



Christmas Lights! Children's Christmas Program

December 21, 2025

10:00 a.m.

St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, ELCA

Reverend Maggie Westaby

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CALL TO WORSHIP & CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY

Here in worship—
we pray together,
we stand together,
we sing together,
we listen together.

Here in worship—we are not alone.

So when life gives you reason to grieve, to fear, or to worry, remember this:
We are not alone.

Let us worship our with-us God.

In a world full of fear, where do you see the presence of love?

**We see love all around us. We see love when people hold open the door.
We see love in a warm embrace, a homemade casserole, a phone call
after a long day. We see love in random acts of kindness and intentional
acts of empathy. We see love in worship – through the Children’s
Christmas Program and through the Confirmation students helping to
lead. We see love all around us.**

You are right. Even in a fearful world, love is all around us. Today we light
the candle of love as a reminder of this good news. May this flicker of light
help us remember that even in a fearful world, love is here. Love is world-
changing. Love is shining bright. We only have to look for it.

Thanks be to God for a love like that!

Pause for reflection as the candle is lit.



*The advent wreath is a symbol of God’s never-ending love.
The candles acknowledge the blessings God gives us:
the blessings of hope, peace, joy, and love.*

*Today we light the candle for love
(and we relight the candles for hope, peace & joy)*

SPECIAL MUSIC

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear
Performed by Briah Landwehr

PRAYER OF THE DAY (*Billie Jo Grueneberg*)

Wonderous God,

The stories of Advent are stories many of us have heard before. We've arranged the nativity scenes. We've read the children's books. We've seen the movies. We've sung the songs. But as we come together this morning, as we prepare our hearts to hear this joyful story told through St. John's youth we pray: help us begin again. Clear the distractions from our minds. Center us in this space. Move through the barriers we surround ourselves with and speak to us here and now. We are listening. We are hopeful. May today be a time of experiencing your love.

Amen.



CHRISTMAS



PROGRAM

Christmas Lights!

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem. Come and behold Him, Born the King of angels;
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation; O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God, Glory in the highest;
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this happy morning; Jesus, to Thee be glory given; Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing.
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.



AFTER THE CHRISTMAS PROGRAM:
PRAYER OF THANKS (*Elise Gallenberg*)

Loving God,

We come before you with hearts full of gratitude. For the gift of this day and the joy of witnessing the children share the story of Christ's birth. Thank you for their voices, their energy, and their creativity. We are grateful for the teachers, parents, and volunteers who have nurtured and guided them, offering their time and talents to make this program possible. May the message the children shared take root in us once again—the wonder of your love made flesh, the hope that shines in the darkness, and the peace Christ brings to the world. Bless these children as they continue to grow in faith, curiosity, and compassion. Bless our families and all who support them. And bless our congregation, that we may continue to cherish and encourage the gifts you place in every one of us. Fill us with joy as we carry the good news of this season into our daily lives. In the name of Jesus, the Light of the World, we pray. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING (*Bianca Melander*)

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. *Scan the QR code to donate online:*

<https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZEVQ/home>

SPECIAL MUSIC
O Holy Night
Performed by Maci Landwehr

Give Thanks

The musical score for 'Give Thanks' is written in a single system with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). It consists of ten staves of music. The first two staves form the first line of the song, the next two staves form the second line, and the final six staves form the third line. The lyrics are printed below the notes on each staff. The music features a mix of quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, with some rests and a final double bar line at the end of the piece.

Give thanks with a grate - ful heart, give thanks to the Ho - ly One,
give thanks be - cause he's giv - en Je - sus Christ, his Son.
Give thanks with a grate - ful heart, give thanks to the Ho - ly One,
give thanks be - cause he's giv - en Je - sus Christ, his Son.
And now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am
rich," be - cause of what the Lord has done for us. And
now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am
rich," be - cause of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks!

Text: Henry Smith

Music: GIVE THANKS, Henry Smith

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OFFERING PRAYER (*Mason Hirn*)

Holy God,

In this season of watching and waiting, we bring our gifts to you. Like candles in the growing dark, may they shine with hope. Take these offerings, the work of our hands, the prayers of our hearts, the resources we share, and use them to bring light where shadows linger, comfort where fear resides, and justice where your children long to be free. **Amen.**

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

With-us God, we live in a fearful world. If we're honest, we come to this table today with the taste of fear on our tongues. We come to this table carrying our anxiety. We come to this table asking for guidance. We come to this table with all of life's "what-ifs." But you do not disregard our fear. You do not brush it under the rug or call us foolish. You do not ignore the realities in front of us. Instead, you meet us here. You listen to our fears. You remind us that we are not alone. You surround us with people who love us. You show us where we are strong. You walk beside us. And you give us a new song to sing. As we come to this table, pour out your Spirit on this bread and cup. Remind us that even in a fearful world, you are on the move. Living even here, in the Words that Jesus said.

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 & ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Beloveds, it is Advent – a season of stubborn hope – when we dare to lean toward the faintest flicker of light in the shadows. We have seen the longest night, and still we believe. We believe in a with-us God. We believe in the hope of tomorrow. We believe that good news is louder than fear. So even when our knees shake, even when our voice trembles, *we will hold onto that good news. We will reach for each other. We will look for God in our midst.* We will proclaim: **Unto us, love is born.** We have seen the longest night, and we have seen unimaginable love. Love that meets us here at this table. Where light shines in the darkness, where hope takes on flesh in bread and wine. Here, there is space for all people; here there is space for all that we carry. So come, all who are weary, all who rejoice, all who doubt, and all who dare to hope.

LAMB OF GOD (page 154)

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMNS

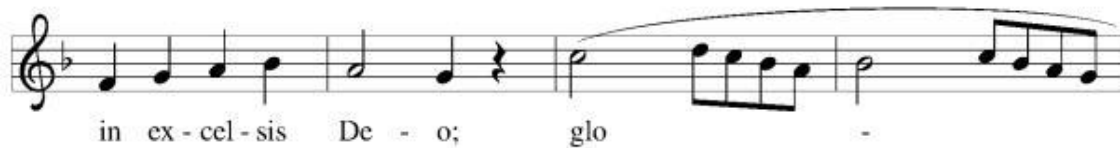
Angels We Have Heard on High



- 1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
- 2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi-lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
- 3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



and the moun-tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.



Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864
Music: GLORIA, French carol

What Child Is This



- 1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?
- 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
- 3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?
Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837-1898

Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (*Rylan Chadwick*)

Loving God, in a world racked with fear, you gather us together. You nourish our bodies as you nourish our spirits. You remind us that this is a joyful feast, and that fear cannot win every time. So with renewed courage, with renewed hope, with renewed conviction, send us out into the world. Help us to feed others as you have fed us. With gratitude we pray. **Amen**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING (*Briah Landwehr*)

As you leave this place, may you have the wisdom to lean on one other.
May you have the courage to hold onto hope,
The compassion to do the good that is yours to do,
And the confidence to trust that God sees you as a blessing.
For in a world full of dead ends, Advent invites us to begin again.
So start here. Start now. Start with love and begin again.
In the name of Christ ✝ our new beginning, go in peace. Amen.

SENDING HYMN

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing



1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born king;
2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
3 Hail the heav'n - born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righ - teous - ness!



peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled."
late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of a vir - gin's womb.
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.



Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; join the tri - umph of the skies;
Veiled in flesh the God - head see! Hail, in - car - nate de - i - ty!
Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,



with an - gel - ic hosts pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el!
born to raise each child of earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

Refrain



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

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788, alt.

Music: MENDELSSOHN, Felix Mendelssohn, 1809–1847; arr. William H. Cummings, 1831–1915

DISMISSAL Hold fast to hope, for God is faithful. **Thanks be to God.**

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Thank You, Louie Reissman for the beautiful Christmas Tree!



Welcome to all! Happy Advent! *Please remember to silence pagers and cell phones.*

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.

Holy Communion is celebrated every Sunday. All are welcome to Christ's Table.

Reminder! **If you are in need of Pastoral care, please contact St. John (715) 675-6950**
If you or a loved one is in the hospital and would like a visit from Pastor Maggie, please contact St. John.

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 *Shopping Cart* next to the main entrance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, December 21st at 5:30 p.m. Christmas Pizza & PJ Party. Pizza served at 5:30, "Charlie Brown Christmas" from 6:00 - 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.**

Wednesday, December 24th Christmas Eve Worship 2:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m. *Please note we are offering an additional service this year at 2:00*

Friday, January 2nd 5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Winter Youth Night for all middle & high school students! Pizza dinner at 5:00 p.m. followed by lots of fun: Broomball Outside (bring boots & warm clothes), Church Scavenger Hunt, Taylor Swift vs Lamentations Trivia, Minute-To-Win-It Games, Ice Cream Social, Movie vs Gaming vs Board Games!

Noisy offering! The 2nd Sunday of the month! Next Noisy offering:

Sunday, January 11th bring your coins (bills also accepted 😊).

Money will be raised and donated quarterly. This noisy offering will go to: *Community Dinners for the Houseless.*

Monday, January 12th at 6:30 p.m. Adult Study will discuss Chapters 9:17 – 14 of the Gospel of Luke.

Monday, January 26th at 6:30 Pastor Maggie's Book Club will discuss *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus.

Kwik Trip Gift Cards Sign-up in the Fellowship Hall or on our website! Help support St. John when buying groceries, gas, or getting your car washed at Kwik Trip! <https://stjohnwausau.org/fundraising/>

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 21st – December 28th

Today - Sunday, December 21st

10:00 a.m. Worship – Christmas Program

11:15 a.m. Potluck!!

Tuesday, December 23rd

9:00 a.m. Pastors Meeting

Wednesday, December 24th

No Quilting

2:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship

4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship

6:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship

No Confirmation Class

Thursday, December 25th

Church Closed – Merry Christmas.

Sunday, December 28th

9:00 a.m. Worship

No Sunday School