



# Love

*The mighty one  
...shows mercy  
to everyone,  
from one  
generation  
to the next.*

LUKE 1:49a, 50a (CEB)

**December 22, 2024**

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent**

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

8:00 am	Early Worship
9:15 am	JAM Sunday School
9:15 am	Adult Sunday School
10:30 am	Late Worship
2:00 pm	Chapel Communion (2 <sup>nd</sup> 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!

**SUNDAY SCHOOL & CATECHISM** JAM Sunday School (church basement) and Adult Sunday School (lounge) meet each Sunday at 9:15 am. First year catechism will start soon! If you have a child in 6-7th grade interested please let Pastor Rayl know.

**NURSERY** is in the church basement and is now available during 2<sup>nd</sup> Service each week; you are welcome to sit with your child as well. 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

Preludes Dr. Anthony Pattin

Ring of the Bell (Please stand)

**Opening Hymn** “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” No. 270

### **Lighting the Advent Wreath—The Fourth Candle** **Fourth Sunday in Advent: Love**

P: Blessed are you, God of hosts, for you promised to send a son, Emmanuel, who brought your presence among us; and you promise through your Son Jesus to save us from our sin.

As we light these candles, turn again to us in mercy; strengthen our faith in the word spoken by your prophets; restore us and give us life that we may be saved.

*(The fourth Advent candle is lit)*

P: O, house of David, come.

**C: let us rejoice, for the Son of God, Emmanuel, comes to be with us. Amen.**

**Hymn of Advent – “Angels From the Realms of Glory” - (Vs. 1 & 4)**

*Angels from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
Once you sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth.  
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the new-born king.*

*All creation, join in praising God, the Father, Spirit, Son, evermore  
your voices raising to the eternal Three in One. Come and worship,  
come and worship, worship Christ, the new-born king.*

### **Rite of Baptism**

*Please use insert in bulletin and read responsively as asked*

### **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: “Lord I Lift Your Name on High” No. 857

**“Lord I lift your name on high;  
Lord I love to sing your praises,  
I’m so glad you’re in my life,  
I’m so glad you came to save us.**

**You came from heaven to earth to show the way.  
From the earth to the cross, my debt to pay,  
From the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky;  
Lord, I lift your name on high.”**

### **Greeting**

P: The grace given to us in Christ Jesus, the help of the Holy Spirit living in us, and the power of God who calls us with a holy purpose be with you all.

**C: And also with you.**

### **Prayer of the Day**

P: Let us pray. Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

*(Please be seated)*

### **Announcements**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Cradle and cross are inextricably connected on the fourth Sunday of Advent. Between a lovely tribute to the little town of Bethlehem and Mary’s magnificent song of praise, the letter to the Hebrews reminds us in no uncertain terms that Christ’s advent is for “the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” It is the kind of tension in which the church always lives as when in holy communion—with high delight—“we proclaim the Lord’s death.”

### **FIRST READING: Micah 5:2-5a**

*The prophet Micah, having pronounced judgment upon Judah, speaks of a future shepherd-king who, like David, will come from the small town of Bethlehem. (Ephrathah refers to the area around Bethlehem.) This king will restore Israel and bring peace. New Testament writers understood this passage to be referring to Jesus.*

<sup>2</sup> But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
 who are one of the little clans of Judah,  
 from you shall come forth for me  
 one who is to rule in Israel,  
 whose origin is from of old,  
 from ancient days.  
<sup>3</sup> Therefore he shall give them up until the time  
 when she who is in labor has brought forth;  
 then the rest of his kindred shall return  
 to the people of Israel.  
<sup>4</sup> And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord,  
 in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.  
 And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great  
 to the ends of the earth;  
<sup>5a</sup> and he shall be the one of peace.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**RESPONSIVE READING: Luke 1:46-55** — Congregation responds  
 in **BOLD**.

“My soul magnifies the Lord,  
<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
<sup>48</sup> **for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.**  
**Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;**

<sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
 and holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup> **His mercy is for those who fear him**  
**from generation to generation.**

<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm;  
 he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

<sup>52</sup> **He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,**  
**and lifted up the lowly;**

<sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things,  
 and sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup> **He has helped his servant Israel,**  
**in remembrance of his mercy,**

<sup>55</sup> according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
 to Abraham and to his descendants forever.

**SECOND READING: Hebrews 10:5-10**

*The author of Hebrews uses the image of religious sacrifice to convey the significance of Christ's coming. Through obedient acceptance of God's will, Christ allows his own body to become the greatest sacrifice of all, one through which we are made a holy people.*

<sup>5</sup> Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,  
 “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,  
 but a body you have prepared for me;

<sup>6</sup> in burnt offerings and sin offerings  
 you have taken no pleasure.

<sup>7</sup> Then I said, ‘See, God, I have come to do your will, O God’  
 (in the scroll of the book it is written of me).”

<sup>8</sup> When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), <sup>9</sup> then he added, “See, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. <sup>10</sup> And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

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,

warm it with the day. When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.

Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart be good soil.

## **Gospel Announcement**

P: The Gospel according to St. Luke Chapter 1.

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

## **GOSPEL: Luke 1:39-45**

*Elizabeth, John's mother, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, are two women filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. In Elizabeth's inspired greeting and Mary's song of praise we hear of a saving God who remembers, scatters, lifts up, and fulfills all things.*

<sup>39</sup> In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup> where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup> and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup> And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? <sup>44</sup> For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

## **Gospel Response**

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

*(Please be seated)*

## **SERMON**

Pastor Ray

## **Sermon Hymn**

*"It Came Upon A Midnight Clear"*

No.282

*(Please stand)*

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

P: Merciful God,

**C: Receive our prayer.**

*(Please be seated)*

## **The Offering**

**Offertory Music** *"Jesus, O What A Wonderful Child"* Schrader  
FSJ Chancel Choir  
Craig Whitaker, Interim Director

*(Please stand)*

## **Offering Prayer**

P: Our generous heavenly Father, all good gifts come from you and from these riches we bring this offering. Help us to use it for the furtherance of your purpose in this place, and for the benefit of those in need, through our resurrected and living Lord, Jesus Christ.

**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: You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God. You are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory. You so loved the world that you gave your only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life. We give you thanks for his coming into the world to fulfill for us your holy will and to accomplish all things for our salvation.

P: 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.

P: 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.

P: For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from the cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

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

P: To you, O God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory in your holy church, 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: God feeds us with tender mercy. Come to 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: Now may the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in God's grace.

**C: Amen.**

### **Prayer after Communion**

P: Generous God we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name.

**C: Amen.**

### **Blessing**

P: God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light, God, our hope for the journey, (✠) bless and keep you now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

**Closing Hymn** "Good Christian Friends Rejoice" No. 288

### **Dismissal**

P: Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude**

Dr. Anthony Pattin

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### ***PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE***

#### **ELDERS**

Ben Hodges

Matt Miller

#### **READER**

Susie Purewal

#### **SOUND BOARD**

Dave Wilbarger

# PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY URGENT NEEDS!

Please purchase full size items.

dish soap	shampoo, child	*disposable razors
paper towel	*laundry soap	toothbrush, adult
toilet paper	fabric softener sheets	*toothpaste, adult
*tissues	*body lotion	*sanitary pads
*deodorant	*body soap	band aids
shampoo, adult	toothpaste, child	toothbrush, child

This is a list of the items that will provide a month's worth of hygiene supplies to families or individuals in our neighborhood to help them stay clean and healthy. We always welcome any donations from our congregation members.

**If you would like to donate items, please donate only full size products as sample sizes will not last a month.** If you would prefer a Pantry volunteer to do the shopping for you, we welcome monetary donations. Please make out checks to First St. John Lutheran Church and write Personal Needs Pantry on the memo line.

\*denotes high need items for this month



## Pregnant Pause

Fresh from her encounter with the angel Gabriel, Mary runs to visit her older relative. Can you imagine this visit, this meeting of intimates? Two women pregnant with the promise of new life, pregnant with hope. Two women in their time of wonder and wondering--nine months full of expectation and mystery.

Unexpectedly, their lives have been graciously rearranged. One mother-to-be is expecting a child in her old age. The other will be the virgin mother of God. Surely each ponders what her life will be now, how it will change. What does it mean that God has chosen each for her particular task? What does it mean that each has said yes? What will the future hold?

In their holy moment of wondering and wonderment, Mary and Elizabeth lead us into a pregnant pause. We, too, ponder what God is doing in us and through us. We wonder what the future will bring. We count the cost of saying yes to God. We share our hopes and fears, our longings and our joys with those dear to us. Like these faithful women, we experience holy moments, blessed by God, when we open ourselves to the mystery of God's presence and the unexpectedness of God's leading.

Where is your pregnant pause? Where is the quiet place within that could become a cradle for the God who desires to make a home in you? How do you welcome God's gracious leading? What is it that leaps for joy within you? In these waning days of Advent, these days of expectation and hope, pause with Mary and Elizabeth. Dear, favored ones of God, let this pause fill you with the gentle and startling love of God in Christ Jesus. Let this love grow inside you and be born again and again.