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



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

November 22, 2026 - 10:30 am

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.

Restroms: 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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ORDER OF WORSHIP—10:30 am

Prelude

Ringing of the Bell

Opening Hymn *"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name!"* No. 634

Confession and Forgiveness

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

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity (☩) one God, who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth.
C: Amen.

P: Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith, let us confess our sin.

(Silence is kept for reflection)

P: Compassionate God,
C: we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice. Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others. Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.

P: Hear this good news: We have peace with God through (☩) Jesus Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. Receive freely this healing gift of grace.
C: Amen.

Sharing of the Peace

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:

"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."

Prayer of the Day

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also, with you.

P: O God of power and might, your Son shows us the way of service, and in him we inherit the riches of your grace. Give us the wisdom to know what is right and the strength to serve the world you have made, 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

Bells *"Give Thanks"* *FSJ Bell Choir*
Cheri Sergent, Director

Children's Message

Introduction

On this final Sunday of the church year our gospel is Jesus' great story of judgment. In the end, the faithful are those who served Christ by ministering to those who are poor, hungry, naked, sick, or estranged. In the first reading God is the shepherd who seeks the lost, weak, and injured and feeds them with justice. We gather this day to celebrate the reign of Christ and his victory over death, yet we await the consummation of all things yet to come. Acknowledging Christ as our merciful ruler, we go forth that his reign may be known in our loving words and deeds.

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

Because Israel's kings proved to be bad shepherds, Ezekiel declares that the Lord will assume the role of shepherd in Israel. The Lord will also set over them a shepherdmessiah, "my servant David," who will feed and care for the people.

11 Thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep and
will sort them out. 12 As shepherds sort out their flocks when they
are among scattered sheep, so I will sort out my sheep. I will
rescue them from all the places to which they have been
scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. 13 I will bring
them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries
and bring them into their own land, and I will feed them on the
mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited
parts of the land. 14 I will feed them with good pasture, and the
mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall
lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture
on the mountains of Israel. 15 I myself will be the shepherd of my
sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. 16 I will
seek the lost, and I will bring back the strays, and I will bind up
the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the
strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

[20] Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them: I myself will judge
between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. [21] Because you pushed
with flank and shoulder and butted at all the weak animals with
your horns until you scattered them far and wide, [22] I will save my
flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged, and I will judge
between sheep and sheep. [23] I will set up over them one shepherd,
my servant David, and he shall feed them; he shall feed them and
be their shepherd. [24] And I the Lord will be their God, and my
servant David shall be prince among them; I the Lord have
spoken.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.
C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 95:1-7 (*congregation responds in BOLD*)

[1] O come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
[2] Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!
[3] For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods.
[4] In his hand are the depths of the earth;
the heights of the mountains are his also.
[5] The sea is his, for he made it,
and the dry land, which his hands have formed.
[6] O come, let us worship and bow down;
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!
[7] For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture
and the sheep of his hand.
O that today you would listen to his voice!

SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:15-23

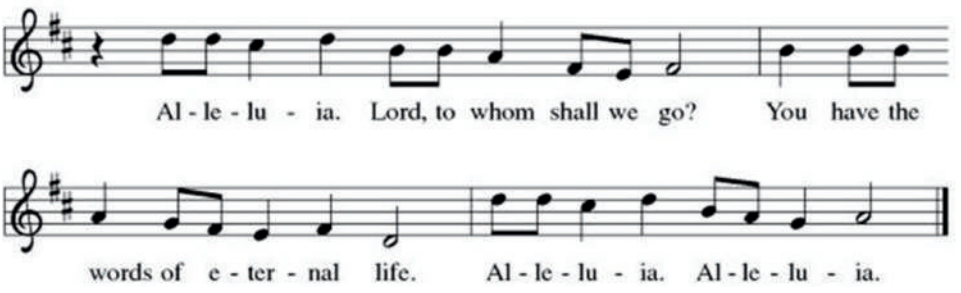
In this passage, God is praised for revealing ultimate divine power in raising Jesus from the dead. The resurrected, exalted Christ is Lord of both the church and the entire universe, now and in the age to come.

15 I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love
toward all the saints, and for this reason 16 I do not cease to give
thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers, 17 that the God
of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a
spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, 18 so
that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may perceive
what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches
of his glorious inheritance among the saints, 19 and what is the
immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe,
according to the working of his great power. 20 God put this
power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and
seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above
all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every
name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to
come. 22 And he has put all things under his feet and has made
him the head over all things for the church, 23 which is his body,
the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.
C: **Thanks be to God.**

(Please stand)

<u>Alleluia Verse</u> *(sung in unison)*



Gospel Acclamation

P: The Gospel according to St. Matthew, Chapter 25.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus compares himself to a king who moves among his subjects to see how he is treated: what is done for the least of those who belong to his family is truly done for him.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, 33 and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. 34 Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, 35 for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' 37 Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? 38 And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? 39 And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' 40 And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.' 41 Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You who are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, 42 for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

[44] Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you
hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and
did not take care of you?’ [45] Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I
tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you
did not do it to me.’ [46] And these will go away into eternal
punishment but the righteous into eternal life.”

Gospel Response

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.
C: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated)

SERMON Pastor Rayl

Sermon Hymn *“We Plow the Fields and Scatter”* No. 681

(please stand)

Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

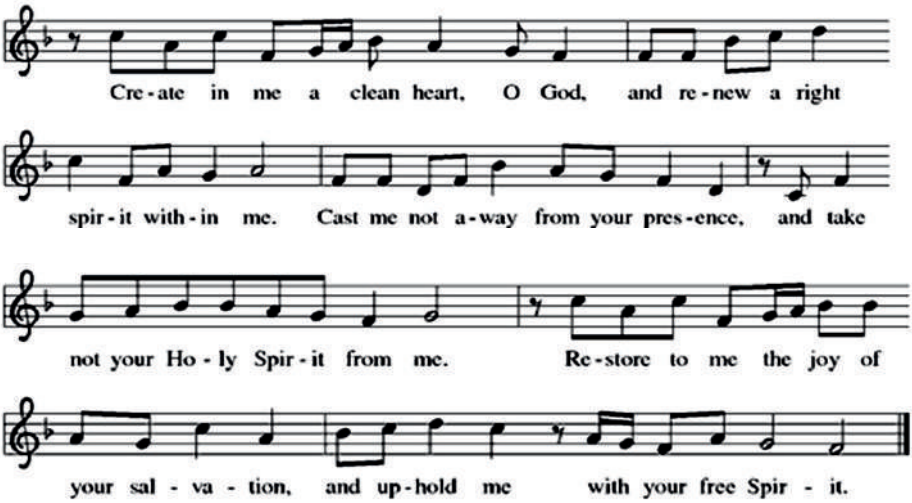
Pastoral Prayer *(Each petition concludes with this response)*

P: Hear us, O Lord,
C: your mercy is great.

The Offering

Musical Offertory *"A New Thanksgiving" FSJ Chancel Choir*
Jo-Anne Chrysochoos, Director

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



Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray. Merciful God, as grains of wheat scattered upon the hills were gathered together to become one bread, so let your church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom, for yours is the glory through Jesus Christ, now and forever.
C: Amen

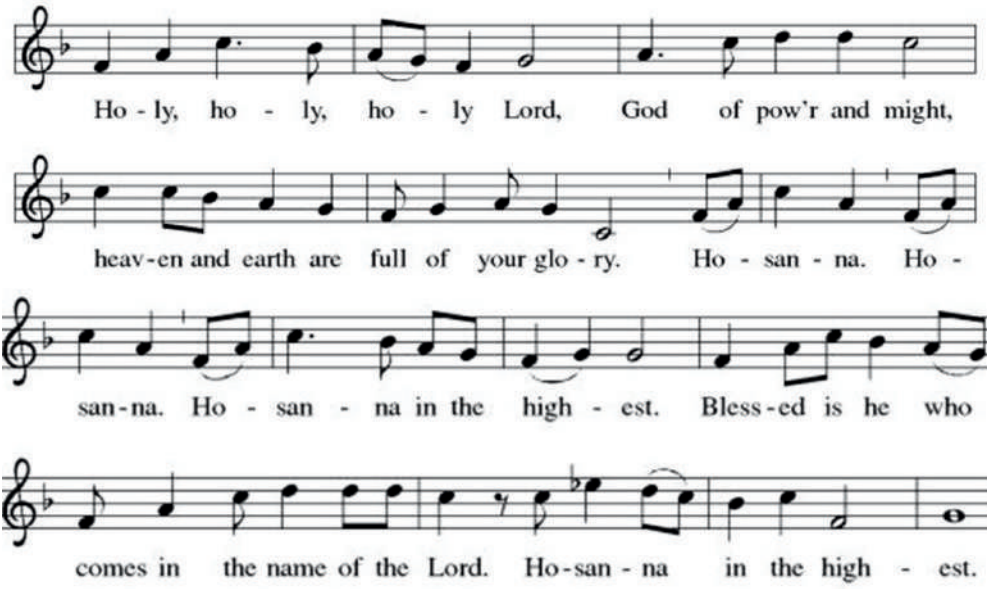
The Great Thanksgiving

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 and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



P: In the night in which He was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, 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. 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: The risen Christ invites us to this table.
C: Come, eat and be satisfied.

(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."

**** Please be certain to fill out a communion record card then put it in the offering plate or hand it to the usher when directed to go up to receive the bread and wine.*

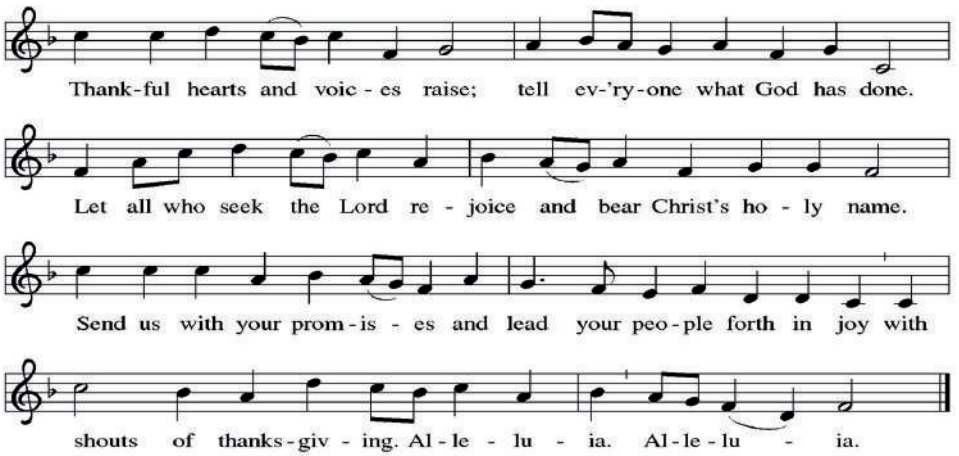
If you wish to receive apple juice instead of wine, place your hand over your shoulder as you approach the person distributing the wine.

(After all have received communion, please stand.)

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and sustain you in God's grace.

C: Amen.

Post Communion Response ***(sung in unison)***



Text: John W. Arthur, 1922-1980
Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923
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Prayer after Communion

P: Let us pray. We give you thanks, O God, that you welcome us to your table and satisfy our deepest hunger and thirst. By your gifts of word and holy meal, strengthen us to take up the cross as we go about our callings in this world, following after Jesus Christ, our servant Lord.

C: 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 *"Praise and Thanksgiving"* No. 689

Dismissal

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

C: Thanks be to God

Postlude Dr. Anthony Pattin

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PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

ELDERS

Bob Haar

Sherrie Haar

READER

Dwight Paul

SOUND BOARD

Mark Ackerman



2026 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 13th.

****

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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A Divine Will

God wants to leave us an inheritance. But how do we get an inheritance from God? An inheritance comes after somebody dies. Ah, now we get closer to the heart of the matter! Can God die? It would not seem so, but God did die. That is what the cross of Jesus is all about. God died and left us an inheritance.

Thinking about today's gospel reading this way puts a different spin on Jesus' words: "I was hungry, thirsty, sick, and in prison." Jesus was dying for a long time. Jesus came among us not only to share in our life but to share in our dying as well. Through Jesus we know that God refuses to distance the divine self from our suffering, our pain, even our death. God has decided to share everything in the human experience--even the grave.

"Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom!" What a blessing this is, that God loves us so deeply that even our dying cannot be separated from God. In Jesus God enters so deeply into the pain of the human condition that we can find God even in the places that appear most God-forsaken. God in a soup kitchen? God in a jail cell? God in a cancer ward? Yes!

The inheritance we receive from God is more than a promise of happy days ahead. God's will is to meet us even in those places where we would never expect to find God. Jesus reigns even in the places of suffering and death. It is the divine will that you should meet God where you never expected to see God.

"I was there! Didn't you see me? No? Look more closely. I am there, present in human need, ready to bless you with the inheritance that has been prepared for you."