oth - er in your name in truth and char - i - ty.

Text: Omer Westendorf, 1916–1997  
 Music: BICENTENNIAL, Robert E. Kreutz, 1922–1996  
 Text and music © 1977 Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

## O Come, O Come, Emmanuel



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive  
 2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things  
 3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on  
 4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's



Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here  
 far and nigh: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;  
 Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law  
 tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,



un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 teach us your will and guide our way. Re-joice! Re-joice!  
 in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.  
 and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

- 5 O come, O Key of David, come,  
 and open wide our heav'nly home;  
 make safe the way that leads on high,  
 and close the path to misery. *Refrain*
- 6 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. *Refrain*
- 7 O come, O King of nations, come,  
 O Cornerstone that binds in one:  
 refresh the hearts that long for you;  
 restore the broken, make us new. *Refrain*
- 8 O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
 and ransom captive Israel,  
 that mourns in lonely exile here  
 until the Son of God appear. *Refrain*

Text: *Psalterium Cantionum Catholicorum*, Köln, 1710; tr. composite  
 Music: VENI, EMMANUEL, French processionals, 15th cent.  
 Text vs. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Faithful God,

In this meal you shared with us your mercy, bringing heaven to earth in the body and blood of Christ. As we wait for the day when all your promises will be fulfilled, sustain us and strengthen us by this holy mystery. Guide us toward your promised future, coming to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.

**Amen.**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **BLESSING**

May God, our Creator blossom joy within you,

May the Holy Spirit bloom peace in your midst,

May Christ open up courage in your heart,

And may the Three in One † always lead you on God's Holy Way.

Amen.

## Fling Wide the Door

1 Fling wide the door, un - bar the gate; the King of glo - ry  
 2 He is the rock of our be - lief, the heart of mer - cy's  
 3 Oh, hap - py towns and bless - ed lands that live by their true  
 4 Come, Lord, our Sav - ior, Je - sus Christ; our hearts are o - pen

comes in state; the Lord of lords and King of kings, the  
 gen - tle self. His king - ly crown is ho - li - ness; his  
 king's com - mands. And bless - ed be the hearts he rules, the  
 wide in trust. Oh, show us now your love - ly grace, up -

Sav - ior of the world who brings his great sal - va - tion  
 scap - ter is his love - li - ness; he brings our sor - rows  
 hum - ble plac - es where he dwells. He is the right - ful  
 on our sor - rows shine your face, and let your Ho - ly

to the earth. So raise a shout of ho - ly mirth and  
 to an end. Now glad - ly praise our king and friend, and  
 Son of bliss who fills our lives and makes us his, cre -  
 Spir - it guide our jour - ney in your grace so wide. We

praise our God and Lord, Cre - a - tor, Spir - it, Word,  
 wor - ship him with song for sav - ing us from wrong,  
 a - tor of the world, our on - ly strength for good,  
 praise your ho - ly name, from age to age the same!

Text: Georg Weisuel, 1590-1635; n. Gustav Grindal, b. 1943  
 Music: MACHT HOCH DIE TÜR, J. A. Freydinghausen, Geistes- und Gesangsbc. 1704; arr. hymnal version  
 Text © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship, ed. by Augsburg Fortress.  
 Arr. © 2000 Augsburg Fortress.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administration.

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. God is at work in you.

**Thanks be to God.**

From sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2023 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from *Feasting on the Word* © Worship Companion. Copyright 2014.

***Thank You, Louie Reissman for the beautiful Christmas Tree!***



***Welcome to all!*** Welcome to what some branches of the Christian church call Gaudete, or Rejoice, Sunday. May we find joy in worshiping God and anticipating the celebration of Christ's birth.

The spirit of the Lord is upon us to bring good news to all the world. May we be strengthened for this work through our time of worship. (See Isaiah 61:1.)

Please remember to silence pagers and cell phones during services.

***To those who are visiting:*** Welcome to St. John and thank you for joining us! You are welcome to sign our registry in the narthex. May God bless you today and all days.

***Reminder!*** If you are in need of Pastoral care, please contact St. John's at (715) 675-6950

**Holy Communion** is celebrated every Sunday. All are welcome to the Lord's Supper.

**Food Basket.** Each week you are invited to bring non-perishable grocery items to be given to a local food pantry. Place your gift in the *Food Basket* next to the main entrance.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**2024 Time & Talent sheet** is ready for you to select area(s) that you would like to help share your time and talent with your church! There are so many options, and the wonderful thing is that most have very little time investment for you, but the benefit is great to our church! Please take a moment to look over the Time & Talent sheet, it is divided into different areas of service, with the council chairperson's contact info listed, for you to reach out to with any questions you may have. Please fill out and return your sheet in the offering plate on any Sunday, leave in Mary's (secretaries) mailbox, or even call / email me and we'll get you signed up! Please take time to fill out a Time & Talent sheet, even if you already serve in areas of the church. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lane Bahr.

**St. John Quilting Wishlist.** Left over fabric or never used fabric, light weight denim, cotton or flannel sheets, pillow cases, cotton curtains (unlined), cotton shower curtains. If you are interested, come join us! You can also sew a quilt top from home. Size needed is 60 x 80. They do not need to be fancy. Thank you!

**Advent Resources Available.** ELCA Advent Devotionals & Advent Calendars are in the Narthex. If you are interested in Kate Bowler's Advent Devotional, see Pastor Maggie.

**Men's Breakfast.** Pastor Will from Trinity in Stettin and St. Peter's in Marathon has invited all men from St. John to meet the second Saturday of the month at 9 a.m. At LC Restaurant, in Marathon (Formerly the Village Inn).

**Tuesday, December 12 at 5:00 p.m. St. John's Sisterhood Ladies Christmas Gathering.** Please consider joining the Sisterhood crew for our annual Christmas gathering at 2510 Restaurant. "Happy Hour" starts at 5:00 p.m. with dinner to follow at 6:00 p.m. As per tradition, we will be collecting non-perishable items for the Women's Community (toiletries, toothpaste, shampoo/conditioner, etc.) and holding our annual white elephant gift exchange... so start looking in those storage rooms and basements (this exchange will be held after dinner – don't forget to wrap your 'gift!'). A sign-up sheet and additional information are located in the Narthex.

**Saturday, December 16 9:30-10:30 a.m. Dress Rehearsal for Children's Christmas Program**

**Sunday, December 17 worship is at 10:00 a.m. for our Children's Christmas Program! Potluck to follow! Bring an appetizer or dessert to share.**

**Monday, December 18 at 6:30 p.m. Blue Christmas.** A prayerfully cultivated service for those who have lost loved ones, for those who find the holidays to be a lonely time, and for those who would like to spend more time in prayer. This service will have candle lighting, music, prayers, and a sermon. All are welcome.

**Sunday, December 24. Christmas Eve Worship will be at 4:00 & 6:30 only.** We will not have a 9:00 a.m. Worship Service.

**Wednesday, December 27 at 6:00 p.m. Christmas Pizza & PJ Party.** Pizza served at 6, "Mickey's Christmas Carol" and "A Muppet Family Christmas" from 6:30-8. Kids are welcome to bring a friend! The event is free, please sign up in the Narthex so we have a head count for dinner.

**Live Streaming and Photography Notice.** When you enter a St. John Lutheran Church service or event, you will be entering an area where photography, video and audio recording or live streaming may occur. If you prefer not to be recognized on camera, the back row inside the church is not within viewing distance of a camera and communion will typically be only on a wide shot where it may be difficult to recognize congregants. Parents, please note our children's sermons are being recorded and live streamed. If you do not want your child to be recognized on camera, please refrain from having them participate.

### **Coming This Week @ St. John December 10 – December 17**

#### **Today**

- 9:00 a.m. Worship
- 10:15 a.m. Sunday School/Christmas Program Practice

#### **December 12**

- 8:30 a.m. Quilting
- 9:00 a.m. Pr. Maggie @ Pr. Meeting
- 5:00 p.m. Sisterhood Gathering at 2510

#### **December 13**

- 6:30 p.m. Confirmation

#### **December 16**

- 9:30 a.m. Dress Rehearsal for Children's Christmas Program

#### **December 17—Worship is at 10:00 a.m.!!!**

- 10:00 a.m. Worship