

First St. John Lutheran Church

2471 Seaman Street

Toledo, Ohio 43605

419-691-7222

Email: office@firststjohn.com

Web site: www.firststjohn.com

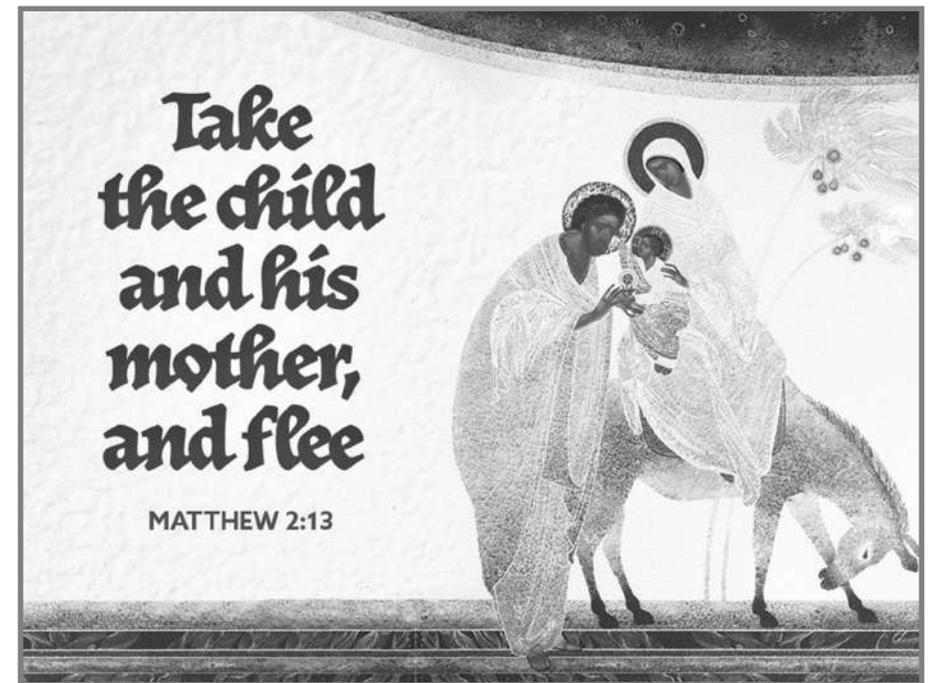
Rev. Jerald K. Rayl, Pastor

Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician

Jo-Anne Chrysochoos, Director of Music

Cheri Sergent, Bell Choir, Director

(* * * *), Office Manager



December 28, 2025 - 10:30 am

Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community

December 28, 2025

First Sunday in Christmas

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

"Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, "which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him

HOW IT FEELS NEVER TO BE ALONE

As Advent draws to its conclusion, we, along with Mary and Joseph, anticipate the birth of the Son of God. Interestingly, in both the Isaiah reading and the angelic instructions given to Joseph, the child is not named “the Son of God is with us” or “the Son of God saves.” *Immanuel* means “God is with us.” *Jesus* means “God saves.”

In some impossible-to-explain way (and for an impossible-to-explain reason), God will take on flesh and be joined with us who are not God. Somehow God is with us in this vulnerable, helpless infant. God-with-us will live, laugh, walk, love, hunger, grow weary, suffer, and die. The very God who is immortal, omniscient, and omnipotent will come into our space and experience what it is like to be born, grow up, lose loved ones, feel rage, face temptations, know betrayal, endure torture. The perfect and all-wise God will even know what it is to cry out, “My God, how could you leave me here like this?”

Think of that. Not only will this incarnated God feel human vulnerability and weakness, but this incarnated God will understand what it feels like to be afraid that God has abandoned you. And will hang there in that space with us so that we might begin to see the depth of the love that brought this God to us.

Of course, since we believe that God is omniscient, we might assume that God would understand us thoroughly anyway, even without the incarnation. But how would we know? How could we trust? God has chosen this incarnational space of radical communion to assure us that God does know us—our joys, our sufferings, and our sins. God has chosen this incarnational space of radical communion to reveal to us the promise that God is truly with us, and that God’s judgment will be against death itself and all its workings.

ORDER OF WORSHIP—10:30 am

Prelude

Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician

Ringing of the Bell

Opening Hymn

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

No. 270

Invocation

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

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, (+) one God, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Savior, Prince of Peace.

C: Amen.

Confession and Forgiveness

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

C: Amen.

P: Trusting in God’s steadfast love and faithfulness, let us confess our sin.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

P: Reconciling God,

C: we yearn for your presence to transform our grief, pain, and despair. We confess that we have not always prepared room in our hearts for your love; we have not always recognized your presence among us; we have not always embraced your message of peace. We cry out, weary with the burden of violence, oppression, and fear. Be born in us today and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation. Amen.

P: God’s grace upon grace flows over you. (+) Christ’s presence redeems the whole creation. Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad.

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:

**Good Christian friends rejoice with
heart and soul and voice
Now ye need not fear the grave,**

**Jesus Christ was born to save.
Calls you one and calls you all
to gain the everlasting hall.**

Christ was born to save, Christ was born to save!
- Good Christian Friends Rejoice ELW 288 (verse 3)

The Greeting and Prayer

P: The Lord be with you all.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray. O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, 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

As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the “holy innocents” of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 7:10-16

God does not delegate divine intervention to a messenger or angel. God’s own presence brings salvation. The prophet and all who read these words join in celebrating God’s gracious deeds. God trusts that God’s people will not act falsely.

7 I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord,
the praiseworthy acts of the Lord,
because of all that the Lord has done for us
and the great favor to the house of Israel
that he has shown them according to his mercy,
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.
8 For he said, “Surely they are my people,
children who will not act deceitfully,”
and he became their savior
9 in all their distress.

Closing Hymn

“The Bells of Christmas”

No. 298

Dismissal

P: Glory to God in the highest!

C: **And peace to God’s people on earth!**

P: Go in joy. Embody God’s redeeming grace.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

Dr. Anthony Pattin

**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 | | |

**denotes high need item*

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

glory in your holy church, now and forever.

C: Amen.

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: Glory to God in the highest, Come to the table of peace.

C: We come at our Lord's command.

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.

Infant 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 are not receiving the bread and wine."

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.)

Prayer After Communion

P: Let us pray. God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table With gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and 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.

It was no messenger or angel

but his presence that saved them;

in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them;

he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 148 (Congregation responds in **BOLD**.)

1 Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD from the heavens;

praise him in the heights!

2 Praise him, all his angels;

praise him, all his host!

3 Praise him, sun and moon;

praise him, all you shining stars!

4 Praise him, you highest heavens

and you waters above the heavens!

5 Let them praise the name of the LORD,

for he commanded and they were created.

6 He established them forever and ever;

he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

7 Praise the LORD from the earth,

you sea monsters and all deeps,

8 fire and hail, snow and frost,

stormy wind fulfilling his command!

9 Mountains and all hills,

fruit trees and all cedars!

10 Wild animals and all cattle,

creeping things and flying birds!

11 Kings of the earth and all peoples,

princes and all rulers of the earth!

12 Young men and women alike,

old and young together!

13 Let them praise the name of the LORD,

for his name alone is exalted;

his glory is above earth and heaven.

14 He has raised up a horn for his people,

praise for all his faithful,

for the people of Israel who are close to him.

Praise the LORD!

SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-7

Through Jesus' suffering and death, the trail to eternal salvation has been blazed for us. We do not fear death, because he has conquered the power of death. Thus Christ, our merciful and faithful high priest, has the final say over the destiny of our lives.

10 It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, 12 saying,

“I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.”

13 And again,

“I will put my trust in him.”

And again,

“Here am I and the children whom God has given me.”

14 Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. 16 For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. 17 Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. 18 Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand)

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Gospel Announcement

P: The Gospel according to St. Matthew, Chapter 2.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23

In a dream, Joseph is warned to flee to Egypt to protect the infant Jesus from the jealousy of Herod.

Now after [the magi] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” Then Joseph got up, took the child and his

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. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and 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.

P: Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: Blessed are you for the birth of creation. Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light. Blessed are you for your promise to your people. Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams. Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

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)

The Offering

Musical Offertory “*Jesus, Oh What a Wonderful Child*”

FSJ Chancel Choir, Jo-Anne Chrysochoos, Director of Music
Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician

(Please stand)

Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray. God of glory, great are your wonders among us and
many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for
the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in
your saving grace, through Christ our Savior.

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.**

mother by night, and went to Egypt and remained there until the death of
Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the
prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was
infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem
who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned
from the magi. Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah
was fulfilled:

¹⁸“A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”

When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream
to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go
to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.”
Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of
Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his
father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream,
he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town
called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might
be fulfilled, “He will be called a Nazarene.”

Gospel Response

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

(Please be seated)

Sermon

Pastor Rayl

Sermon Hymn

“*What Child Is This*”

No. 296

(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