

**First St. John Lutheran Church**

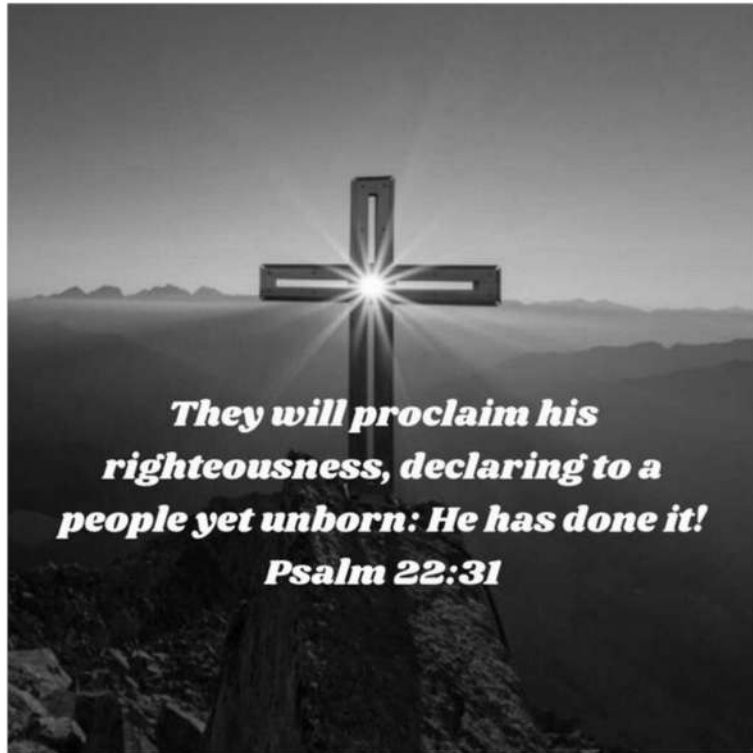
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Rev. Jerald K. Rayl, Pastor

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



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

**February 25, 2024 - 10:30 am**

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**Second 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 <i>(every other Sunday)</i>
2:00 pm	Chapel Communion <i>(2nd Sunday of the month)</i>

**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.

**ORDER OF WORSHIP—10:30 am**

Prelude Dr. Anthony Pattin

Ring of the Bell (Please stand)

**Opening Hymn** “O Word of God Incarnate” No. 514

**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: Let us pray. O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life. Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son, 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

The second covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the one made with Abraham and Sarah: God's promise to make them the ancestors of many, with whom God will remain in everlasting covenant. Paul says this promise comes to all who share Abraham's faith in the God who brings life into being where there was no life. We receive this baptismal promise of resurrection life in faith. Sarah and Abraham receive new names as a sign of the covenant, and we too get new identities in baptism, as we put on Christ.

### **FIRST READING: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16**

*As with Noah, God makes an everlasting covenant with Abraham and Sarah. God promises this old couple that they will be the ancestors of nations, though they have no child together. God will miraculously bring forth new life from Sarah's womb. The name changes emphasize the firmness of God's promise.*

<sup>1</sup>When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. <sup>2</sup>And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous." <sup>3</sup>Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, <sup>4</sup>"As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. <sup>5</sup>No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. <sup>6</sup>I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. <sup>7</sup>I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you."

<sup>15</sup>God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. <sup>16</sup>I will bless her, and moreover I will

give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

## **PSALMS: Psalms 22:23-31**— Congregation responds in **BOLD**.

<sup>23</sup>You who fear the LORD, praise him!  
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him;  
stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!

<sup>24</sup>**For he did not despise or abhor  
the affliction of the afflicted;  
he did not hide his face from me,  
but heard when I cried to him.**

<sup>25</sup>From you comes my praise in the great congregation;  
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.

<sup>26</sup>**The poor shall eat and be satisfied;  
those who seek him shall praise the LORD.  
May your hearts live forever!**

<sup>27</sup>All the ends of the earth shall remember  
and turn to the LORD;  
and all the families of the nations  
shall worship before him.

<sup>28</sup>**For dominion belongs to the LORD,  
and he rules over the nations.**

<sup>29</sup>To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down;  
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,  
and I shall live for him.

<sup>30</sup>**Posterity will serve him;  
future generations will be told about the LORD,**

<sup>31</sup>and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,  
saying that he has done it.

## **SECOND READING: Romans 4:13-25**

*Paul presents Abraham as the example for how a person comes into a right relationship with God not through works of the law but through faith. Though Abraham and Sarah were far too old for bearing children, Abraham trusted that God would accomplish what God had promised to accomplish.*

<sup>13</sup>The promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith.

<sup>14</sup>If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and

the promise is void. <sup>15</sup>For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

<sup>16</sup>For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, <sup>17</sup>as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”)—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. <sup>18</sup>Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become “the father of many nations,” according to what was said, “So numerous shall your descendants be.” <sup>19</sup>He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. <sup>20</sup>No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, <sup>21</sup>being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. <sup>22</sup>Therefore his faith “was reckoned to him as righteousness.” <sup>23</sup>Now the words, “it was reckoned to him,” were written not for his sake alone, <sup>24</sup>but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, <sup>25</sup>who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

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 8.

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

### **GOSPEL: Mark 8:31-38**

*After Peter confesses his belief that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus tells his disciples for the first time what is to come. Peter’s response indicates that he does not yet understand the way of the cross that Jesus will travel.*

<sup>31</sup>[Jesus] began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup>He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup>But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

<sup>34</sup>He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup>For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. <sup>36</sup>For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? <sup>37</sup>Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? <sup>38</sup>Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

### **Gospel Response**

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

*(Please be seated)*

### **SERMON**

Pastor Rayl

**Sermon Hymn** “Take Up Your Cross, the Savior Said” No.667

*(Please stand)*

### **Apostles’ Creed**

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

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

P: Merciful God

C: **Receive our prayer.**

*(Please be seated)*

**The Offering**

**Offertory Music**

“At His Name” FSJ Chancel Choir  
Dr. Joan Walldorf, Director of Music

*(Please stand)*

**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 our thanks and praise.**

P: We give you thanks, Father, through Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, whom you sent in this end of the ages to save and redeem us and to proclaim to us your will.

He is your Word, inseparable from you, through whom you created all things, and in whom you take delight. He is your Word, sent from heaven to a virgin’s womb. He there took on our nature and our lot and was shown forth as your Son, born of the Holy Spirit and of the virgin Mary. He, our Lord Jesus, free.

He is the one who, handed over to a death he freely accepted, in order to destroy death, to break the bonds of the evil one, to crush hell underfoot, to give light to the righteous, to establish his covenant, and to show forth the resurrection, taking bread and giving thanks to you, said: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

In the same way 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, then, his death and resurrection, we take this bread and cup, giving you thanks that you have made us worthy to stand before you and to serve you as your priestly people.

Send your Spirit upon these gifts of your church; gather into one all who share this bread and wine; fill us with your Holy Spirit to establish our faith in truth, that we may praise and glorify you through your Son Jesus Christ; through whom all glory and honor are yours, almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy church, both now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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: At Jesus’ table, heaven and earth are joined as one. Come and see.

C: **Come, take your place at the table.**

*(Please be seated)*

**The Communion** (distribution will be continuous)

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."

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

(After all have received communion, please stand.)

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

C: Amen.

**Prayer after Communion**

P: Let us pray. We give you thanks, almighty God that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: 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**

"Faith of Our Fathers"

No.812

**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**

Ben Hodges, Matt Miller

**READER**

Carol Haar

**SOUND BOARD**

Amy Nelson

**Belonging**

The line between law and gospel, the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of God, has been drawn in the sand in today's gospel reading. Jesus startles the disciples and us with edgy words about suffering, rejection, dying, and rising.

Peter, struggling to find logic in Jesus' words, prompts his master to describe one of the most perplexing paradoxes of following him: in order to find your life you must lose it.

A little girl, abandoned by her mother in Sweden, takes the voyage to America in the early 1900s at the age of four, tagging along with distant relatives. As a child she is shuffled from relative to neighbor, unwanted, growing up virtually alone in a strange land. One can imagine her joy in becoming a Lutheran deaconess, entering a community of strong young women like herself, belonging. Perhaps it is because she has never really had a life that this new home is so sweet. Secondary school leads to nursing school, and she comes into her own. She has found herself.

The day after her nursing school graduation, she leaves the only real home she has known. Once again, she is on a voyage, alone. This time the destination is China. Her first nursing job is as director of nursing at a hospital where she will serve alongside Lutheran missionaries in a strange land. She pours out her life, joyfully. She serves with intelligence and compassion, always taking under her wing an orphan or a misfit as her personal assistant.

Jesus calls each of us to follow him. But what shape that call takes is between the Lover and the beloved. After all, we are as individual as stars in the sky. One by one, day by day, we are called to this lavish, abandoning love.