



# Peace

*God...speaks  
peace to his  
people and to  
his faithful ones.*

PSALM 85:8 (CEB)

**December 8, 2024**

**2<sup>nd</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** “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” No. 254

**Lighting the Advent Wreath—The Second Candle**  
**Second Sunday in Advent: Peace**

P: Blessed are you, God of hope, for you promise to bring forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse who will bring justice to the poor, who will deliver the needy and crush the oppressor, who will stand as a signal of hope for all people.

As we light these candles, turn our wills to bear the fruit of repentance, transform our hearts to live in justice and harmony with one another, and fix our eyes on the root of Jesse, Jesus Christ, the hope of all nations.

*(The second Advent candle is lit)*

P: People of hope, come,

**C: Let us rejoice in the faithfulness of the Lord. Amen.**

**Hymn of Advent – “Hark, the Glad Sound!” - ELW 239 (Vs. 1 & 3)**

*Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes, the Savior promised long;  
let ev'ry heart prepare a throne and ev'ry voice a song.*

*He comes the broken heart to bind, the bleeding soul to cure, and  
with the treasures of his grace to enrich the humble poor.*

*(Please be seated)*

**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 our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; 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**

**Special Music**

*“I Wonder as I Wander” Nilas  
“O Come, O Come Emmanuel” Arr. Liebergen  
Patricia McCauley, Soloist*

**INTRODUCTION:**

Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the baptizer’s voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi’s prophecy could as easily herald the coming Christ as forerunner of the Lord of hosts. Finally all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of Jesus and assist all people in capturing a vision of the “salvation of God.”

**FIRST READING: Malachi 3:1-4**

*God announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means “my messenger”) will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God’s people, as silver and gold are refined.*

<sup>1</sup> See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of

the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. <sup>2</sup> 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; <sup>3</sup> he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. <sup>4</sup> Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Luke 1:68-79** — Congregation responds in **BOLD**.

<sup>68</sup> “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.

<sup>69</sup> **He has raised up a mighty savior for us  
in the house of his servant David,**

<sup>70</sup> as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

<sup>71</sup> **that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all  
who hate us.**

<sup>72</sup> Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,  
and has remembered his holy covenant,

<sup>73</sup> **the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,  
to grant us**

<sup>74</sup> that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,  
might serve him without fear,

<sup>75</sup> **in holiness and righteousness  
before him all our days.**

<sup>76</sup> And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;

for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

<sup>77</sup> **to give knowledge of salvation to his people  
by the forgiveness of their sins.**

<sup>78</sup> By the tender mercy of our God,

the dawn from on high will break upon us,

<sup>79</sup> **to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of  
death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”**

*(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 3.

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

## **GOSPEL: Luke 3:1-6**

*John the Baptist is a herald of Jesus, whose way is prepared by “repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” As we hear the careful record of human leaders, we sense the spectrum of political and religious authority that will be challenged by this coming Lord.*

<sup>1</sup> In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, <sup>2</sup> during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup> He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, <sup>4</sup> as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.

<sup>5</sup> Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
and the crooked shall be made straight,  
and the rough ways made smooth;

<sup>6</sup> and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

### **Gospel Response**

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

*(Please be seated)*

### **SERMON**

Pastor Rayl

**Sermon Hymn** "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry" No.249

*(Please stand)*

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

P: Merciful God,

**C: Receive our prayer.**

*(Please be seated)*

### **The Offering**

**Offertory Music** "Some Children See Him" *Burt*  
Patricia McCauley, Soloist

*(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: Come and know Christ, broken and poured out for you.

**C: We come at our Lord's command.**

*(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: Let us pray. Gracious God, in you we live and move and have our being. With your word and this meal of grace, you have nourished our life together. Strengthen us to show our love and serve the world in Jesus' name.

**C: Amen.**

**Blessing**

P: The God of all, who raised † Jesus from the dead, bless you by the power of the Holy Spirit to live in the new creation..

**C: Amen.**

**Closing Hymn**      *"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"*      No. 270

**Dismissal**

P: Go in peace. Serve the Risen One.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude**

Dr. Anthony Pattin

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**Please Welcome Special Guest,  
Patricia A. McCauley, soprano**



Patricia was a member of the Scott High School Symphonic Choir, under the direction of David Carter. She is also proud to say that she was a charter member of the David Carter Symphonic Choir Alumni Choir. She has had the pleasure of performing as soloist in many concerts over the years in many venues.

Pat graduated from Bowling Green State University with a Bachelor of Music degree and holds a Master's degree in Education from the University of Toledo in Educational Technology. She served as an educator/educational technologist for nearly 30 years, and was a part-time instructor of pre-service teachers at the University of Toledo. In addition, she taught online courses for many years at BGSU for master's students in degree programs. She served for seven years at NWOET as an Educational Technology Specialist and for eighteen years as a teacher/librarian at the former Maumee Juvenile Correctional Facility.

Patricia has served as Director of the Angel's Wings handbell choir at the Monroe Street United Methodist Church for nearly four years. A longtime member of the Wesleyan Chorus, she also is a member of the Praise Team at her church, and often serves as Song Leader during worship services.

**Please welcome Patricia this morning!**

**CHRISTMAS COOKIE SALE FUNDRAISER**

SPONSORED BY WELCA

Please consider helping WELCA with their Christmas Cookie Sale that will be held on December 15<sup>th</sup> after both services. To participate and help raise funds plan to bring your baked cookies on Saturday, Dec 14<sup>th</sup> between 10-12pm. All types of cookies, fudge, bars, or bark accepted. There is a sign-up sheet available in the lounge on a clipboard or complete the form below and place in the offering plate. . Contact Sue Ann Rogers for more information (419) 280-1310.

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✓ I will plan to bake cookies for the fundraiser and bring them on Saturday, December 14th between 10 -12pm, or Sunday, December 15th before first service.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Cookie or dessert:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Drop in the offering plate\*\***



# 2024 POINSETTIA SALE

SPONSORED BY THE ALTAR GUILD



Fill in the form below to place your order for poinsettias to be used during worship at Christmas time. You can place this form with payment in the offering plate or mail it in to the church office. Payment must accompany orders. Checks payable to: **First St. John**

***Deadline for placing orders is Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>.***

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

Color (circle one)    Red                    White

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

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December 8, 2024

**SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

## Time and Place

Before John appears against the backdrop of a barren wilderness, the gospel writer sets the stage. Luke provides great detail about who ruled the administrative districts of Palestine in the first century and when. Only after this narrative is fastened to a specific moment in history does Luke tell us that the word of God came to John in the wilderness.

So what? Why does Luke care that we know exactly what time it is? Because Jesus' advent is once for all. It was rooted in history, yet he continues to come to us anew each day. When John appears on the scene proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, it signals a new age of salvation. Now, nothing will ever be the same again. The promised messiah is near, and John's task is to get people ready to meet him.

On this side of John's testimony, we continue what began in his proclamation. Having heard and believed the good news of God's salvation, we bear God's creative and redeeming word to all the world. Rooted in this place, in our own unique contexts, we announce hope to those who live in fear and despair. We are the present-day messengers in a long line of faithful witnesses who pointed to Jesus, the one whose coming ushered in a brand new history for them and for us.

When that new history is obscured by crooked paths and rough ways, we might remember that the word of God came to John in the *wilderness*. John's base of operation was not a political, military, or religious stronghold, but the desert. Our own barren landscapes of doubt, discouragement, or lack of enthusiasm will not keep God from finding us. Our deserts, like John's, are made holy by God's presence. Now, in this time and place, God prepares us to be both recipients and messengers of good news.