

November 30, 2025

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

### What Does the Future Look Like?

This section of Matthew's gospel is often referred to as a "little apocalypse" because of its use of symbolic language in describing the Day of the Lord. The genre of apocalypse has taken on a second life in contemporary culture, characterized by movies and literature that feature zombies, nuclear annihilation, and alien invasions. However, in the first-century world, the apocalyptic genre simply referred to a style of writing that used rich symbolism to reveal the "truth" about the world, usually in dualistic terms.

This whole discourse results from Jesus, as a good teacher, answering his disciples' question: "Tell us," they said, "when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" (Matt. 24:3). But he doesn't give them the countdown calendar for which they were hoping. Instead, Jesus, and Paul following him, exhorts the faithful, "Keep awake!" (Matt. 24:42; cf. Rom. 13:11). Like a parent on a road trip telling their child, "We're getting closer," Paul writes in what may have been his final letter, "Salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers" (Rom. 13:11). But the truth remains: "About that day and hour no one knows" (Matt. 24:36).

Instead, in this season of Advent (literally, "arrival" or "emergence"), the faithful are called to be alert to all the ways in which God is *already* present in the history of Israel (Ps. 122:5; Isa. 2:3), in the incarnation of Christ (whose speech is at the center of Matthew's entire revelation), and in the light of Christ's body shared and proclaimed in the midst of the faithful from every generation (Rom. 13:12-14). The revelation of Christ is not a moment for which Christians are to count down in anticipation; it is one toward which we are to move with confidence. Because of God's faithfulness we can *already* go up to the house of the Lord (Ps. 122:1), learn God's ways and walk in God's paths (Isa. 2:3), beat our swords into plowshares (Isa. 2:4), and put on the "armor of light" (Rom. 13:12).

**First St. John Lutheran Church**

2471 Seaman Street

Toledo, Ohio 43605

419-691-7222

Email: [office@firststjohn.com](mailto:office@firststjohn.com)

Web site: [www.firststjohn.com](http://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



**November 30, 2025 - 8:00 am & 10:30 am**

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

**November 30, 2025**

**First 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](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!

**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.

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

**ELDERS**

Tom Gaskins  
Terry Ruedy

**READER**

**2025 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 14<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) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**The lights of the tree are then illuminated.**

P: May the God of glory fill our hearts with peace and joy, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

**"Tannenbaum"** Text: Ernst Anschütz, 1824 Melodie: Volksweise (Trad.) (Sung by the Congregation)

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree How steadfast are your branches!

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree How steadfast are your branches!

Your boughs are green in summer's time And through the snows of wintertime,

O Christmas Tree, o Christmas Tree How steadfast are your branches!

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree Your boughs can teach a lesson  
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree Your boughs can teach a lesson  
That constant faith and hope sublime Lend strength and comfort through all time

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree Your boughs can teach a lesson  
You bid us all to faithful be, To trust in God unchangingly.

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree, How strong and true God made you!

### **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.**

### **Dismissal**

P: God sends us in mission to the world

**C. Thanks be to God.**

### **Postlude**

*Dr. Anthony Pattin*

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## **ORDER OF WORSHIP—8:00 am**

**Prelude**

Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician

**Ringing of the Bell**

**Opening Hymn**

*"Jesus Shall Reign"*

No. 434

### **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.**

### **First Sunday in Advent Candle: Hope**

P: Every year we light candles as we prepare to celebrate the coming of Christ at Christmas. More and more candles, more and more light, as we watch and wait for Jesus, the Light of the World.

**C: God of Promise, come into our darkness. Renew your hope in us, for you alone bring life out of death**

P: Receive God's promise of hope from Psalm 33: "The eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine."

**C: We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love rest upon us, O LORD, even as we put our hope in you.**

*(Light the candle of hope)*

P: As we light the first candle on this wreath, wake us from our sleep, wrap us in your light, empower us to live honorably, and guide us along your path of peace.

**C: Let us walk in the light of the Lord. Amen.**

### **Hymn**

*"O Come, O Come Emmanuel" v. 1-2*

No. 257

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear. (Refrain)

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.

2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,  
embracing all things far and nigh:

in strength and beauty come and stay;  
teach us your will and guide our way. (*Refrain*)

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 your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your

### **Lighting the Christmas Tree**

P: Let us glorify Christ our light, who brings salvation and peace into our midst, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

P: Fellow people of God, amid signs and wonders Christ Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea: his birth brings joy to our hearts and enlightenment to our minds. With this tree, decorated and adorned in our sanctuary, may we welcome Christ among us; may its lights guide us to the perfect light.

P: A Reading from Ezekiel 17: 22-24.

*Thus says the Lord God: I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar; I will set it out. I will break off a tender one from the topmost of its young twigs; I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain. On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it, in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit, and become a noble cedar. Under it every kind of bird will live; in the shade of its branches will nest winged creatures of every kind. All the trees of the field shall know that I am the Lord. I bring low the high tree, I make high the low tree; I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish. I the Lord have spoken; I will accomplish it.*

P: The Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

P: Let us ask God to send his blessing upon us and upon this sign of our faith in the Lord.

**C: Lord, give light to our hearts.**

P: That this tree of lights may remind us of the tree of glory on which Christ accomplished our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

**C: Lord, give light to our hearts.**

P: That the joy of Christmas may always be in our homes, let us pray to the Lord.

**C: Lord, give light to our hearts.**

P: That the peace of Christ may dwell in our hearts and in the world, let us pray to the Lord.

**C: Lord, give light to our hearts.**

P: Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we illumine this tree. May the light and cheer it gives be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts. May all who delight in this tree come to the knowledge and joy of salvation. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

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.

*(Please be seated)*

*(Please be seated)*

### **The Offering**

#### **Musical Offertory**

*“Thankful”* FSJ Chancel Choir  
Jo-Anne Chrysochoos, Director of Music  
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.**

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

P: God of grace,

**C: receive our prayer.**

#### **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.

merciful protection save us from the threatening dangers of our sins, and  
enlighten our walk in the way of your salvation, for you live and reign with  
the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

*(Please be seated)*

### **Announcements**

#### **Introduction**

The new church year begins with a wake-up call: Christ is coming  
soon! In today’s readings both Paul and Jesus challenge us to  
wake from sleep, for we know neither the day nor hour of the  
Lord’s coming. Isaiah proclaims the day when God will gather all  
people on the holy mountain and there will be no more war or  
suffering. Though we vigilantly watch for the promised day of  
salvation, we wait for what we already have: Christ comes among  
us this day as the word and meal that strengthens our faith in the  
promises of God.

#### **FIRST READING: Isaiah 2:1-5**

*The visionary message presented in this reading focuses on a future day  
when God establishes a universal reign of peace. Divine decisions will  
make war obsolete, and the worshiping community responds: “Let us  
walk in the light of that Lord now!”*

<sup>1</sup>The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup>In days to come

the mountain of the LORD’s house  
shall be established as the highest of the mountains

and shall be raised above the hills;  
all the nations shall stream to it.

<sup>3</sup>Many peoples shall come and say,

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,

to the house of the God of Jacob,

that he may teach us his ways

and that we may walk in his paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction

and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

<sup>4</sup>He shall judge between the nations

and shall arbitrate for many peoples;

they shall beat their swords into plowshares

and their spears into pruning hooks;

nation shall not lift up sword against nation;

neither shall they learn war any more.

<sup>5</sup>O house of Jacob,

come, let us walk

in the light of the LORD!

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 122, (Congregation responds in BOLD.)**

<sup>1</sup> I was glad when they said to me,  
“Let us go to the house of the LORD!”  
<sup>2</sup> **Our feet are standing  
within your gates, O Jerusalem.**  
<sup>3</sup> Jerusalem—built as a city  
that is bound firmly together.  
<sup>4</sup> **To it the tribes go up,  
the tribes of the LORD,  
as was decreed for Israel,**  
to give thanks to the name of the LORD.  
<sup>5</sup> For there the thrones for judgment were set up,  
the thrones of the house of David.  
<sup>6</sup> **Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:  
“May they prosper who love you.**  
<sup>7</sup> Peace be within your walls  
and security within your towers.”  
<sup>8</sup> **For the sake of my relatives and friends  
I will say, “Peace be within you.”**  
<sup>9</sup> For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,  
I will seek your good.

**SECOND READING: Romans 13:11-14**

*Paul compares the advent of Christ to the coming of dawn. We live our lives today in light of Christ’s coming in the future*

<sup>11</sup> Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is already the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; <sup>12</sup> the night is far gone; the day is near. Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; <sup>13</sup> let us walk decently as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in illicit sex and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup> Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

*(Please stand)*

**Gospel Announcement**

P: The Gospel according to St. Luke, Chapter 24.

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

**GOSPEL: Matthew 24:36-44**

*Jesus describes his second coming as a sudden, turbulent event that will bring about deep change to our normal, day-to-day lives. Therefore, he*

*urges people to stay awake, be aware, and wait expectantly, because the Son of Man will come unannounced.*

[Jesus said to the disciples,] <sup>36</sup> “About that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>37</sup> For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so, too, will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>40</sup> Then two will be in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. <sup>41</sup> Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken, and one will be left. <sup>42</sup> Keep awake, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. <sup>43</sup> But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. <sup>44</sup> Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

**Gospel Response**

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

*(Please be seated)*

**SERMON**

Pastor Rayl

**Sermon Hymn**

*“Fling Wide the Door”*

No. 259

*(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;