

The  
desert  
shall  
rejoice  
and  
blossom

ISAIAH 35:1



St. John Lutheran Church, Ingomar  
2139 Enterprise Rd.  
PO Box 32  
West Alexandria, OH 45381  
937-839-5321  
[stjohningomar@swohio.twcbc.com](mailto:stjohningomar@swohio.twcbc.com)  
[www.stjohningomar.org](http://www.stjohningomar.org)  
Find us on Facebook!

## St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

We come together to love God and one another, Serve others, and Share God's Word.

We do these things by God's Grace that comes through the death and resurrection of His son, Jesus Christ.

**December 11, 2022**

**Holy Communion**

**Pastor Tim Swanson**

**Worship 10:00 am**

**Third Sunday in Advent**

**Ministers Members**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **PRELUDE**

### **GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

### **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.

**Blessed be God's name forever. Amen.**

Beloved, now is the time to wake from sleep.

Let us confront our sins, and confess them to the one who is merciful and just.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God of new beginnings,

**we confess that we have not welcomed your holy reign.**

**We have strayed from your paths.**

**We prepare for war instead of peace.**

**We dishonor one another and your creation.**

**Purify us with your refining fire and set us again on your way of love,**

**that we may bear fruit worthy of repentance, and welcome your coming among us.**

**Amen.**

People of God, a new thing is growing in our midst, a tender branch, a living sign.

By water and the Spirit you are joined to this wonder.

You have put on † Christ, and your sins have been washed away.

Rejoice in the way of the Lord.

**Amen.**

### **GATHERING SONG:**

**Prepare the Royal Highway**

**ELW 264**

## **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.**

## **LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH: ADVENT 2**

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.

Your prophets spoke of a day when the desert would blossom and waters would break forth in the wilderness. Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath.

Strengthen our hearts as we prepare for the coming of the Lord.

May he give water to all who thirst, for he is our light and our salvation.

Blessed be God forever.

**Amen.**

## **ADVENT PRAYER**

**Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel vs 5 & 6 ELW 257**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## **FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:1-10**

<sup>1</sup>The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus <sup>2</sup>it shall blossom abundantly,  
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the LORD,  
the majesty of our God.

<sup>3</sup>Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.

<sup>4</sup>Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
“Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.”

<sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;  
<sup>6</sup>then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.  
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;  
<sup>7</sup>the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

<sup>8</sup>A highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Holy Way;  
the unclean shall not travel on it,  
but it shall be for God's people;  
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.  
<sup>9</sup>No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.  
<sup>10</sup>And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 146:5-10**

<sup>5</sup>Happy are they who have the God of Jacob<sup>1</sup> for their help,  
whose hope is in the<sup>1</sup> LORD their God;  
<sup>6</sup>**who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that<sup>1</sup> is in them;**  
**who keeps promis-<sup>1</sup> es forever;**  
<sup>7</sup>who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to<sup>1</sup> those who hunger.  
The LORD sets the<sup>1</sup> captive free.  
<sup>8</sup>**The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who<sup>1</sup> are bowed  
down;**  
**the LORD<sup>1</sup> loves the righteous. R**



**Matthew 11:2-11** <sup>2</sup>When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup>and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” <sup>4</sup>Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup>the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. <sup>6</sup>And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

<sup>7</sup>As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup>What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. <sup>9</sup>What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup>This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way before you.’

<sup>11</sup>Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON**

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

**All Earth Is Hopeful**

**ELW 266**

## **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**

As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope.

*A brief silence.*

Gracious God, we rejoice in the gifts of your Spirit. We pray that, like John the Baptist, we will share the good news of Jesus and the love of God with boldness and humility and will invite all people to believe and be baptized into a new life in Christ, free from the confines of sin, despair and death. God, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Abundant God, we rejoice in your creation. Revive lands that have been squandered and depleted. Make gardens flourish in cities and neighborhoods. Cleanse polluted air and water so living things may breathe, drink, and praise you. God, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Righteous God, we rejoice in your justice. End racism and oppression. Deliver all who are unjustly imprisoned or persecuted. Reconcile nations and peoples in conflict, especially Peru and Ukraine. Help us pray for our enemies. God, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Healing God, we rejoice in your compassion. Comfort any in distress because of worry, illness, or loss (*especially*). Strengthen and protect health care workers, rescue teams, crisis counselors, and all who risk themselves to keep others safe. God, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Abiding God, we rejoice in your company. Give us calm and patient hearts as we gather with family and friends. Keep us mindful of those for whom this season is not happy. Console the grieving and surround them with loving support. God, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Faithful God, we rejoice with Mary, Mother of our Lord, and with all the saints, that your mercy endures for all generations. Look with favor on those who have died and lead us to joyfully sing of your everlasting promises. God, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

God of our longing, you know our deepest needs. By your Spirit, gather our prayers and join them with the prayers of all your children. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

## **PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.** Please share God's Peace.

## **OFFERING**

**OFFERING PRAYER**

Eternal God, you make the desert bloom and send springs of water to thirsty ground. Receive these simple gifts of bread, wine, and money, and make us messengers of your mercy and love for all in need of your healing and justice. We ask this through Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

**DIALOGUE**

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.**

**PREFACE**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san - na in the high - est.



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



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

## **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**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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**

Be strong, do not fear!  
Here is your God, who has come to save you.

### **COMMUNION**

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Faithful God, in this meal you have remembered your mercy, bringing heaven to earth in the body and blood of Christ. As we wait for the day when all your promises will be fulfilled, sustain us and strengthen us by this holy mystery. Guide us toward your promised future, coming to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.  
**Amen.**

### **BLESSING**

God the eternal Word, who dwells with us in Jesus, and who holds us in the grace of the Holy Spirit, ✠ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

### **SENDING SONG**

**People, Look East**

**ELW 248**

### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace, **To LOVE, SERVE, and SHARE God's word.**

## Worship Assistants

**Musician – Jenny Dawson**

**Altar Guild – Becky Stockslager**

**Lay Reader & Communion Assistant– Stephanie Cotterman**

**Ushers – Mark McKinley, Scott Hittle, Bill Dafler, Steve Dafler**

## Church Records

In order to LOVE, SERVE and SHARE God's Word in 2022, we commit to regular attendance at worship and Sunday school, to time spent in service to others, and daily Bible reading and prayer. As God blesses us with what we need, we respond with gifts that support God's work at St. John's. In order to meet current expenses, we have committed to monetary gifts totally almost \$2096 a week.

***Statistics for December 4, 2022***

***Attendance at worship: 31***

Current	\$1740.00
Benevolence	310.00
Disaster	50.00
Success Lunch	125.00
World Hunger	75.00
Total	\$2200.00

## Announcements

**A vote was taken by council on November 9 to not have  
Christmas Day Sunday worship service this year.**

***Altar Flowers today are given in honor of Dave and Nancy Wright's anniversary.  
Coffee cake and fellowship after the service down stairs. All are welcome!***

**2023 Offering Envelopes** are ready for pick-up at the back of the sanctuary.

**Adopted Families Christmas** – St. John has adopted two families again for Christmas giving. You may place gifts (name tags attached) and food on the table in fellowship hall no later than December 18.

**Bible Study** - Monday evenings at 6:30 pm. Pastor Tim leads the group in a study on the book of Galatians and the freedom we have in Christ.

**Birthdays and Anniversaries** – Butch Spitler 12/10, Joe & Lori Nelson 12/11(A), Marna Beneke 12/11, Buzz & Nancy Wright 12/12(A), Nancy Wright 12/15, Glen & Norma Behnken 12/19 (A), Fred Boebel 12/21, Glen Behnken 12/25.

**Bell Choir Practice** – Wednesdays at 6:30 pm

**Holden Even Prayer** – Midweek Advent services, Wednesdays at 7:00pm

**Choir Practice** – Wednesdays after Advent Service

**Advent Devotionals** – Pick yours up and some to share with friends. (back of the sanctuary)

## GOSPEL MESSAGE Managing Expectations

Last week John the Baptist was full of religious fervor, certain in his convictions, and bold in his proclamation about the role of the coming Messiah: “Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (Matthew 3:10).

But there was no fire. There was no chopping down of anything or anyone. Jesus had arrived and his ministry had begun, but he did *not* come bearing the ax or winnowing fork that John had predicted. Instead, he began healing the sick, casting out demons, and spending a lot of time with the very people many thought were part of the problem. John asks on behalf of his community, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” (Matt. 11:3).

John’s hope (and ours) is not in vain. But this Messiah’s redemption will not come in the way we expect. This Messiah is not a victor in a battle scene or a political coup. Instead, this Messiah is one who shows that greatness and strength are actually found in gentleness and service. It isn’t through fire that God saves the world; it is through God’s own sacrificial love. And the road to this love is not a victory parade, but the one that leads us humbly to a cleansing bath and a laden table.

To those who trust in wealth and power to set things right, what we do each Sunday must sound silly: gathering around old stories, singing and praying, sharing a little meal. How could any of this change *anything*? But for us wilderness wanderers, it is water in the desert. It is the very presence of God in our midst. Thanks be to God!