

First St. John Lutheran Church

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Rev. Jerald K. Rayl, Pastor

Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician
Jo-Anne Chrysochoos, Director of Music
Cheri Sergent, Bell Choir, Director
Jessica Miller, Office Manager



October 18, 2026

21st Sunday After Pentecost

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

8:00 am	Early Worship
9:15 am	Adult Sunday School
10:30 am	JAM 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 You are welcome to sit with your child downstairs as needed. 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.

Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community

October 18, 2026 - 10:30 am

ORDER OF WORSHIP—10:30 am

Prelude Dr. Anthony Pattin

Ring of the Bell

Opening Hymn "Alleluia, Song of Gladness" No. 318

Rite of Holy Baptism

(Please use insert in the bulletin and make responses as indicated)

Hymn "We are Baptized in Christ Jesus" v. 1-2 No. 451
(printed below)

We are baptized in Christ Jesus, we are baptized in his death; that as Christ is raised victorious, we might live a brand new life. And if we have been united in a dreadful death like his, we will all be reunited, for he lives.

In the water and the witness, in the breaking of the bread, in the waiting arms of Jesus who is risen from the dead, God has made a new beginning from the ashes of our past; in the losing and the winning we hold fast.

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:

Hymn "We are Baptized in Christ Jesus" v. 3 No. 451
(printed below)

Glory be to God the Father, glory be to Christ the Son, glory to the Holy Spirit, ever three and ever one; as it was in the beginning, glory now resounds again in a song that has no ending. Amen

The Greeting and Prayer

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray. Sovereign God, raise your throne in our hearts. Created by you, let us live in your image; created for you, let us act for your glory; redeemed by you, let us give you what is yours, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

(Please be seated)

Announcements

Children's Message

Introduction

In today's first reading God uses the Gentile ruler Cyrus to accomplish divine purposes. When the Pharisees try to trap Jesus, he tells them to give the emperor what belongs to him and to God what belongs to God. To gather for worship reminds us that our ultimate allegiance is to God rather than to any earthly authority. Created in the image of God, we offer our entire selves in the service of God and for the sake of the world.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 45:1-7

The prophet announces that Cyrus the Persian emperor is the one the Lord has anointed to end Israel's exile. The Lord makes this choice so that the whole world will recognize this Lord as the only God. Persia had a god of light and a god of darkness; the Lord claims sovereignty over both light and darkness.

¹Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their robes, to open doors before him—and the gates shall not be closed: ²I will go before you and level the mountains; I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron; ³I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places, so that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name. ⁴For the sake of my servant Jacob and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name; I give you a title, though you do not know me. ⁵I am the Lord, and there is no other; besides me there is no god. I arm you, though you do not know me, ⁶so that they may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is no one besides me; I am the Lord, and there is no other. ⁷I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe; I the Lord do all these things.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 96:1-13 *(congregation responds in BOLD)*

O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.

² **Sing to the Lord; bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.**

³ Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples.

⁴ **For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; he is to be revered above all gods.**

⁵ For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the Lord made the heavens.

⁶ **Honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.**

⁷ Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

⁸ **Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts.**

⁹ Worship the Lord in holy splendor; tremble before him, all the earth.

¹⁰ **Say among the nations, "The Lord is king! The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity."**

¹¹ Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar and all that fills it;

¹² **let the field exult and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy**

¹³ before the Lord, for he is coming, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with his truth.

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Most likely this letter is the first written by Paul. Paul gives pastoral encouragement and reassurances to new Christians living in an antagonistic environment. Their commitment of faith, love, and hope makes them a model for other new Christian communities.

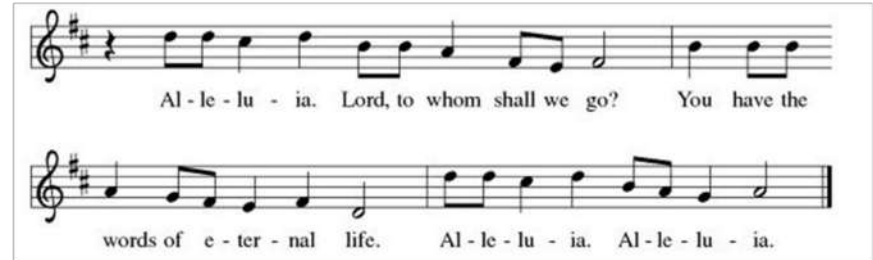
¹ Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. ² We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly ³ remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵ because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶ And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy from the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸ For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. ⁹ For they report about us what kind of welcome we had among you and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand)

Alleluia Verse *(sung in unison)*



Gospel Announcement

P: The Gospel according to St. Matthew, Chapter 22.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 22:15-22

After Jesus begins teaching in the temple, religious leaders try to trap him with questions. First they ask if God's people should pay taxes to an earthly tyrant like Caesar.

¹⁵ The Pharisees went and plotted to entrap [Jesus] in what he said. ¹⁶ So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one, for you do not regard people with partiality. ¹⁷ Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" ¹⁸ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹ Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰ Then he said to them, "Whose head is this and whose title?" ²¹ They answered, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." ²² When they heard this, they were amazed, and they left him and went away.

Gospel Response

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated)

SERMON

Pastor Rayl

Sermon Hymn "Take My Life, That I May Be" No. 685

The Offering

Musical Offertory "One Song in Praise"
FSJ Chancel Choir
Jo-Anne Chrysochoos, Director

Offertory Response – (sung by the congregation, as the offering plates are brought forward to the Altar).



Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re-new a right
not your Ho-ly Spir-it from me. Re-store to me the joy of
your sal-va-tion, and up-hold me with your free Spir-it.

Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray. God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always.

C: Amen.

Pastoral Prayer (Each petition concludes with this response)

P: Hear us, O Lord,

C: your mercy is great.

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.

Blessing

P: Like children held in the arms of Jesus, receive the blessing:
The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you
with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and (+)
give you peace.

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn "God of Grace and God of Glory" No. 705

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve your neighbor with joy.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Dr. Anthony Pattin

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

ELDERS

Bob Haar
Sherrie Haar

READER

Carol Haar

SOUND BOARD

Beth Hugueley

FIND YOUR PLACE AT FIRST ST JOHN

Check anything that interests you. You can choose more than one—and you don't have to commit today.

MUSIC	■ Adult Choir ■ Bell Choir ■ Organ/Piano ■ Worship
FAITH & PRAYER	■ Prayer Chain ■ Adult Sunday School ■ J.A.M. ■ Readers ■ Youth
CHILDREN & YOUTH	■ Nursery ■ Scouting ■ VBS ■ Youth Ministry
HELPING OTHERS	■ Personal Needs Pantry ■ Feed Your Neighbor ■ WELCA ■ Bereavement
FRIENDSHIP & FELLOWSHIP	■ Hannah Circle ■ Rebecca Circle ■ Miriam Circle ■ Ruth Circle ■ Dartball
HANDS-ON / BEHIND THE SCENES	■ Quilters ■ Altar Guild ■ Library ■ VBS Team ■ Event Help
COMMUNITY	■ East Toledo outreach ■ Community partners ■ Other service
RECONNECTING	■ Worship ■ Coffee/conversation ■ Prayer ■ I want someone to contact me

Something else I would enjoy: _____

I'd like someone to contact me about: _____

Name (optional): _____ Phone/Email: _____

Remember: You don't have to do everything. Find one thing that fits you, try it, and see where it leads.

PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY

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		

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.



God's Due

What are "God's things?" Are they spiritual rather than material? Are they religious rather than secular? Do they belong to the Sunday world rather than the Monday world?

In today's gospel Jesus is confronted with a question meant to trap him. "Is it lawful to pay taxes . . . or not?" hardly sounds like a trick question to us. But in Jesus' world taxes supported a foreign occupation, and so this question has political overtones. "Jesus, are you a collaborator with the Romans (or are you a revolutionary)?"

Jesus' answer cleverly avoids the trap while shifting the focus to its proper object: "Give to God the things that are God's." Jesus answers a thorny question by reminding us that some things matter more than others. The emperor's claims, as weighty as they may be, are not the ultimate demand upon us. Caesar's authority goes no further than his face on a coin. "The things that are God's" know no limits! The coin, the emperor, the empire--*all* are God's!

Giving God what belongs to God cannot be calculated by a formula or worked out as a percentage. God's due includes everything--all that I have, all that I am. It includes my possessions, my money, my skills, my personality, my relationships, my history, and my future. All of it is God's. It is not that God is greedy. The bottom line is that, simply, God is God. And that makes us stewards. All that we have, all that we are, all that has been entrusted to our care, is evidence of God's lavish and extravagant generosity. We offer these good gifts--our lives and our possessions--as the hymn of praise we sing to the God who holds the universe.