

At that time I will gather you;
at that time I will bring you home.

Zephaniah 3:20



Third Sunday in Advent
December 14 / 15, 2024

St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church



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Today's service is televised locally

Channel 14 - Comcast: Monday at 6:00 p.m. & Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. & Thursday at 10:00 a.m.

Channel 3 - Nuvera: Monday at 6:00 p.m. & Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. & Thursday at 10:00 a.m.

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

December 14/15, 2024

PRAYER BEFORE WORSHIP: Almighty God, please guide us through this pilgrimage on earth. Deliver us from the difficulties and temptations that surround us. Give strength to resist evil and the zeal to follow all that you command. Cause us to trust solely in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, and do not let us be led astray by the idols that would take our hearts away from you. Lead us at last safely to our heavenly home. We pray these things in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Service Setting 2

HANDBELLS

The Blessed Angels Sing

arr. Michael Helamn

6:30pm & 8am

HYMN

O Lord, how Shall I Meet You

CW 324

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 O Lord, how shall I meet you,
how welcome you aright?
Your people long to greet you,
my hope, my heart's delight.
O Jesus, let your Word be
a lamp to light my way,
to show me how to please you,
to guide me ev'ry day. | 3 Rejoice, then, you sad-hearted,
who sit in deepest gloom,
who mourn o'er joys departed
and tremble at your doom.
Despair not; he is near you,
he's standing at the door
who best can help and cheer
you
and bids you weep no more. |
| 2 Love caused your incarnation;
love brought you down to
me.
Your thirst for my salvation
procured my liberty.
Oh, love beyond all telling
that led you to embrace
in love, all love excelling,
our lost and fallen race! | 4 Sin's debt, that fearful burden,
let not your souls distress;
your guilt the Lord will pardon
and cover by his grace.
He comes, for you procuring
the peace of sin forgiv'n,
his children thus securing
eternal life in heav'n. |
| | 5 He comes to judge the nations,
a terror to his foes,
a light of consolation
and blessèd hope to those
who love the Lord's appearing.
O glorious Sun, now come,
send forth your beams most
cheering,
and guide us safely home. |

Stand

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.
**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.
**Holy God, gracious Father,
I am sinful by nature
and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.
I have not loved you with my whole heart;
I have not loved others as I should.
I deserve your punishment both now and forever.
But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins
with his innocent suffering and death.
Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

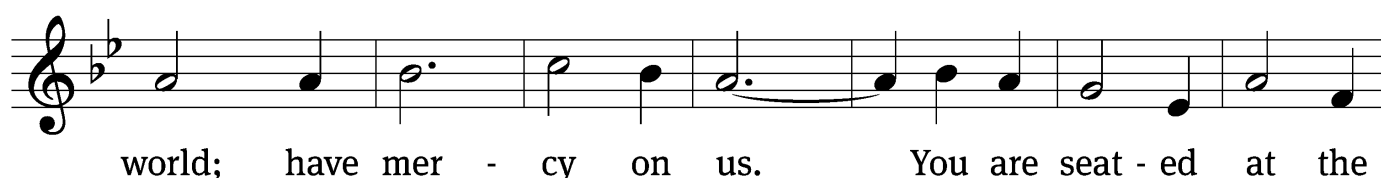
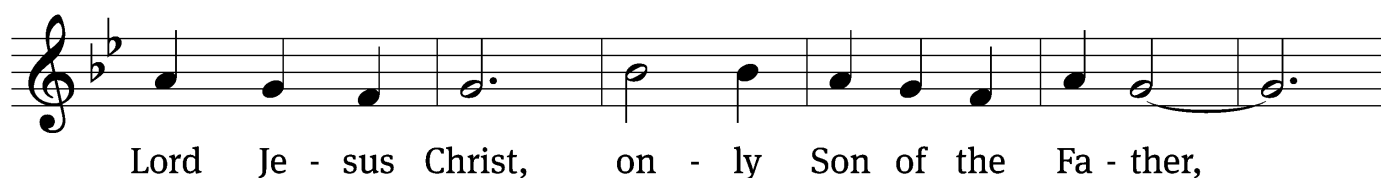
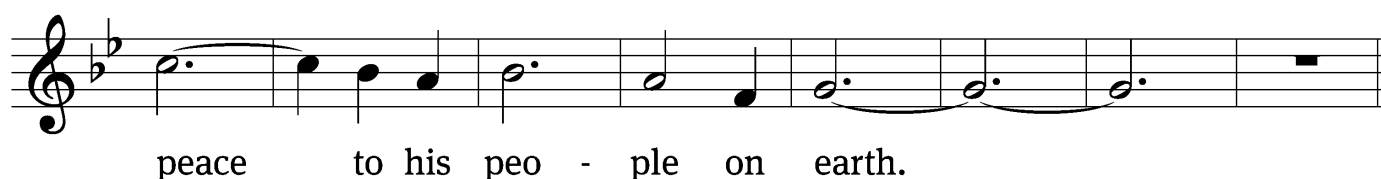
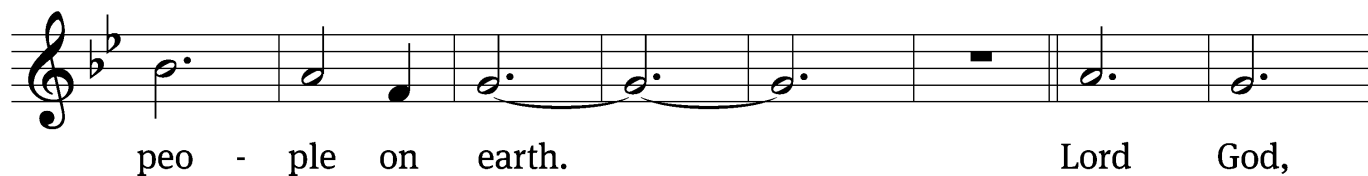
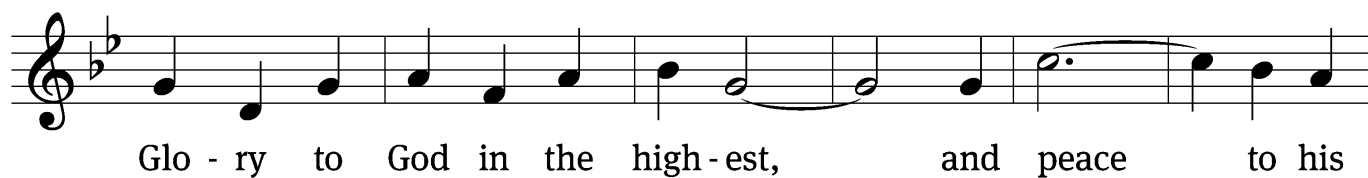
In peace let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.
Amen.



right hand of the Fa - ther; re - ceive our prayer.

Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace to his

peo - ple on earth. For you a -

lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,

you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ,

with the Ho - ly Spir - it in the glo - ry of

God the Fa - ther. A - men. A - men.

Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace to his

peo - ple on earth.

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Hear our prayers, Lord Jesus Christ, and come with the good news of your mighty deliverance. Drive the darkness from our hearts, and fill us with your light; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Be seated

FIRST READING

Zephaniah 3:14–20

14Sing, Daughter Zion;
shout aloud, Israel!

Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,
Daughter Jerusalem!

15The Lord has taken away your punishment,
he has turned back your enemy.

The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you;
never again will you fear any harm.

16On that day
they will say to Jerusalem,

“Do not fear, Zion;
do not let your hands hang limp.

17The Lord your God is with you,
the Mighty Warrior who saves.

He will take great delight in you;
in his love he will no longer rebuke you,
but will rejoice over you with singing.”

18“I will remove from you
all who mourn over the loss of your appointed festivals,
which is a burden and reproach for you.

19At that time I will deal
with all who oppressed you.

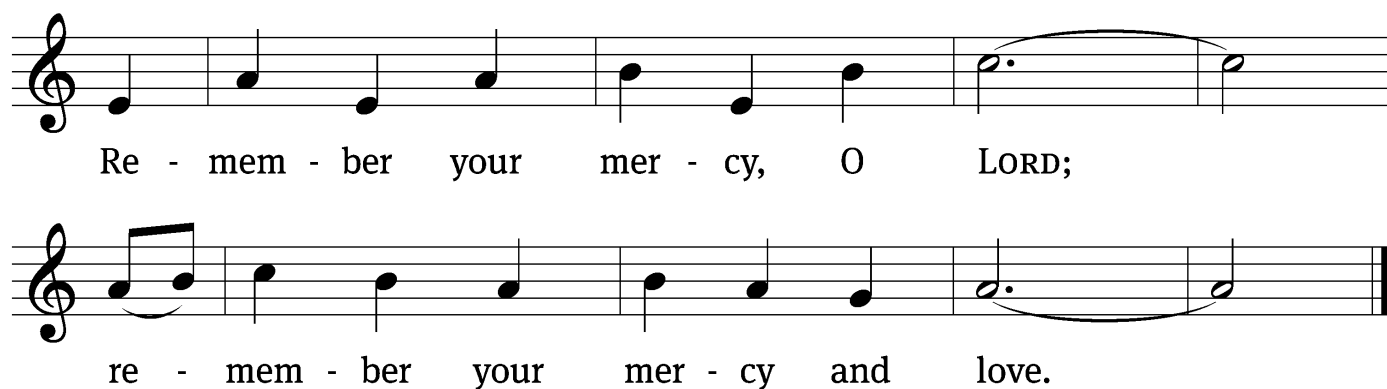
I will rescue the lame;

I will gather the exiles.
 I will give them praise and honor
 in every land where they have suffered shame.
 20 At that time I will gather you;
 at that time I will bring you home.
 I will give you honor and praise
 among all the peoples of the earth
 when I restore your fortunes
 before your very eyes,"
 says the Lord.

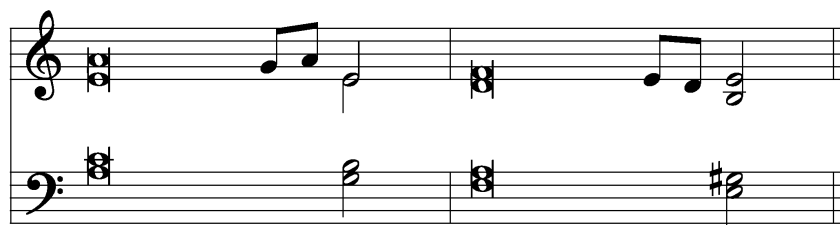
The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM OF THE DAY *Remember Your Mercy, O Lord* Psalm 130B

Refrain



Tone



Out of the depths I cry to / you, LORD;
 Lord, / hear my voice.
 Let your ears be at- / tentive
 to my cry for / mercy.
 If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, / who could stand?
 But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, / serve
 you. *Refrain*

I wait for the LORD, my whole / being waits,
 and in his word I / put my hope.
 I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the / morning,
 more than watchmen wait for the / morning.
 Israel, put your hope / in the LORD,
 for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full re- / demption.
 He himself will redeem / Israel
 from / all their sins.
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 READING

Philippians 4:4–7

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Stand

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Refrain



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Tone



I will send my messenger a - head of you,

Refrain



who will prepare your way be - fore you.

⁷John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ⁹The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

¹⁰“What should we do then?” the crowd asked.

¹¹John answered, “Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.”

¹²Even tax collectors came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?”

¹³“Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” he told them.

¹⁴Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?”

He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.”

¹⁵The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. ¹⁶John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” ¹⁸And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

HYMN OF THE DAY *O Rejoice, All Christians, Loudly* CW 366

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 O rejoice, all Christians, loudly,
 for our joy has now begun;
 wondrous things our God has
 done.
 Tell abroad his goodness proudly,
 who our race has honored thus,
 that he has befriended us.
 Joy, O joy, beyond all gladness!
 Christ has done away with
 sadness!
 Hence, all sorrow and repining,
 for the Sun of grace is shining!</p> | <p>2 See, my soul, your Savior chooses
 poverty and weakness, too;
 in such love he comes to you.
 Neither crib nor cross refuses,
 all he suffers for your good
 to redeem you by his blood.
 Joy, O joy, beyond all gladness!
 Christ has done away with
 sadness!
 Hence, all sorrow and repining,
 for the Sun of grace is shining!</p> |
|---|--|

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>3 Lord, how shall I thank you rightly?
 I am saved eternally
 by your life and death for me.
 Let me not forget it lightly,
 but with all my heart believe
 that from you I shall receive.
 Joy, O joy, beyond all gladness!
 Christ has done away with
 sadness!
 Hence, all sorrow and repining,
 for the Sun of grace is shining!</p> | <p>4 Jesus, guard and guide your
 members,
 fill them with your boundless
 grace,
 hear their prayers in ev'ry place.
 Fan to life faith's glowing embers;
 grant all Christians far and near
 holy peace, a glad new year.
 Joy, O joy, beyond all gladness!
 Christ has done away with sadness!
 Hence, all sorrow and repining,
 for the Sun of grace is shining!</p> |
|---|--|

SERMON God Promises to Bring Us Home Zephaniah 3:14-20

Stand

NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who in unity with the Father and the Son
is worshiped and glorified,**

**who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Be seated

Brief intercessory prayers may be added in a fitting place.

Eternal Lord, give us peace as we ponder the good news that you forgive our sins in Christ. Lead us to see clearly the path you have laid out for us.
Work in us so that we believe and live the Word we have heard today.

Provide courage and compassion to all who preach and teach your Word. Fill them with a love like yours as they proclaim your grace to us and all people.
Move us to love all ministers of the Word wherever they serve.

Guard and guide the families of our congregation. Lead husbands and wives to love each other with commitment, respect, and patience. Help parents to grasp the eternal value of keeping their children close to Jesus all their lives. Grant joy to those who are single, and make them a blessing to others.
Protect us from the temptations that surround us; give us pure hearts and minds.

Provide wisdom and insight to those who make laws and set policies. Give us respect for those who protect us from crime. Lead us to value the rights of our fellow citizens and to defend those who cannot defend themselves.
Bless our land with peace and prosperity so that the gospel may be proclaimed to all.

Give us passion to share the story of your love with our family and friends. Overcome unbelief, and open the hearts of people everywhere to believe the good news that Jesus has forgiven their sins and opened the gates of heaven.
Fill us with joy over every sinner who repents and comes to trust in you.

Extend your healing power to those who are sick and suffering in body or mind. [Pour out your special blessing on . . . *here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] Give patience and compassion to all who care for the sick and dying.
Lift the eyes of the distressed to your love in Christ.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

Gracious God, you govern and direct all things and you love all people. Hear our prayers, spoken and silent, and answer them in your wisdom and grace.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

OFFERING

Stand

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right . . . and join their glorious song:

The musical score is written on seven staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, using mostly quarter and half notes. The lyrics are printed below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables across measures. The score concludes with a double bar line.

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er,
God of might. Heav - en 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!

Lord God, you are worthy to receive thanks and praise from all people. You created the world and all who live in it, and in your mercy you saved us. We give thanks to you for the grace of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Though in very nature God, he took the nature of a servant and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. He offered himself as a sacrifice for sin and redeemed us from its curse and penalty. He rescued us from the terrors of death and restored eternal life with you. He conquered our enemies and gained for us the kingdom of grace and glory.

Bless us as we receive your Son's body and blood, and lead us to remember his suffering, death, and resurrection. Forgive our sins and fill us with the hope of new life in heaven. Hear our praise and receive our thanks as we worship you—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my + body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my + blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
Amen.

Je - sus, Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us your peace.

Be seated

DISTRIBUTION HYMN *My Heart Is Filled with Thankfulness* CW 626

- 1 My heart is filled with thankfulness
to him who bore my pain,
who plumb'd the depths of my disgrace
and gave me life again,
who crush'd my curse of sinfulness
and clothed me in his light
and wrote his law of righteousness
with pow'r upon my heart.

2 My heart is filled with thankfulness
to him who walks beside,
who floods my weaknesses with strength
and causes fears to fly,
whose ev'ry promise is enough
for ev'ry step I take,
sustaining me with arms of love
and crowning me with grace.

3 My heart is filled with thankfulness
to him who reigns above,
whose wisdom is my perfect peace,
whose ev'ry thought is love.
For ev'ry day I have on earth
is given by the King.
So I will give my life, my all,
to love and follow him,
to love and follow him.

HYMN

What Is This Bread

CW 665

1 What is this bread?
Christ's body risen from the dead:
this bread we break,
this life we take,
was crushed to pay for our
release.
O taste and see—the Lord is
peace.

2 What is this wine?
The blood of Jesus shed for mine;
the cup of grace
brings his embrace
of life and love until I sing!
O taste and see—the Lord is
King.

3 So who am I,
that I should live and he should die
under the rod?
My God, my God,
why have you not forsaken me?
O taste and see—the Lord is free.

4 Yet is God here?
Oh, yes! By Word and promise
clear,
in mouth and soul
he makes us whole—
Christ, truly present in this meal.
O taste and see—the Lord is real.

5 Is this for me?
I am forgiven and set free!
I do believe
that I receive
his very body and his blood.
O taste and see—the Lord is
good.

As he distributes the elements, the minister says to the communicants:

Take and eat; this is the true body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, given
into death for your sins.

Take and drink; this is the true blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,
poured out for the forgiveness of your sins.

As he dismisses the communicants, the minister says:

The true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve
you to life everlasting. Go + in peace.

Amen.

Stand

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet you
have given us in this Sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith,
nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit, help us to live
as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at
the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy
Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

Amen.

**PREACHER
PRESIDING MINSTER
ORGAN
HANDBELLS**

Pastor Jeff Bovee
Pastor Rob Guenther
Jacob Behnken
Becky Berg

Acknowledgments

Setting Two from Christian Worship
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Welcome, Visitors! Please scan the QR code to sign our
guest register.



THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

Sunday	8, 9:30, 11 am	Worship
	9:30 am	Bible Class: Biblical Conflict Resolution
Tuesday	6:30 pm	Council Meal
	7 pm	Council Meeting
Wednesday	11 am	Midweek Service
	3:30 pm	Home School and Public Catechism
	4, 6:30 pm	Midweek Service
	5 pm	Advent Meal
	7:30 pm	Choir
Thursday	8 am	St. Paul's School Practice
Friday	8 am	St. Paul's School Practice
Saturday	9 am	Sunday School Christmas Rehearsal
	6:30 pm	Worship
Sunday, Dec. 22	8, 9:30 am	Worship
	11 am	Sunday School Christmas Service
Monday, Dec. 23	8 am	St. Paul's School Practice
Tuesday, Dec. 24	4 pm	St. Paul's Christmas Eve Children's Service
	7 pm	Candlelight Service
Wednesday, Dec. 25	9 am	Christmas Day Service
Thursday, Dec. 26	8 am	Office Closed
Friday, Dec. 27	8 am	Office Closed

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Attendance for this past weekend was 567

Fruits of Faith:

\$15,636 Home Operations ~ Year to Date needed: \$863,680 / Year to Date received: \$835,349

\$1,034 WELS Missions ~ Received to Date: \$82,381 (2024 Goal: \$78,000)

\$1,087 MVL ~ Received to Date: \$54,695 (2024 Goal: \$52,000)

\$252 Altar and Flowers

\$641 Food and Fellowship

\$210 K-12 Education Assistance

\$125 St. Paul's School Building Fund

\$20 Ministerial Student Scholarship Fund

\$105 Lutheran Charities

\$595 Building Fund

\$50 Sanctuary Renovation

\$100 St. Paul's School

\$100 Technology Equipment

Please Complete the Communications &

Contribution Preference Survey ~ Your stewardship committee is trying to maximize the effectiveness of our communication by sharing information with our members in the way that they prefer to receive it. We also want to offer giving options that will be used based on how our members give gifts to God. Please take 2 minutes to scan and complete the digital survey or pick up a printed copy in the narthex.



Communion Announcement ~ At St. John's we practice "close communion." That is, we invite only those who are in fellowship with us as members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Church (or of a synod that is in fellowship with us) to commune with us. We are in no way judging your personal faith. But we recognize that in the Lord's supper we enjoy not only a close communion, or fellowship, with God, but we also enjoy a close communion with one another as we publicly express our agreement in every teaching of God's Word. And we wouldn't presume to ask you to publicly confess your agreement with all that we teach and believe without first being instructed in what it is that we teach and believe. But if you do desire to commune with us, please speak to one of the pastors after the service.

AREA ANNOUNCEMENTS

St. Paul's Preschool Open House ~ Mon. Jan. 20, 2025 – 3PM – 6PM

New preschoolers, please come and visit! (And SPP children moving to a new SPP classroom!) 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 (NU & SE) & St. Paul's members and our school families are invited to have first choice of preschool sessions through Jan 20th. (Community "Open Registration" begins Jan. 21.)

If you have questions, please contact our preschool director, Mrs. Heidi Meyer: preschool@splnewulm.org

Food Shelf Volunteers ~ Check your church mailbox for a draft of the 2025 New Ulm FoodShelf schedule. If you have any questions, contact Carla Melendy (507-217-9750) or Deb Beatty (507-276-2722) by December 21. Thanks for your help!

MVL Christmas Concert ~ The MVL Music Department invites you to its annual Sacred Christmas Concert on Friday, December 20, at 6:45 p.m. in the

MVL Fine Arts Center. This year's program, themed *Be Near Me, Lord Jesus*, will celebrate the Advent and Christmas seasons with performances by the A Cappella Choir, Freshmen Choir, MVL Chargaliers, and the Symphonic Band. A freewill offering will be collected.

Pastor Kuehl Installation ~ Members of the MVLHS Association are invited to attend the installation of Rev. Stephen Kuehl. Rev. Kuehl will be installed as a teacher at Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School on Monday, January 6, as part of an MVL chapel devotion, beginning at 2:26 p.m. Association pastors who would like to participate in the laying on of hands should contact Rev. Jon Ladner (jladner@mvlhs.org) for more information. The service will be completed by 3:00 and light refreshments will follow.

Amazing Race ~ The 2025 Amazing Race is right around the corner! This FUN raising event will benefit the School Building Project and is always one of the must-attend events of the year. It will take place on Sunday, February 2, with lunch for all starting at 11:30 and race time at 1pm. There will be events at school for everyone, even those who don't wish to race. If you would like to race, get your teams together and prepare for a trip around town that you won't soon forget! You can register your team of 4-7 people here: <https://bit.ly/amazingrace2025>. Cost is \$15 per racer. Team registration is due Friday, January 17, with a deadline of January 10 to order your Amazing Race short sleeve t-shirt at <https://bit.ly/amazingracets25> (see attached t-shirt graphic). We are already looking forward to the big day!

About the Cover ~ In the days of the prophet Zephaniah God warned the people of Israel and the surrounding nations of the judgment that would befall them if they continued in their sinful ways. They worshiped false gods and trusted in idols instead of in the LORD. God forewarned that they would go into exile and that the land they once knew would become a wasteland, given over to weeds and wild beasts. However, he also promised that those who turned their hearts back to God would find comfort in his mercy. He would bring them home. Of course, the home God spoke of was not merely an earthly dwelling. Ultimately, God was speaking of a better home, a heavenly one. That home is promised to all of us as the people of God who place their trust in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.