



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 21, 2025 | 10:30am

Welcome to St. John's. We invite you to join us as an active participant in the worship of God.

PRELUDE

Cold December flies away

LUTHERINGS

We stand.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

In the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the aid of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone.

Give us the power of your Holy Spirit, that attentive to your Word, we may confess our sins, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Gracious God,

**have mercy on us. In your compassion, forgive our sins,
known and unknown, things done and left undone.**

**Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you
in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.**

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins
through ✝ Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness,
and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

Amen.

HYMN AT THE PROCESSION

Fling wide the door

HYMN 259

ADVENT WREATH: THE BLESSING OF THE CANDLES

Praise to you, O God, who lives with us,
sharing our flesh and bones.

As Mary waited and Joseph dreamed,
so we dream and wait for you.

Bless us and let your face shine upon us,
more radiant than these candles,
and more dear than all else we seek.

Restore us when we fail to refuse the evil and choose the good,
and banish all our fears.

We pray in the name of Emmanuel,
your promised child and our Savior.
Amen.



GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

KYRIE

Cantor: All: Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Cantor: All: Christ, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy.

Cantor: All: Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

We sit.

THE BEST OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Presented by the children and choir of St. John's

Inger Ruffles, narrator

Melissa Bartles, costumes and coordinator

We kneel or sit for the prayers.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

After each intercession:

Merciful God,

receive our prayer

We stand.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

We sit.

GREETINGS

MEAL

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

Walk in love, as Christ loved us
and gave himself for us,
an offering and sacrifice to God.



OFFERTORY HYMN

The angel Gabriel

HYMN 265

We stand.

HYMN AT THE PRESENTATION

PUER NOBIS

All praise to you, eternal Son,
Whose advent has our freedom won,
Whom with the Father we adore,
And Holy Spirit, evermore.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

**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

Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us.

Therefore, let us keep the feast.

All who believe that Jesus is present in the bread and wine, forgiving sin and promising eternal life, are welcome to the Table of the Lord. Gluten-free wafers are available if requested.

We sit.

MUSIC AT THE DISTRIBUTION

ANTHEM

See amid the winter's snow

Cheryl Milukas, handbells

We stand.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray.

God for whom we wait,

in this meal, you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, **✠** Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!

Thanks be to God.

We sit.

SANTA LUCIA PROCESSION

Hymn Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

Verse 1 is sung by the children.

2. The watchers on the mountain
proclaim the bridegroom near;
go forth as he approaches
with alleluias clear.

The marriage feast is waiting;
the gates wide open stand.
Arise, O heirs of glory;
the bridegroom is at hand.

3. The saints, who here in patience
their cross and sufferings bore,
shall live and reign forever
when sorrow is no more.
Around the throne of glory
the Lamb they shall behold;
in triumph cast before him
their diadems of gold.

4. 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!

THE SWEDISH TRADITION OF LUCIA

Song of the Swedish Children – “Ritsch, Ratsch”

Grandfather's Song – “Jul, Jul”

Dance of the Tomtes – “Hej Tomtegubbar”

March of the Bakers – “Goder afton”

Song of the Troubadour – “Santa Lucia”

Lucia of Old – “Of the Father's Love Begotten”

Lucia's Procession – “Santa Lucia”

1. Santa Lucia,
Thy light is glowing
Through darkest winter night,
Comfort bestowing!
Dreams float on wings bedight
Comes then the morning light.
Santa Lucia! Santa Lucia!

3. Santa Lucia,
Christmas foretelling,
Fill hearts with hope and cheer.
Dark fears dispelling,

2. Through silent winter gloom
Thy song comes winging
To waken earth anew
Glad carols bringing
Come, thou, O Queen of Light,
Wearing thy crown so bright.
Santa Lucia!
Santa Lucia!

Bring to the world again
Peace, and good will to men.
Santa Lucia!
Santa Lucia!

Hymn “Prepare the Royal Highway”

1

Prepare the royal highway;
the King of kings is near!
Let ev'ry hill and valley
a level road appear!
Then greet the King of glory,
foretold in sacred story:

Refrain

Hosanna to the Lord,
for he fulfills God's word!

2

God's people, see him coming:
your own eternal king!
Palm branches strew before him!
Spread garments! Shout and sing!
God's promise will not fail you!
No more shall doubt assail you!

Refrain

3

Then fling the gates wide open
to greet your promised king!
Your king, yet ev'ry nation
its tribute too may bring.
All lands will bow before him;
their voices join your singing:

Refrain

4

His is no earthly kingdom;
it comes from heav'n above.
His rule is peace and freedom
and justice, truth, and love.
So let your praise be sounding
for kindness so abounding:

Refrain

Hosanna to the Lord,
for he fulfills God's word!

+

Narrator - Isaac Ylitalo

Tomtes, Bakers, and Star Children – St. John's Sunday School Children

Troubadour – Gary Olson

Grandfather – Mike Mahler

Lucia of Old – Rebecca Albrecht

Lucia – Charlotte Dianis

Lucia's Court – Emily Brandt and Liz Ylitalo

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Please help decorate for Christmas following this morning's service. We need assistance putting lights in the windows, wreaths at the back of the church, wreaths on the front doors, and carrying out the outdoor manger scene. Then everyone is welcome to join the chili luncheon in the Welcome Room.

Worship Leaders Today

Celebrant & Preacher	The Rev ^d Martha McCreight
Organist	Cantor Nathan K. Lively-Greyling
Worship Assistant	Eric Lane
Communion Assistant	Jennifer Leffers
Acolyte	
Usher	
Altar Committee	Sheila Koch
Counters	J. Geils, Janet Halpin
Little Free Pantry	
Coffee Hour	Camilla & Mike Medeiros

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

24	5:00 pm Family Eucharist and Blessing of the Creche
	9:00 pm Prelude 9:30 pm Choral Eucharist
25	10:00 am Christmas Mass in Chapel
28	10:30 am single service Congregational Lessons & Carols

Dates to Remember

December 28	10:30 am Single Worship Sunday - Lessons & Carols
January 4	8:30 & 10:30 am Epiphany Worship (put away decorations after 10:30 service)

MITTEN TREE

Our Mitten Tree is up in the narthex in the back of the sanctuary. Donations of mittens (gloves), scarves, and hats will be accepted through the **first week of January**. All donations go to Family Centers. Please help make this a warmer winter for those in need. If you have any questions, please contact Michele Effren at 203-515-0843 or meffren0703@gmail.com.

Finance Committee Update



We at St. John's are grateful for our congregation's generous giving, especially during this Christmas season. As the year comes to a close, we still face an offering shortfall, and current projections show we will fall below our budget. If you're able to give a little extra this season, we sincerely thank you — your support sustains our church and its mission.

St. John's Holiday office hours:

Closed Friday, December 26 | December 31 and January 1



Start off the new year by unloading those extra Christmas cookies and treats. Bring them to share at the coffee hour on Sunday, December 28, following the single 9:30 am service of worship.

Christmas @ St John's



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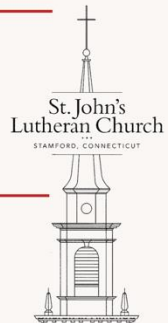
CHRISTMAS EVE
**5PM - FAMILY SERVICE &
BLESSING OF THE CRECHE**
CHILDREN ARE INVITED TO WEAR
PAJAMAS!
9:00PM- PRELUDE
9:30PM - CHORAL EUCHARIST

25

CHRISTMAS DAY
10AM - CHAPEL

28

**LESSONS &
CAROLS**
10:30AM



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