

December 07, 2025

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Here He Comes Again to Stir the Pot

During the season of Advent, we are on a journey to the incarnation; today we continue that journey toward Bethlehem. But as we make our way to the manger, we are, rather surprisingly, invited into the wilderness. Here, in Matthew's gospel, we meet John the Baptist, with his message of baptism and repentance.

However, most of us already have our Christmas trees decorated, have begun shopping for gifts, and have even started listening to Christmas music on our morning and evening commutes. We hold the familiar nativity stories in our thoughts, and this same gospel writer provides us with a large portion of that traditional Christmas story: the virgin birth, the star in the east, and wise men who come to pay homage to the Christ child with extravagant gifts are all found in Matthew. But none of that today. No, instead we get only the wilderness wanderer, John the Baptist, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

John had a duty, a call, to fulfill 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'" (Matt. 3:3). Yet, John's message can sound downright strange amid the rest of the story. We might find ourselves wondering, "Is *this* the way to the manger?"

At first glance, John the Baptist's call to repentance seems out of place—our message today should be about hope, peace, and joy! What does John the Baptist have to do with Christmas? Well, according to Matthew, *everything*. John's call to repentance is at the heart of who Christ is. *Repentance* simply means that we turn away from the sin that easily creeps into our lives and robs us of those very things: hope, peace, and joy. As we turn our face away from sin, we turn toward Jesus, preparing our hearts to receive this gift of salvation. Is there any message *more* filled with hope, peace, and joy than turning toward the warmth of God's Son?

The good news for us today is the same good news the original hearers received. Jesus *is* coming! Jesus continues to come to us every day, and even moment by moment. It is possible still to lean into hope, joy, and love, but remember that joy is not the same thing as happiness or festivity.

The season calls us into the "already," but a brief look at the top news stories clearly indicates the "not yet." So it is that John stands in the wilderness, beckoning us: "Prepare the way!"

First St. John Lutheran Church

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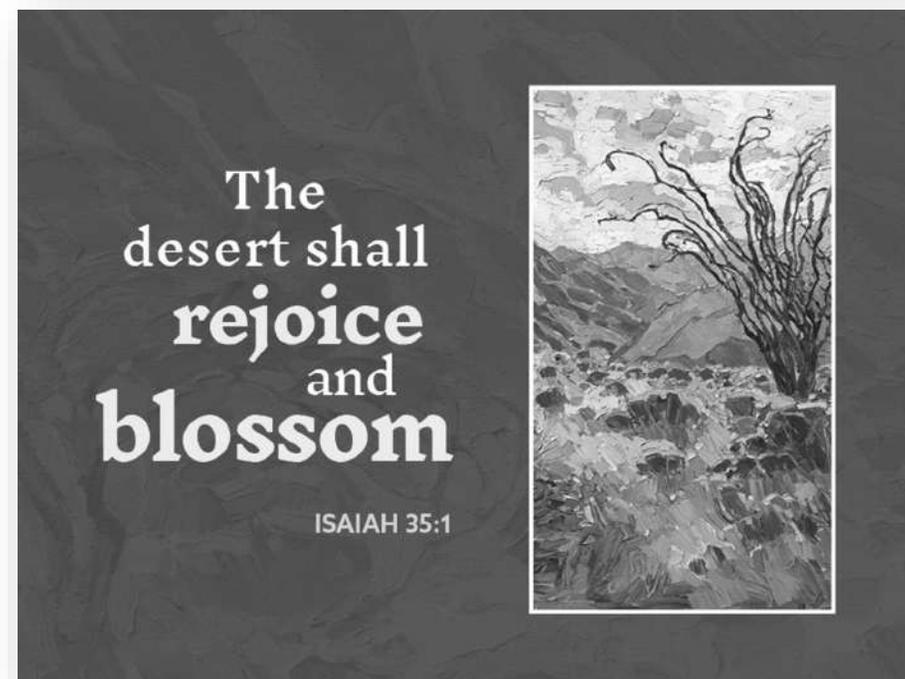
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(* * * *), Office Manager



December 14, 2025 - 10:30 am

Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community

December 14, 2025

Third Sunday in 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	Adult Sunday School
9:15 am	J.A.M. Sunday School
10:30 am	Late Worship
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. 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!

NURSERY is provided during second service, downstairs in the basement of the church. 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.

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

ELDERS

READER

SOUND BOARD

Susie Purewal

(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. God of abundance, with this bread of life and cup of salvation you have united us with Christ, making us one with all your people. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing

P: May God who comes among us, Father, (+) Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always..

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn

"Joy To The World"

No. 268

Dismissal

P: God sends us in mission to the world

C. Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Dr. Anthony Pattin



Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

P: Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts, that we may receive our Lord with a living faith as he comes to us in his holy supper.

C: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

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.

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.

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

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

P: Lord 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 to the banquet, for all is now ready.

C: Praise be to the Lord.

(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.

ORDER OF WORSHIP—10:30 am

Prelude

Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician

Ring of the Bell

Opening Hymn

"O Come All Ye Faithful"

No. 283

Invocation

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: In the name of the Father, and the Son, (+) and the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Third Sunday in Advent Candle: Joy

P: Hear the Old Testament prophecy from Isaiah 35:1-2: The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing.

C: Blessed are you, God of might and majesty, for you promise to make the desert rejoice and blossom, to watch over the strangers, and to set the prisoners free.

(Light the third candle)

P: As we light these candles, satisfy our hunger with your good gifts, open our eyes to the great things you have done for us, and fill us with patience until the coming of the Lord Jesus.

P: O ransomed people of the Lord, come,

C: let us travel on God's holy way and enter into Zion with singing. Amen.

Hymn

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel" verses 5-6

No. 257

O come, O Key of David, come,
and open wide our heav'nly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;
O Sun of justice, now draw near.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadow put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, (†) one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure.

C: Amen.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

P: Long-expected God,

C: we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake. Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.

P: God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. † You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior.

C: Amen.

P: The peace of the Lord be with you all.

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:

***Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear;
arise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this benighted sphere.
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see
the day of earth's redemption that sets your people free!***

- Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers, ELW 244 (verse 4)

The Greeting and Prayer

P: The Lord be with you all.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray. Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; 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)

The Offering

Musical Offertory

Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician

(Please stand)

Offering Prayer

P: God of mercy and grace, the eyes of all wait upon you, and you open your hand in blessing. Fill us with good things by the powerful presence of your Spirit, so that we may come to the help of all in need, through Jesus Christ, our redeemer 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: 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.

By the witness of your saints you show us the hope of our calling and strengthen us to run the race set before us, that we may delight in your mercy and rejoice with them in glory. And so, with all the saints, with the choirs of angels and all 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.

(Please be seated)

Jesus And Me (Sunday School) Christmas Program

Program Hymn “Your Little Ones Dear Lord” No. 286

(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: God of grace,

C: receive our prayer.

(Please be seated)

Announcements

Introduction

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:1-10

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

1 The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus 2 it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.
3 Strengthen the weak hands
and make firm the feeble knees.
4 Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
“Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you.”
5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;
6 then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert;
7 the burning sand shall become a pool
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.
8 A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;

the unclean shall not travel on it,
 but it shall be for God's people;
 no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.
 9 No lion shall be there,
 nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
 they shall not be found there,
 but the redeemed shall walk there.
 10 And the ransomed of the Lord shall return
 and come to Zion with singing;
 everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
 they shall obtain joy and gladness,
 and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 146:5-10 (Congregation responds in **BOLD**.)

5 Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,
 whose hope is in the Lord their God;
 6 who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;
 who keeps promises forever;
 7 who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who
 hunger.
 The Lord sets the captive free.
 8 The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord lifts up those who are
 bowed down;
 the Lord loves the righteous.
 9 The Lord cares for the stranger;
 the Lord sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the
 wicked.
 10 The Lord shall reign forever,
 your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!

SECOND READING: James 5:7-10

In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

7 Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord.
 The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it
 until it receives the early and the late rains. 8 You also must be patient.
 Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. 9 Brothers and
 sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged.
 See, the Judge is standing at the doors! 10 As an example of suffering and
 patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of
 the Lord
 the one who rises to rule the gentiles;
 in him the gentiles shall hope."

13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that
 you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand)

Gospel Announcement

P: The Gospel according to St. Matthew, Chapter 11.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.



GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

2 When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by
 his disciples 3 and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we
 to wait for another?" 4 Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you
 hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a
 skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor
 have good news brought to them. 6 And blessed is anyone who takes no
 offense at me."

7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John:
 "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the
 wind? 8 What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes?
 Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. 9 What, then, did you
 go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This
 is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
 who will prepare your way before you.'

11 "Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater
 than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than
 he."

Gospel Response

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.