

## First St. John Lutheran Church

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

Rev. Jerald K. Rayl, Pastor

Dr. Joan Walldorf, Director of Music  
Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician  
Cheri Sergent, Bell Choir, Director  
Jennifer Hess, Office Manager

**February 18, 2024**

**First Sunday in Lent**

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

8:00 am	Early Worship
9:15 am	JAM Sunday School
9:15 am	Adult Bible Study
10:30 am	Late Worship
11:45 am	2nd Year Catechism (every other Sunday)
2:00 pm	Chapel Communion (2nd Sunday of the month)

**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

**SMILE! YOU'RE ON CAMERA:** Please remember you may be on camera during the livestream and the recording of the service.

**IMPORTANT REMINDER:** Please remember to silence your cell phone before church begins. Thanks!

**ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL** meets at 9:15 am in the lounge every Sunday.

**CHILDREN AGES 3 THROUGH 5TH GRADE** will meet at 9:15 am for Sunday School in the basement of the church (JAM Room).

**2ND YEAR CATECHISM CLASSES:** Second year class will meet every other Sunday at 11:45 am.

**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.



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

**February 18, 2024 - 10:30 am**

**ORDER OF WORSHIP—10:30 am**

Prelude Dr. Anthony Pattin

Ring of the Bell (Please stand)

**Opening Hymn** “In the Cross of Christ I Glory” No. 324

**Confession and Forgiveness**

*The assembly stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

P: In the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

**(silence is kept for reflection.)**

P: Most merciful God,

**C: we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

P: God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

**C: Amen.**

**Sharing of the Peace**

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Let us share the peace of the Lord.

The congregation may greet one another by shaking hands, fist bumping, or any other form of greeting with the words, “**Peace be with you.**” We conclude the sharing of the peace by singing:

**Hymn of Praise**

Assisting minister  
Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

All  
Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther,  
we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.

Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;  
you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.

For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,  
you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,  
in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

## 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: Holy God, heavenly Father, in the waters of the flood you saved the chosen, and in the wilderness of temptation you protected your Son from sin. Renew us in the gift of baptism. May your holy angels be with us, that the wicked foe may have no power over us, 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

### Introduction

On Ash Wednesday the church began its journey toward baptismal immersion in the death and resurrection of Christ. This year, the Sundays in Lent lead us to focus on five covenants God makes in the Hebrew Scriptures and to use them as lenses through which to view baptism. First Peter connects the way God saved Noah's family in the flood with the way God saves us through the water of baptism. The baptismal covenant is made with us individually, but the new life we are given in baptism is for the sake of the whole world.

### **FIRST READING: Genesis 9:8-17**

*Today's reading is the conclusion to the flood story. Because of human sin, God destroys the earth by flood, saving only Noah, his family, and the animals on the ark. Yet divine destruction gives way to divine commitment. As in the first creation, God blesses humanity and establishes a covenant with all creatures.*

<sup>8</sup>God said to Noah and to his sons with him, <sup>9</sup>“As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, <sup>10</sup>and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. <sup>11</sup>I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” <sup>12</sup>God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: <sup>13</sup>I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. <sup>14</sup>When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, <sup>15</sup>I will remember my covenant that is

between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. <sup>16</sup>When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” <sup>17</sup>God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

### **PSALMS: Psalms 25:1-10**— Congregation responds in **BOLD**.

<sup>1</sup> To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

<sup>2</sup> ***O my God, in you I trust;  
do not let me be put to shame;  
do not let my enemies exult over me.***

<sup>3</sup> Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;  
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

<sup>4</sup> ***Make me to know your ways, O LORD;  
teach me your paths.***

<sup>5</sup> Lead me in your truth, and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation;  
for you I wait all day long.

<sup>6</sup> ***Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love,  
for they have been from of old.***

<sup>7</sup> Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;  
according to your steadfast love remember me,  
for your goodness' sake, O LORD!

<sup>8</sup> ***Good and upright is the LORD;  
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.***

<sup>9</sup> He leads the humble in what is right,  
and teaches the humble his way.

<sup>10</sup> ***All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,  
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.***

### **SECOND READING: 1 Peter 3:18-22**

*As God acted through Christ's suffering and death to bring us to God, so God acts through baptism to save us from a sinful existence. This spiritual cleansing marks our new life in Christ.*

<sup>18</sup>Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup>in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup>who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. <sup>21</sup>And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup>who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

*(Please stand)*

**Gospel Acclamation**

Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and

mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in

stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

**Gospel Announcement**

P: The Gospel according to Mark Chapter 1.

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

**GOSPEL: Mark 1:9-15**

*The Spirit that comes upon Jesus at his baptism sustains him when he is tested by Satan so that he might proclaim the good news of God's reign.*

<sup>9</sup>In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup>And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.

<sup>11</sup>And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

<sup>12</sup>And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. <sup>13</sup>He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

<sup>14</sup>Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, <sup>15</sup>and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

**Gospel Response**

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

*(Please be seated)*

**SERMON**

Pastor Rayl

**Sermon Hymn** "Eternal Lord of Love, Behold Your Church" No.321

**The Offering**

**Offertory Music** "O Lord throughout These Forty Days"

FSJ Chancel Choir

Dr. Joan Walldorf, Director of Music

Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician

*(Please stand)*

**Offering Prayer**

P: God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

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

P: Merciful God,

**C: Receive our prayer.**

**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.

**Blessing**

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and † give you peace.

**C: Amen.**

**Closing Hymn**      “Now Thank We All Our God”      No.839

**Dismissal**

P: Go in peace. Share the good news.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude**      Dr. Anthony Pattin

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***PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY’S SERVICE***

**ELDERS**

Tom Hartford, Bob Hecklinger

**READER**

Susie Purewal

**SOUND BOARD**

Beth Hugueley



**LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES**  
of Northwestern Ohio

*Strengthening People in Body, Mind and Spirit*

We once again will be participating in the **Souper Bowl of Caring** to benefit Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio’s Food Pantry. The local Toledo food pantry distributes food to those in need every Tuesday and Thursday each month.

**We will be collecting items for the pantry and also monetary donations. Every dollar donated will go directly to the purchase of food for the pantry!**

**Food Pantry Wishlist**

- Canned Meats (Tuna, Chicken, Spam)
- Canned Fruits and Vegetables
- Canned Soup, Ravioli, Chili, Beef Stew
- Juice (46 or 64 oz.—plastic bottles only)
- Ramen
- Crackers
- Cereal
- Oatmeal or Grits
- Pasta and Pasta Sauce (Marinara or Alfredo)
- Ketchup, Mayo, Mustard
- Cake or Brownie Mixes and Frosting
- Cereal Bars
- Jelly

Grocery Carts are available for your food donations, and a soup pot is in the Narthex (lobby) to collect monetary donations. You can also donate directly to LSS by using the pink envelopes in the pew and placing in the offering plate. Please write “LSS food pantry” in the memo line. This will be our ministry focus for January and February. Please plan to participate!

Visit **[www.lssnwo.org](http://www.lssnwo.org)** for more info.

**2024 EASTER FLOWER SALE**  
 SPONSORED BY THE ALTAR GUILD



It's time to order flowers that will decorate the church on Easter morning, March 31<sup>st</sup>. The price is \$15.00 per plant. You can choose a lily, daffodil, hyacinth, or tulip. Fill out the order form below and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church. The final Sunday to order will be March 17<sup>th</sup>. Payment must accompany your order. Make checks out to: **First St. John Lutheran** and write "Easter Flowers" on the memo line.

***Deadline for placing orders is Sunday, March 17<sup>th</sup>.***

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Number of plants @ \$15.00 each \_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Type of plant: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(lily, daffodil, hyacinth, tulip)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

In Loving Memory of (Deceased) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of (Living) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*February 18, 2024*

***FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT***

**The Wilderness**

Who among us has been spared the wilderness? The wilderness may be different for each of us, but always stops us dead in our tracks. We are thrown into the company of wild beasts.

So it was with Jesus' wilderness. Our starchy understanding of this story assumes that for Jesus this and every step in his ministry was softened by clear and resolute understanding of the ways of the Father. Whether or not this was so, there is no doubt that Jesus allowed himself to be fully human, fully vulnerable, for our sake.

But before the wilderness, there was baptism: sign and seal of enduring love of the Father for the Son. In the baptism of Jesus by John, we are given tangible signs of God's intent to bring the kingdom of God to a wayward world: the wild and singular John, the dove, the voice from heaven. In all these tangible signs God proclaimed a radical, wild, and unexpected infusion of mercy and forgiveness, for the sake of a waiting world.

In the sign of the rainbow, God entered a covenant with Noah and all living creatures, sign and seal of enduring love. In the waters of baptism we, fully vulnerable and fully human, enter into a covenant with God. It is in the strength of that unbreakable covenant that we can live in our wildernesses as Jesus lived in his.

For some, the wilderness fades over time; for others there is no sense of an ending, just the unspeakable wilderness of one long and listless day followed by a longer night. The imprint of ashes on our days this Lenten season brings our human frailty into sharp relief. Yet by water, faith, and the word of God, our frailty is not the last word. Jesus has made it so.