



St. James Lutheran Church
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Pastor: Rev. Dr. Glenn E. Schaeffer
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The Third Sunday in Advent
December 17, 2023

Divine Service, Setting Four (p. 203)

The Preservice Music, the Call to Worship, and Welcome

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath

P Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem.

C Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation.

P Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
From the house of the Lord we bless you.

The Candles are lit on the Advent Wreath as we sing.

Hymn: 331 "The Advent of our King"

Invocation

Exhortation

LSB 203

Confession of Sins

LSB 203

Absolution

LSB 203

Hymn: 351 "Creator of the Stars of Night" will be sung to the of LSB 426

1 Creator of the stars of night,
Thy people's everlasting Light:
O Christ, Redeemer, save us all
And hear Thy servants when they call.

2 Thou, grieving that the ancient curse
Should doom to death a universe,
Hast found the healing, full of grace,
To cure and save our ruined race.

3 Thou cam'st the Bridegroom of the bride,
As drew the world to eventide,
The spotless Victim all divine
Proceeding from a virgin shrine.

4 At whose dread name, majestic now,
All knees must bend, all hearts must bow;
All things celestial Thee shall own,
And things terrestrial, Lord alone.

5 O Thou, whose coming is with dread
To judge the living and the dead,
Preserve us from the ancient foe
While still we dwell on earth below.

△6 To God the Father and the Son
And Holy Spirit, Three in One,
Praise, honor, might, and glory be
From age to age eternally.

Text: Latin, c. 5th-10th cent.; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-66, alt.
Text: Public domain

Salutation and Collect of the Day

The First Reading

Haggai 2:6-7 and Malachi 3:1-3

A The First reading is Haggai 2:6-7 and Malachi 3:1-3.

For thus says the LORD of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts... "Behold, I send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the Lord.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

The Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

A The Second Reading is 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Song: "The True Light" (Worship Team)

Verse 1 (Numbers 24)

In times of old, men prophesied the visions they would see
Images from the Almighty, Creator, Lord, and King
Balaam saw a scepter rise from a single ancestry
a star would come from Jacob to rescue you and me

Chorus (John 1)

The true light to give light to all
Was coming to this world
The true light to redeem us all
Was coming to this world

Verse 2 (Isaiah 9 & Isaiah 40)

A voice cried out in the wilderness make straight the way for him
Prepare the way of Adonai, for the glory come from heaven
Prepare your hearts for the prince of peace who will cast evil away
Even in the land of the shadow of death the darkness will not reign

Bridge

Oh tehillah* Yahweh
The Light is coming
Oh gloh-rih-ah-ah
We await the Prince of Peace

*Tehillah means "Praise" / "Song of Praise" in Hebrew... Pronounced: TIH-HEY-LAH
Written by Christina Shourds

The Holy Gospel Reading

John 1:6-8, 19-28

P The Holy Gospel reading is from John, chapter 1.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. . . . This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" 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." (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

Apostles' Creed

Hymn of the Day: 346 "When All the World Was Cursed"

Sermon (During the sermon, children who are ages 3 through grade 2 are invited to participate in KIDZ Time. Children can make their way to the back of the sanctuary where the KIDZ Time teacher is waiting. The children will return to the service following the sermon.)

Offering (We will sing LSB 333, "Once He Came in Blessing") (Please sign the burgundy Friendship booklet and pass it to other people sitting in your pew. When completed, pass it back to the center aisle and be sure to greet the people next to you! Those sitting by the center aisle: please tear off the completed sheet and place it on the pew. Thank you!)

Prayer of the Church & The Lord's Prayer

Hymn: God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

Verse 1

God rest ye merry gentlemen
Let nothing you dismay
Remember Christ our Saviour
Was born on Christmas Day
To save us all from Satan's pow'r
When we were gone astray

Chorus

O tidings of comfort and joy
Comfort and joy
O tidings of comfort and joy

Verse 2

In Bethlehem in Jewry
This blessed Babe was born
And laid within a manger
Upon this blessed morn
The which His mother Mary
Did nothing take in scorn **(Chorus)**

Verse 3

From God our heavenly Father
A blessed angel came
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name **(Chorus)**

Verse 4

"Fear Not," then said the angel
"let nothing you affright;
This day is born a Savior,
The true and radiant light,
To free all those who trust in Him
From Satan's pow'r and might." **(Chorus)**

Verse 7

Now to the Lord sing praises
All you within this place
And with true love and brotherhood
Each other now embrace
This holy tide of Christmas
All others doth deface **(Chorus)**

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Announcements and Dismissal for Online Worshippers

The Words of Institution

Distribution

Distribution Song: Noel (Worship Team)

Benediction

Hymn to Depart: 348 "The King Shall Come"

Acknowledgments
Divine Service, Setting Four from Lutheran Service Book
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This Week at St. James

Today (12/17) Gizmo on FB – 8:00 AM
Communion Service - 9:30 AM
F.I.F. Event – 11:00 AM

Monday (12/18) **Communion Service - 6:30 PM**

Wednesday (12/20) Advent Meal (Friends In Faith Hosting) - 5:00 PM
ISJ Christmas Program – 6:00 PM

Thursday (12/21) Adult Bells – 6:00 PM
Adult Choir – 7:15 PM

Saturday (12/23) Pastor’s Day Off – 8:30 AM

Sunday (12/24) **Communion Service - 9:30 AM**
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service – 6:30 PM

Monday (12/25)Christmas Day Communion Service – 10:00 AM
 Office Closed – 9:00 AM

Looking Ahead

Serving Today (12/17)

Officiant Pastor Glenn Schaeffer
 Lector Carol Bifulco
 Organist Beth McKay
 Deacon(s) Jerry Talen / Dave Hood
 Ushers Dale & Grace Rosema / Walt & Karen Kryzanowski
 Video/Sound/Recording Nathan Urbanski/John & Marjie Weiss
 December Altar Guild Butler Family
 KidzTime Cindy McAuliffe

Serving Next Sunday (12/24) AM Service

Lector Marjie Weiss
 Organist Beth McKay
 Deacon(s) Craig Popma / Bryan Ensing
 Ushers Jim McKay
 Video/Sound/Recording Nathan Urbanski/John & Marjie Weiss
 December Altar Guild Butler Family
 KidzTime -

Financial Discipleship: December 10 & 11, 2023

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| General Fund | \$2,916.10 |
| <i>Needed each week for budget \$5,769.00 (-\$2,852.90)</i> | |
| <u>Memorials</u> | <u>\$30.00</u> |
| TOTAL Contributions | \$2,946.10 |

Announcements

“This is So Embarrassing!” You are encouraged to attend the ISJ Academy Christmas program. The children will share with us the “embarrassing” story of our Savior’s birth. The program will be on Wednesday, December 20 at 6:00 p.m. You are also invited to the supper that will be served by Friends in Faith beginning at 5:00 p.m.

In His Image 2024 Winter Conference: A conference will be held at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids on January 20, 2024, from 9:00 am-4:30 pm. The cost will be \$20 which includes the conference and lunch. The conference will be on Christian worldviews, sexuality, Caring for the transgender child and so much more. The presenters are Rev. David Fleming and Dr. Beverly K. Yahnke. If you would like more information on this conference and to see the conference schedule, please see the bulletin board outside the coat room. If you would like to attend the conference, please let the office know no later than Friday, January 12th so we can send over a head count.

Sometimes silence is golden. Other times it is a relationship killer. Two people are estranged. Angry. At odds. A friend intervenes with the suggestion, “Well, have you tried talking about it?” Reconciliation takes conversation, verbal interaction, words. Under the theme *Love Talks: Daring Conversations Toward Reconciliation*, the 2024 Theological Conference is designed especially for laity of all ages. The conference, which will take place on February 3 in Lansing, will equip you to engage in the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18). The world around us needs us to engage with others in the ministry of reconciliation, both with people and with God. At the very heart of all reconciliation is the Word Himself, the Word made flesh, Jesus. Let’s get started with daring conversations of reconciliation. After all, love talks

WHEN & WHERE

- **February 3, 2024**
- Our Savior Lutheran Church, Lansing
7910 E. St. Joe Hwy
Lansing, MI, 48917

For more information, visit: <https://michigandistrict.org/event/theological-conference-2024/#overview>. If interested in attending this conference, please talk with Pastor Schaeffer.

Lord, Teach Us To Pray! This was the question the disciples asked Jesus and he responded by teaching them The Lord’s Prayer. Pastor Schaeffer will begin a new Bible study on The Lord’s Prayer on Sunday, January 7th. Not only will this study help you appreciate The Lord’s Prayer but it will equip you and motivate you to be a person of prayer.

Funeral Planning: If you are looking to pre-plan your funeral, we have a few funeral planning packets on the table in the coat room. If you go to get one and the packets are gone, please let the office know and we can print more.

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Services: Just as a reminder we have two services on Sunday, December 24. We will have our AM service starting at 9:30 AM and then we will have the Christmas Eve service starting at 6:30 pm. Christmas Day Monday, December 25, service will begin at 10:00 am.

The Seasons of Advent and Christmas



Advent begins the fourth Sunday *before* December 25 or the Sunday closest to the feast of St. Andrew (Nov. 30) and it ends with midday prayer on December 24th. The calendar of the Church begins with Advent (from Latin *adventus*, which means

“coming into”, a four-week period of preparation before Christmas. The story of Jesus in Advent is the story of hope coming into the world. When the time was just right, God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world. The Advent season teaches us to prepare to receive Jesus, the hope of the world. It has become common to use an Advent wreath to mark the season. Advent wreath has four candles – one for each week in Advent. As these candles are lit each week, our anticipation mounts as we look forward to Jesus’ Second Advent.

Christmas begins on the evening of Christmas Eve, December 24. It ends midday, January 5. The evening service of Christmas Eve marks the beginning of the Church’s celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord. The season continues after December 25 over a period traditionally known as the twelve days of Christmas. This season includes several lesser festivals: The festival of St. Stephen, the first martyr, occurs on December 26. St. John, apostle and evangelist, is remembered on December 27. The death of the babies in Bethlehem (Matthew 2) is observed on December 28 as the festival of the Holy Innocents. The circumcision and naming of Jesus on the eighth day after His birth (Luke 2:21) is celebrated on January 1.

A Statement on Holy Communion

We rejoice in the celebration of the LORD'S Supper as the Lord Jesus comes to us in a very personal manner, giving to us His true Body and Blood in, with, and under the bread and wine in this sacred meal. St. Paul writes, "*A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.*" (1 Corinthians 11:28-29) It is out of love and care for every individual who comes to the Lord's Supper that we ask those who are not instructed in the faith and/or doubt the presence of the Body and Blood of Jesus in this Sacrament to refrain from attending the Lord's Supper.

Members of Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregations, who:

- Repent of their sin;
- Believe in Jesus as their Savior;
- Trust that they are receiving, not only bread and wine but also the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the Lord's Supper for the forgiveness of their sins; and
- Intend, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to live as forgiven sinners resisting the devil, saying no to sinful desires, and walking in the newness of life;

are invited to partake of this Holy Meal with us. We request that ALL guests who desire to commune, kindly speak to the Pastor before the service.

If you prefer to come forward for a blessing at the time of Holy Communion, please do so. We ask that you cross your arms over your chest so that Pastor knows you want to receive a blessing.

NOTE: We provide gluten-free communion host and non-alcoholic grape juice. Just let the Pastor and/or the assistants know when you come for Holy Communion.