

St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church
627 South Washington, New Ulm, Minnesota

**"In keeping with the revelation
of the mystery hidden for long
ages past, but now revealed
and made known..."**

~ Revelation 16:25-26

Fourth Sunday in Advent
Sunday, December 24, 2023

Pastor Jeffrey Bovee
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Today's service is televised locally

Channel 14 - Comcast: Mondays at 6 pm, Tuesdays at 1 pm & Thursdays at 10 am

Channel 3 - Nuvera: Mondays at 6 pm, Tuesdays at 1 pm & Thursdays at 10 am

Prayer before worship: Dear God, we thank and praise you for your grace! It is by grace that you planned our salvation. It is by grace that you carried it out through Jesus. It is by grace that you revealed his work to us, which would have forever remained an unknown mystery unless you did. It is by grace that you sent your Spirit to bring us to trust in your promises. Thank you for revealing our Savior to us! Help us to live for you in thanks all of our days! Amen.

Order of Service: *Christian Worship The Service: Setting Two* page 172

OPENING HYMN *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* **CW327**

CONFESSION p. 173

FIRST LESSON **2 Samuel 7:8–16**

⁸“Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. ⁹I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. ¹⁰And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning ¹¹and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.

“ ‘The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: ¹²When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. ¹⁵But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.’ ”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM of the DAY

Psalm 139F



You have searched me, Lord, and you / know me;
you perceive my thoughts / from afar.

You discern my going out and my / lying down;
you are familiar with / all my ways. *Refrain*

For you created my inmost / being;
you knit me together in my / mother's womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonder- / fully made;
your works are wonderful, I know that / full well.

My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the / secret place;
your eyes saw my unformed / body.

*Glory be to the Father and / to the Son
and to the Holy / Spirit,*

as it was in the be- / ginning,

is now, and will be forever. / Amen. Refrain

SECOND LESSON

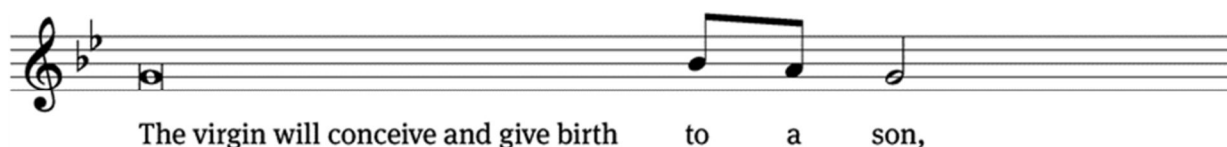
Romans 16:25–27

²⁵Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, ²⁶but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith— ²⁷to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Refrain

GOSPEL**Luke 1:26–38**

²⁶In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.

³¹You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷For no word from God will ever fail."

³⁸"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

HYMN of the DAY*Come, Behold the Wondrous Mystery***CW535****SERMON****Romans 16:25-27****The Big Reveal****I. Hidden by Nature****II. Revealed by Grace****APOSTLES' CREED**

p. 181

PRAYER of the CHURCH

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OFFERING*see announcement***HYMN***God's Own Son Most Holy***CW321****PRAYERS** (*Contemporary*) **and BLESSING**

p. 171

CLOSING HYMN*Let Us All with Gladsome Voice***CW332****† † †****PREACHER**

Pastor Rob Guenther

PRESIDING MINISTER

Pastor Jeff Bovee

ORGAN

Adrian Smith

THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

Sun	8 & 9:30 am	Worship
	4 pm	St. Paul's School Christmas Eve Service
	7 pm	Candlelight Christmas Eve Service
Mon	9 am	Christmas Day Service
Tue		Church office closed
	4 pm	Oak Hills Living Center Service
Sat		NO Saturday Service

† Upcoming Services †

Christmas Eve: 8 & 9:30 Worship

St. Paul's Christmas Service: 4 pm

Candlelight Service: 7 pm

Christmas Day Service: 9 am

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Sunday, December 31: 8, 9:30 & 11 am

NO evening Service

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec 31	8, 9:30 & 11 am	Worship
Jan 1		Church office closed
	6:30 pm	Elders Meeting
Jan 2	7 pm	Women of St. John's Meeting
Jan 3	10 am	Catechism
Jan 4	10:30 am	Bible Class: The Hard Sayings of Jesus
	7 pm	Bible Class: The I AM Statements of Jesus
Jan 5	9:30 am	Women's Bible Class: Book of Esther
Jan 6	6:30 pm	Worship
Jan 7	8, 9:30 & 11 am	Worship
Jan 8	6 pm	Evangelism Meeting
	7 pm	Education Meeting
Jan 9	4 pm	Oak Hills Living Center Service
Jan 10	10 am	Catechism
	7 pm	Choir
Jan 11	10:30 am	Bible Class: TBD
	7 pm	Bible Class: The Hard Sayings of Jesus
Jan 12	9:30 am	Women's Bible Class: Book of Esther
Jan 13	3 pm	Winter Carnival at St. Paul's School
	6:30 pm	Worship
Jan 14	8, 9:30 & 11 am	Worship
	11 am	New Officer Installation

Go to www.stjohnsnewulm.com/calendar for more events

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Attendance for the past weekend was 395.

Fruits of faith given:

\$17,041	Home Operations ~ \$30,392 is our weekly need		
\$1,477	MVL ~ \$1,278 is our weekly need		
\$4,472	Missions ~ \$1,818 is our weekly need	\$105	Lutheran Charities
\$847	Building Fund	\$50	Youth Group
\$15	75th Ann. Sanctuary Renovation	\$10	Food & Fellowship
\$1,000	Ministerial Education Endowment Fund		
\$200	Ministerial Student Scholarship Fund		

2024 Contribution Envelopes ~ The 2024 offering envelopes can be found either in your bulletin box or in alphabetical order on the tables in the new narthex. To ensure you receive proper credit, please do not use the 2024 envelopes until January 1st. New numbers will change for many people with the 2024 envelopes. Please don't use the 2023 envelopes after December 31st. Thank you for your cooperation.

Cards of Caring ~ will meet this winter to continue to make cards for our homebound and thinking-of-you members, and for our three LWMS Befriend a Mission families. All supplies are furnished. If you are unable to create cards, we have other tasks you may do. We welcome those from 7th grade and older including MLC students. Our next dates are Saturday, January 13 and February 10. We meet from 9 am until noon. Come any time between those hours. We meet at 403 N. Minnesota St. (across from the Glockenspiel). This is an opportunity for fellowship and service to the Lord. Contact Lois Willems at 507-676-1230 with questions.

Financial Update - Operating Fund ~ As of December 15, offerings and other receipts for our Operating Fund in 2023 total \$796,928. Expenditures for the same period were \$962,692. We began 2023 with \$179,684 of reserve funds available to be used for our operating expenses. Since year-to-date operating expenditures are \$165,764 greater than operating receipts, the reserve fund balance is now \$13,920. In light of this, the budget plan that has been approved for 2024 contains significant reductions in spending. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless the gospel ministry here at St. John's and provide for it.

Has Your Contact Information Changed? ~ Please contact the church office at 354-6744 or office@stjohnsnewulm.com with any changes to your **home address, cell phone number, and email address**. Also, if your children have moved, please update us with their new contact information so we can better serve them, too. Thank you!

Wish List Items ~ The Church Council has approved the addition of two items to the Wish List, both of which originated with the Campus Facilities Task Force:

- **48 Chairs** (with arm rests and hymnal racks below the seats) for nave seating -- These linked chairs will replace seating the first three pews on each side of the nave. The seat cover will match the covering planned for the pews. These movable seats will provide flexible seating arrangement (e.g., to accommodate choirs or handicapped). Purchasing these in anticipation of the planned renovations may offset the possible price increases in the coming months.
- **Painting** the walls of the nave -- \$1,000 is the anticipated cost for paint and materials; volunteers will be solicited to provide the labor. The color to be selected will coordinate with the renovation. This project is to be completed before renovations begin.

Please consider supporting these efforts in addition to your regular church offerings.

Handbell Ringers Needed! ~ If you've seen the handbells played at church and thought, "I wish I could do that." Now's your chance! There are openings in the group! You don't need to be able to read music. The notes are color coded for all levels of experience. Come join the fun! For more information contact Becky Berg at rberg@mvlhs.org.

Pictorial Directory Update ~ Members, please submit a picture to sm.dretske@stjohnsnewulm.com or have me take your picture before or after services during December if you are not pictured in our PEW Copy of our 2023 St John's Directory. If your picture is included but you would like to update it, you can do the same. You could also change it on your phone or computer by logging into your account and editing the picture yourself. Pew Copies will be updated in January. New Directories will be available upon request once the information and pictures have been updated.

Offering Announcement ~ Visitors, there is no obligation or expectation that you should give to support our ministry at St. John's. This is our members' way of expressing their thanks to God and supporting the work that we do to share the Gospel in New Ulm and around the world. Members, you are invited to give your gifts of gratitude and thanks to God for all he's done for you in Christ by leaving your offerings in the drop box in the narthex. Or you can bring your offerings to the church during regular office hours: Mondays through Fridays, 8 am - 1 pm. You might also consider taking advantage of your bank's online bill pay service and have your offering automatically sent to the church on a one time or recurring basis.

AREA ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELS Night at the Timberwolves! ~ Sunday, January 14 at 6 pm! Tickets purchased with the discount offer will have the opportunity to shoot a free throw on the court after the game! Scan the QR code and use promo code: 2324WELS. Contact Cameron Schwarz at 612-673-1647 or cameron.schwarz@timberwolves.com with questions.



St. Paul's Preschool Open House ~ Monday, January 15, 2024, from 4 – 7 pm! New preschoolers, please come and visit! St. Paul's Preschool offers full day & part-time sessions for 3-, 4- and 5-year-old children. Watch for a preschool Information/Registration mailing in early January. St John's (New Ulm & Sleepy Eye) and St. Paul's members and our school families are invited to have first choice of preschool sessions through January 15th. (Community "Open Registration" begins January 16th. Some sessions fill by early February). If you have questions, please contact our preschool director, Mrs. Heidi Meyer at preschool@splnewulm.org.

Housing Needed for International Student ~ MVL would like to host a young man from Germany next year. However, we are in need of a host family willing to open their home to this young man. He will only be with us for one semester, which means he will arrive in late August and then leave just before Christmas. Host families are compensated for serving in this capacity. If you are interested, please contact MVL Principal Tim Plath at tplath@mvlhs.org or 507-354-6851.

2023 Christmas Schedule

Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 24: 8 & 9:30 am
4 pm St. Paul's School Christmas Service
7 pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Service



Christmas Day

Monday, December 25 at 9 am

New Year's Eve Weekend

Saturday, December 30: NO Service
Sunday, December 31 at 8, 9:30 & 11 am
(NO New Year's Eve Service)



About the Cover ~ On our own, we could never know about God's grace. Born spiritually dead, blind, and hostile to God, we would have been forever lost unless God in his grace revealed his plan of salvation to us and sent his Holy Spirit to bring us to believe it. We rejoice that has revealed his saving grace to us! Now let's live for him in thanks!