



St. John's Lutheran Church Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 3, 2023 | 10:30am



Stir up your power, and come! The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.

WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Congregation of St. John's Lutheran Church Stamford CT is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Munsee Lenape, Schaghticoke, Mohican, and Wappinger peoples. We give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial and wish to recognize and honor all our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.



It is a joy to have you worship at St. John's Lutheran! As we gather to praise God, we trust that the Spirit will make Jesus known in our midst, draw us ever closer to God's grace, and equip us for service and witness in the world.

If you are a visitor, please sign the guest register near the main entrance of the church. If you are looking for a church home, contact the pastor for information about St. John's Lutheran.

Check out the website of St. John's Lutheran Church for information about the array of ministries and mission initiatives of the congregation. www.stjohnelca.org

If you or someone you know is in the hospital or in need of pastoral care, please call the church office at 203-322-0066.

Children

We welcome families with children to our worship.
To assist you, please know:

- † Parents, if you need to take a break with your little one, there is a nursery room in the back of the church.
- † During the offering, children may bring coins to the receptacle on the chancel steps.



MISSION STATEMENT

All are welcome! We share Christ's love, grow in faith, and serve others.

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

The prelude signals a time for silent prayer and meditation.

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

Let us come before God in confession.

Gracious God,

have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ☩ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

Amen.

*HYMN AT THE PROCESSION

Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending



1 Lo! he comes, with clouds de - scend - ing, once for
 2 Ev - ery eye shall now be - hold him, robed in
 3 Those dear to - kens of his pas - sion still his
 4 Yea, a - men! let all a - dore thee, high on



our sal - va - tion slain; thou - sand thou - sand
 dread - ful ma - jes - ty; those who set at
 daz - zling bo - dy bears, cause of end - less
 thine e - ter - nal throne; Sa - vior, take the



saints at - tend - ing swell the tri - umph of his
 nought and sold him, pierced, and nailed him to the
 ex - ul - ta - tion to his ran - somed wor - ship -
 power and glo - ry; claim the king - dom for thine



train: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
 tree, deep - ly wail - ing, deep - ly wail - ing,
 ers; with what rap - ture, with what rap - ture,
 own: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!



Al - le - lu - ia! Christ the Lord re - turns to reign.
 deep - ly wail - ing, shall the true Mes - si - ah see.
 with what rap - ture gaze we on those glo - rious scars!
 Al - le - lu - ia! Thou shalt reign, and thou a - lone.

*LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

Keep awake. Stay alert. The kingdom of God is near.

We are God's partners in hope.

The days are surely coming when God will fulfill the promise.

We are God's partners in hope.

A righteous branch will spring up and will bring forth justice.

We are God's partners in hope.

Stand up. Raise your hands. Your redemption is drawing near.

We are God's partners in hope.

As we light the first Advent candle, the candle of hope, may we be partners in hope, witnesses to the promise that hope is coming in the One born into the world.

Based on Jeremiah 33:14-16 and Luke 21:25-36

*Sing **Verse 1** of "Hope Is a Candle" as the first candle is lit.*

The musical score is written for a single voice part in 3/4 time. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is composed of quarter and eighth notes. Below the staff, there are five lines of lyrics, numbered 1 through 5. The second system also has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The melody continues with quarter and eighth notes. Below the staff, there are four lines of lyrics. The bottom of the page shows the beginning of a bass staff with a key signature of one flat, but it is not fully written.

1 Hope is a can - dle, once lit by the proph - ets,
2 Peace is a can - dle, to show us a path - way,
3 Love is a can - dle whose light makes a cir - cle,
4 Joy is a can - dle of mys - tery and laugh - ter,
5 Christ is the light that the pro - phets a - wait - ed,

nev - er con - sumed, though it burns through the years;
threat - ened by gusts from our rage and our greed.
where ev - ery face is the face of a friend.
mys - tery of light that is born in the dark;
Christ is the li - on, the lamb, and the child.

dim in the day - light of pow - er and priv - ilege—
 Friend, feel no en - vy for those in the shad - ows—
 Wid - en the cir - cle by shar - ing and giv - ing—
 laugh - ter at hear - ing the voice of an an - gel,
 Christ is the love and the mys - tery and laugh - ter—

when they are gone, hope will shine on.
 vi - olence and force their dead end course.
 God's ho - ly dare: love ev - ery - where.
 ev - er so near, cast - ing out fear.
 can - dles, make way! Christ is the day.

Words by Richard Leach, music by Rusty Edwards. © 1996 by Selah Publishing Co. Inc.
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***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.

***THE GREAT LITANY**

HYMN 238

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.
 Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection alert us to the
 threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem us for your life of justice, for you live and
 reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING

ISAIAH 64:1-9

A reading from Isaiah.

O **THAT** you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—
²as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
³When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
⁴From ages past no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for him.
⁵You meet those who gladly do right,
those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned;
because you hid yourself we transgressed.
⁶We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
⁷There is no one who calls on your name,
or attempts to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.
⁸Yet, O Lord, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
⁹Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord,
and do not remember iniquity forever.
Now consider, we are all your people.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL PSALM

PSALM 80:1-7, 17-19

Sung by the choir. Music by Sarah MacDonald (contemporary).

- ¹ Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; *
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.
- ² In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, *
stir up your strength and come to help us.
- ³ Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.
- ⁴ O Lord God of hosts, *
how long will you be angered
despite the prayers of your people?
- ⁵ You have fed them with the bread of tears; *
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.
- ⁶ You have made us the derision of our neighbors, *
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.
- ⁷ Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.
- ¹⁶ Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, *
the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.
- ¹⁷ And so will we never turn away from you; *
give us life, that we may call upon your Name.
- ¹⁸ Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

SECOND READING

I CORINTHIANS 1:3-9

A reading from First Corinthians.

I GIVE thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—⁶just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—⁷so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Come, Lord, our Savior, Jesus Christ;
Our hearts are open wide in trust.
O show us now your lovely grace,
Upon our sorrows shine your face,
And let your Holy Spirit guide
Our journey in your grace so wide.
We praise your holy name,
From age to age the same!

***GOSPEL**

MARK 13:24-37

The holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

JESUS said: ²⁴“In those days, after that suffering,
the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light,
²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and
glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds,
from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts
forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things
taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this
generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and
earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the
Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time
will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his
slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the
watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house
will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he
may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all:
Keep awake.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

*HYMN OF THE DAY

Wake, awake for night is flying



1 Wake, a - wake, for night is fly - ing, the watch-men
2 Zi - on hears the watch-men sing - ing, and in her
3 Now let all the heav'ns a - dore you, and saints and



on the heights are cry - ing; a - wake, Je - ru - sa - lem, at last.
heart new joy is spring - ing. She wakes, she ris - es from her gloom,
an - gels sing be - fore you. The harps and cym-bals all u - nite.



Mid - night hears the wel - come voic - es, and at the
for her Lord comes down all glo - rious, the strong in
Of one pearl each shin - ing por - tal, where, dwell - ing



thrill - ing cry re - joic - es: "Come forth, you maid - ens! Night is past.
grace, in truth vic - to - rious. Her star is ris'n; her light is come.
with the choir im - mor - tal, we gath - er round your daz - zling light.



The bride - groom comes! A - wake; your lamps with glad - ness take!"
Oh, come, you Bless - ed One, Lord Je - sus, God's own Son.
No eye has seen, no ear has yet been trained to hear,



Al - le - lu - ia! Pre - pare your - selves to meet the
Sing ho - san - na! We go un - til the halls we
what joy is ours! Cre - scen - dos rise; your halls re -



Lord, whose light has stirred the wait - ing guard.
view where you have bid us dine with you.
sound; ho - san - nas blend in cos - mic sound.

***THE 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,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come 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.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

After each intercession:

Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

***PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

MEAL

OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Ave Verum

Stephanie Martin (contemporary)

OFFERTORY RESPONSE

PUER NOBIS

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

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should . . . *the pastor concludes the Preface* . . .
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their
unending hymn:

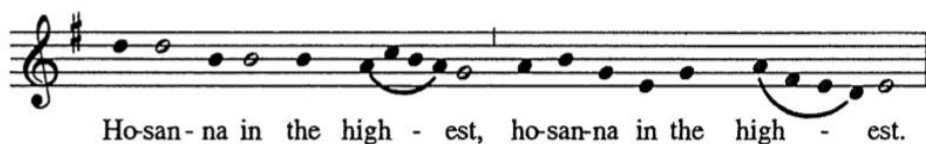


mp
Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and God of might.

mp
Heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry.

Ho-san-na in the high - est, ho-san-na in the high - est.

mp
Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.



THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

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.

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:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us,
full of grace and truth.

We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.

We look with hope for his coming.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit.

Come among us.

Bless this meal.

May your Word take flesh in us.
Awaken your people.
Fill us with your light.
Bring the gift of peace on earth.

Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours,
Holy One of Israel,
Word of God incarnate,
Power of the Most High,
one God, now and forever.

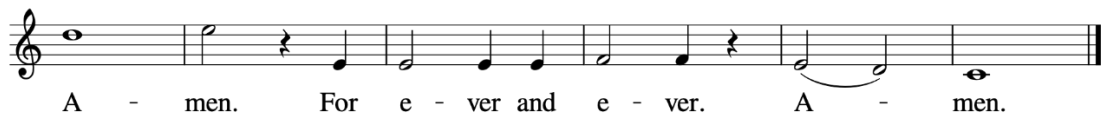
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

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



Our Fa - ther who art in__ hea - ven, Ha - llow'd be thy Name;
Thy king - dom come; thy will be__ done, on earth as it is in hea - ven.
Give us this day our__ dai - ly bread. And for - give us our tres - passes as
we for - give those who tres - pass a - gainst__ us. And lead us
not in - to temp - ta - tion, but de - li - ver us from e - vil. For thine is the
king - dom, the po - wer and the glo - ry, for e - ver and e - ver.



INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come now with joy to Emmanuel's table.
Feast at the banquet of hope and love.

Receiving Communion

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 upon request.

LAMB OF GOD

Cantor:
mp

1. Je - sus, wis - dom and might - y Lord:
2. Je - sus, true branch of Jes - se's tree: you
3. Key of Da - vid and Day-spring from on high:
4. De - sire of na - tions, our Em - man - u - el:

1.2.3. All:
take a-way the sins of the world, have mer-cy on us, have

4.
mer - cy on us. world, grant us

All:
peace, grant us peace.

MUSIC AT THE DISTRIBUTION

Anthem

E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come

MANZ

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

Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen.

*SANTA LUCIA PROCESSION

Narration

Children process to “Ritsch, Ratsch”

The Santa Lucia Court Processes and all sing.

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!

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!

3.Santa Lucia,
Christmas foretelling
Fill hearts with hope and cheer
Dark fears dispelling.
Bring to the world again
Peace, and good will to men.
Santa Lucia!
Santa Lucia!

“Goder afton”

1.Goder afton, goder afton
Både herre och fru!
Vi önskar eder alla
En fröjdefull jul!

Goo-der aftahn, gooder aftahn
Boh-de hair-reh oak fruh!
Vee oonskar aider ah-la
En froeh-de-full Yule

2.Good morning, good morning
All here in this house!
We greet you and wish you a blessed Yuletide!

Repeat verse one.

All join in singing:

Candles are shining bright, here in the darkness
When you come in the night, bringer of gladness.
Now is Lucia’s day; Let us all celebrate!
Santa Lucia, Santa Lucia!
Now is Lucia’s day; Let us all celebrate!
Santa Lucia, Santa Lucia!

Santa Lucia lights the tree and all are invited to join the procession to the Welcome Room for a Swedish reception!

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Service Music: Missa Emmanuel- Richard Proulx

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Original source: Mike Moyers, <https://www.mikemoyersfineart.com/>.

Worship Leaders Today

Celebrant & Preacher	The Rev. Dr. Duane C. Pederson
Organist	Cantor Nathan K. Lively-Greyling
Worship Assistant	Kathy Caraballo
Reader	Betsie Harkins
Acolytes	Addison Bartlett, Sofia Medeiros
Communion Assistants	Roberta Eichler, Anita Gallo
Ushers	Eric Lane
Counters	Charlie Enright, J. Geils, Janet Halpin
Altar Committee	Sheila Koch
Little Free Pantry	Cathy & Mike Mahler

Coffee/Fellowship Time

Our thanks to *Carla Haugen & Friends* for hosting the fellowship time following worship today in the Welcome Room. This time of hospitality is important as we connect with one another over coffee and treats. The Welcome Room is located directly beneath the sanctuary.

New worship assistant and acolyte robes



The Worship and Music Committee has chosen new robes for our acolytes and worship assistants to replace the current white robes, which are twenty years old. The new robes will match the same color as the current blue choir robes, making them interchangeable for different sizes and will also be fitted with a white scapular that is worn over the robe.

If you would like to contribute, each robe is \$235, and we need to order 12. Gifts of any size can be made to the church, marked “robes” in the memo.

A soft, painterly illustration of a nativity scene serves as the background. It depicts the Virgin Mary in a pink robe, the infant Jesus in a blue swaddling cloth, and several other figures, including shepherds and angels, in a field with trees and a star in the sky. The colors are muted and blended, creating a gentle, ethereal atmosphere.

NINE LESSONS & CAROLS

A LIVING CHRISTMAS

With music by JUNE NIXON, JESSICA NELSON, WILL TODD, PAUL HALLEY,
MORTEN LAURIDSEN, AND OTHERS

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8 | 7:30PM

St. Barnabas Episcopal, Greenwich

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 | 5PM

St. John's Lutheran, Stamford



2023 Christmas Decorations & Music Contributions Form

Help decorate the church and let the sanctuary walls ring with joyous carols of Christmas by making a financial contribution. Use this form to order poinsettias or to make a gift to the Special Music Fund. Indicate if your gift is in memory or in honor of a loved one.

Quantity _____ 10-inch, red poinsettia(s) @ (\$20 each). Total for poinsettia(s) \$ _____

_____ Please “check” if you will be taking home your poinsettia(s)

Poinsettias may be taken home following the 9:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service or after the 9:30 am service on Sunday, December 31.

\$ _____ Contribution to the Worship & Music Fund

All contributions may be designated in memory or in honor of a loved one.

~ PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY ~

Circle One: In Memory of:

In Honor of:

Name:

Name:

Given by:

This form, along with your contribution, must be placed in the offering plate or returned to the office no later than Sunday, December 17. Thank you!

Amount Enclosed: _____ Envelope Number: _____