

January 1, 2023

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

## Lullabies and Realities

We hum a soothing melody to lull a baby to sleep. This time of year lullabies make their way into our liturgies as we sing Christmas carols that are slumber songs for the baby Jesus. We imagine the peace and serenity of the first Christmas. All is calm, all is bright. Until the night that Joseph, warned by a message from God, wakes Mary and tells her they must flee. Herod, threatened by the birth of their baby, seeks to destroy him. These young parents must protect their child from harm and leave immediately for Egypt. They wonder into what kind of world their son has been born.

From the moment of his birth, Jesus' presence challenges all claims to earthly authority. This one who brings God's reign of justice and peace evokes a hostile response. What a stark reminder that Christmas is more than sentimentality. Life in the real world brings violence, poverty, sadness, and grief.

Along with all the good in life there is also the shadow side to humanity, including tyrants and powers that take away the lives of innocent people. You can hear the weeping: parents of the infants killed by Herod weeping for their children; loved ones of the deceased weeping at Ground Zero; families of victims of war and violence weeping for their beloved ones.

The lullaby that God sings to us is not the promise that we will never know despair or a broken heart. Life has a way of surprising us with realities of its own. Yet at our baptism God sings us a lullaby of peace for all our days. We gather one day after Christmas to hear tidings of comfort and joy, and to receive comfort from the word and at the Lord's table. We go forth to sing, even in the midst of violence and pain. We go forth to sing God's lullaby of hope to one another and to our world.

**First St. John Lutheran Church**

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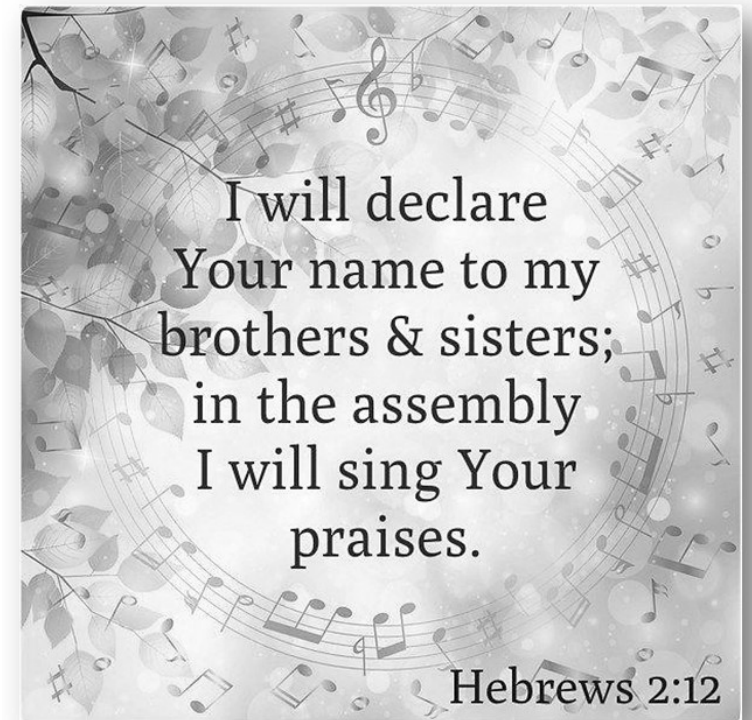
[www.firststjohn.com](http://www.firststjohn.com)

Rev. Jerald K. Rayl

Dr. Anthony Pattin - Church Musician

Jacob Kelly - Youth & Family Minister

Toni Wilbarger - Office Manager



**Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community**

**January 1, 2023**

**January 1, 2023** **First Sunday of Christmas**

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! We offer two services with Sunday School for youth and adults and catechism between the services. Our regular Sunday schedule is:

8:00 am	Early Worship
9:15 am	Sunday School / 1st Year Catechism
9:15 am	Adult Bible Study
10:30 am	Late Worship
11:30 am	2nd Year Catechism every other Sunday

Livestream and Recorded Worship: We livestream the service on our church website at [www.firststjohn.com](http://www.firststjohn.com). Also, the service will be recorded and published to the website.

Adult Sunday School meets at 9:15 am in the Youth Room area in the basement of the Educational Building.

Children ages 3 through 5<sup>th</sup> grade will meet at 9:15 am for Sunday School in the basement of the church (the JAM Room!).

Catechism Classes: First year class will be held from 9:15 to 10:15 am each Sunday. Second year class will meet every other Sunday from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm.

Nursery is in the church basement and is currently unstaffed; you are welcome to sit with your child. A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

Restrooms are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take either set of steps to the basement hallway. The ladies room is at one end, and the men’s room is at the other.

Flowers: If you would like to sign up for altar flowers, there is a book in the lounge. Or, you can call the church office during the week to check on availability.

Memorials: If you wish to give a memorial in honor or memory of a loved one, you may mail it in or pick up a memorial card in the church office.

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**Blessing**

P: May Christ, who by his incarnation has filled us with grace and truth, give you peace this Christmas and always. Almighty God, Father, (+) Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn *“The First Noel”* No. 300

**Dismissal**

P: Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude Dr. Pattin

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***PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY’S SERVICE***

**ELDERS**

Dick Haar, Darold Henninger

**ACOLYTES**

Vanessa Miller, Aubrey Swartz

**READER**

Tom Hartford

**SOUND BOARD**

Dave Wilbarger

### The Communion (distribution will be continuous)

If you wish to receive apple juice instead of wine, place your hand over your shoulder as you approach the person distributing the wine.

“All baptized Christians, believing that our Lord Jesus Christ is truly present in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, bringing to us the gift of forgiveness and the promise of eternal life, are welcome to gather at the Lord’s table. Infants, children and others who have not been baptized are welcome to come to receive a blessing; please make an X with your arms across your chest.”

(After all have received communion, please stand.)

### Communion Blessing

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and keep you in God’s grace.

C: Amen.

### Post Communion Response (sung in unison)



Thank-ful hearts and voic-es raise; tell ev-'ry-one what God has done. Let



ev - 'ry-one who seeks the Lord re - joice and bear the name of Christ.



Send us with your prom - is - es and lead your peo - ple forth in joy with



shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le-lu - ia, al - le-lu - ia.

### Prayer After Communion

P: On this day, O God, you gave us Christ the Son to save us. As you sent the one foretold, send us now with good news for all people. Let the gladness of this feast have no end, as we share with others the joy that fills us; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

## ORDER OF WORSHIP

Prelude

Dr. Pattin

Ring of the Bell (please stand)

Opening Hymn “Angels from the Realms of Glory” No. 275

### Invocation

P: Blessed be the Holy One of Israel, the Word made flesh, the Power of the Most High, (+) one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

### Confession and Forgiveness

P: Gathered in the Name of Jesus, let us confess our sin against God and our neighbor.

(Silence is kept for reflection)

P: Gracious God,

C: **in Christ Jesus you come among us as light shining in darkness. We confess our failure to welcome this light. Forgive us and renew our hope, so that we may live in the light of your grace, and welcome the truth of Christ the Lord. Amen.**

P: Sisters and brothers, I bring you good news of great joy for all the people: “To you is born a Savior, Christ the Lord.” Your sins are forgiven in (+) Jesus’ name.

C: Amen.

### Greeting

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

### Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray. O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, Now and forever.

C: Amen.

(Please be seated)

### Announcements

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 63:7-9**

*These verses give thanksgiving and praise because of God's "gracious deeds" and "steadfast love" (v. 7). This love does not grow cold, but always treats the other person with unselfish kindness, respect, and loyalty.*

I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD,  
the praiseworthy acts of the LORD,  
because of all that the LORD has done for us,  
and the great favor to the house of Israel  
that he has shown them according to his mercy,  
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

<sup>8</sup>For he said, "Surely they are my people,  
children who will not deal falsely";  
and he became their savior  
<sup>9</sup>in all their distress.

It was no messenger or angel  
but his presence that saved them;  
in his love and in his pity he redeemed them;  
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 148**

*His glory is above earth and heaven. (Ps. 148:13)*

Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights!

<sup>2</sup> **Praise him, all his angels;  
praise him, all his host!**

<sup>3</sup> Praise him, sun and moon;  
praise him, all you shining stars!

<sup>4</sup> **Praise him, you highest heavens  
and you waters above the heavens!**

<sup>5</sup> Let them praise the name of the Lord,  
for he commanded and they were created.

<sup>6</sup> **He established them forever and ever;  
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.**

<sup>7</sup> Praise the Lord from the earth,  
you sea monsters and all deeps,

<sup>8</sup> **fire and hail, snow and frost,  
stormy wind fulfilling his command!**

<sup>9</sup> Mountains and all hills,  
fruit trees and all cedars!

<sup>10</sup> **Wild animals and all cattle,  
creeping things and flying birds!**

<sup>11</sup> Kings of the earth and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers of the earth!

<sup>12</sup> **Young men and women alike,  
old and young together!**

P: Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

**C: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

P: Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

P: Remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**The Lord's Prayer** (*prayed by all*)

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**

P: Joy to the world! The Lord is come.

Let every heart receive your Savior!

**C: We come to receive and to share.**

*(Please be seated)*

## Offering Prayer

P: God of all creation, all you have made is good, and your love endures forever. You bring forth bread from the earth and fruit from the vine. Nourish us with these gifts, that we might be for the world signs of your gracious presence in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

## The Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

P: 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, sharing our life, lived among us to reveal your glory and love, that our darkness should give way to your own brilliant light.

P: And so, with all the choirs of angels, and 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'r and might,  
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -  
san-na. 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.

<sup>13</sup> Let them praise the name of the Lord,  
for his name alone is exalted;  
his glory is above earth and heaven.

<sup>14</sup> **He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful,  
for the people of Israel who are close to him.  
Praise the Lord!**

## **SECOND READING: Hebrews 2:10-18**

*Though Christmas is a joyous season, its meaning cannot be separated from the message of Holy Week. Jesus became like us in order to suffer with us and to destroy the power of death.*

It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. <sup>11</sup>For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, <sup>12</sup>saying,

"I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters,  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."

<sup>13</sup>And again,

"I will put my trust in him."

And again,

"Here am I and the children whom God has given me."

<sup>14</sup>Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup>and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. <sup>16</sup>For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. <sup>17</sup>Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup>Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

*(Please stand)*

## Gospel Acclamation

Lord, let my heart be good soil, o-pen to the seed of your word.  
Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is un-der-stood.  
When my heart is hard, break the stone a - way. When my heart is cold,



### **Gospel Announcement**

P: The Gospel according to St. Matthew Chapter 2.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

### **GOSPEL: Matthew 2:13-23**

*Matthew describes the terrible slaughter of young Bethlehem boys as a sign of evil present in the world and to show the relationship between the scriptures and Jesus' life.*

Now after the wise men had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." <sup>14</sup>Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, <sup>15</sup>and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

<sup>16</sup>When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. <sup>17</sup>Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

<sup>18</sup>"A voice was heard in Ramah,  
wailing and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

<sup>19</sup>When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, <sup>20</sup>"Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." <sup>21</sup>Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel.

<sup>22</sup>But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. <sup>23</sup>There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazorean."

### **Gospel Response**

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

*(Please be seated)*

SERMON  
Sermon Hymn

"Away in a Manger"

Pastor Rayl  
No. 277

*(Please stand)*

### **Nicene Creed**

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
for us and for our salvation

He came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;

He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

### **Pastoral Prayer** *(Each petition concludes with this response)*

P: Hear us, O Lord.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

### **The Offering**

### **Offertory Music**

Dr. Pattin