

# WELCOME TO ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Woodbury, Minnesota

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2020 | 11:00 AM

ONLINE SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2020 | THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

## RINGING OF THE BELL | WELCOME

### OPENING HYMN

“Arise, O Christian People” [LSB 354], vs. 1, 2 & 4



1 A - rise, O Chris - tian peo - ple! Pre - pare your - selves to -  
2 Pre - pare the way be - fore Him; Pre - pare for Him the  
4 Pre - pare my heart, Lord Je - sus; Turn not from me a -



day; Pre - pare to greet the Sav - ior, Who takes your  
best. Cast out what would of - fend Him, This great, this  
side, And help me to re - ceive You This bless - ed



sins a - way. To us by grace a - lone The  
heav'n - ly guest. Make straight, make plain the way: The  
Ad - vent - tide. From stall and man - ger low Come



truth and light were giv - en; The prom - ised Lord from  
low - ly val - leys rais - ing, The heights of pride a -  
now to dwell with - in me; I'll sing Your prais - es



heav - en To all the world is shown.  
bas - ing, His path all e - ven lay.  
glad - ly And forth Your glo - ry show.

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### INVOCATION | OPENING SENTENCES

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

Pastor: Rejoice always,

People: **pray without ceasing,**

Pastor: give thanks in all circumstances;

People: **for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Pastor: Jesus Christ is the Light of the world,

**People: the light no darkness can overcome.**

Pastor: Let Your light scatter the darkness

**People: and illumine Your Church.**

Pastor: Today we re-light the first two candles of the Advent Wreath, the candle of **HOPE** and the candle of **PEACE**. Now we light the third candle of Advent.

**People: This is the candle of JOY. As the coming of Jesus, our Savior, draws nearer, our joy builds with our anticipation of His birth.**

## SONG DURING LIGHTING

*“We Light the Advent Candle” vs. 3*

We light the Advent candle and sing with cheerful heart.  
*With joy, we spread the message that God would us impart.*  
Our joy is never ending; the Son to us is sending.  
*We wait with growing light till God makes all things right!*

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray.

**People: We joyfully praise you, O Lord, for the fulfillment of Your promise of a Savior and what that means in our lives. Thank you for the gift of salvation through the birth of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Create in us clean hearts, and help us to see Your glory as you fill our lives with Your living Spirit. Amen.**

## CONFESSION OF SINS | ABSOLUTION

Pastor: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

**People: But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Pastor: Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

**People: Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

## OLD TESTAMENT READING

*Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11*

<sup>1</sup>The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, <sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, <sup>3</sup>and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor. <sup>4</sup>They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have

been devastated for generations. <sup>8</sup>“For I, the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery and wrongdoing. In my faithfulness I will reward my people and make an everlasting covenant with them. <sup>9</sup> Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the Lord has blessed.” <sup>10</sup> I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. <sup>11</sup> For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

### EPISTLE READING

1 Thessalonians 5:16–24

<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray continually, <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. <sup>19</sup> Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup> Do not treat prophecies with contempt <sup>21</sup> but test them all; hold on to what is good, <sup>22</sup> reject every kind of evil. <sup>23</sup> May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

### HOLY GOSPEL

John 1:6–8, 19–28

Pastor: The Gospel according to St. John, the 1st chapter.

People: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

**John the Baptist Denies Being the Messiah ...** <sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. <sup>19</sup> Now this was John’s testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. <sup>20</sup> He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, “I am not the Messiah.” <sup>21</sup> They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” He answered, “No.” <sup>22</sup> Finally they said, “Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” <sup>23</sup> John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, “I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’” <sup>24</sup> Now the Pharisees who had been sent <sup>25</sup> questioned him, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” <sup>26</sup> “I baptize with water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know. <sup>27</sup> He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.” <sup>28</sup> This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

### HYMN OF THE DAY

“O Word of God Incarnate” [LSB 523]



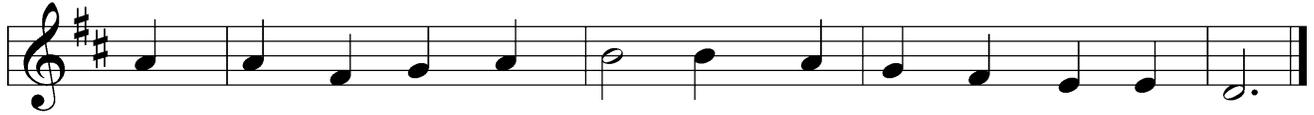
1 O Word of God in - car - nate, O Wis - dom from on high,  
2 The Church from You, dear Mas - ter, Re - ceived the gift di - vine;  
3 O make Your Church, dear Sav - ior, A lamp of bur - nished gold



O Truth un - changed, un - chang - ing, O Light of our dark sky:  
And still that light is lift - ed O'er all the earth to shine.  
To bear be - fore the na - tions Your true light as of old!



We praise You for the ra - diance That from the hal - lowed page,  
It is the chart and com - pass That, all life's voy - age through,  
O teach Your wan - d'ring pil - grims By this their path to trace



A lan - tern to our foot - steps, Shines on from age to age.  
Mid mists and rocks and quick - sands Still guides, O Christ, to You.  
Till, clouds and dark - ness end - ed, They see You face to face!

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## SERMON

*“Rising From Exile”* Ezra/Nehemiah

## THE APOSTLES' CREED

**ALL:** I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. **Amen.**

## GATHERING OF OFFERINGS

[online at <https://stjohnwoodbury.org/give> ~ or ~  
via U.S. mail to SJLC, 1975 St. Johns Drive, Woodbury, MN 55129]

## THE PRAYERS

**Pastor:** Let us pray to the Lord,

**People:** Lord, have mercy.

**Pastor:** Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**People:** Amen.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

**ALL:** 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.**

## THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION | COMMUNION [in-person only]

### COMMUNION DISMISSAL

**Pastor:** The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart in peace.

**People:** Amen.

### BLESSING

**Pastor:** Let us bless the Lord.

**People:** Thanks be to God.

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

People: Amen.

### SEND—OFF PRAYER

**ALL:** Knowing that the time is drawing near, may I by Your Spirit's prompting, support the mission and ministry of my church with my personal witness, my earnest prayers and my sacrificial gifts. Grant that through me, many may be saved from the kingdom of darkness for the kingdom of Your Light, through Jesus Christ, Your Son and our Lord. Amen.

### CLOSING HYMN

"Hark the Glad Sound" [LSB 349]



1 Hark the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, The Sav - ior  
2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, In Sa - tan's  
3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, The bleed - ing  
4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of Peace, Thy wel - come



prom - ised long; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare a  
bond - age held. The gates of brass be - fore Him  
soul to cure, And with the trea - sures of His  
shall pro - claim, And heav'n's e - ter - nal arch - es



throne And ev - 'ry voice a song.  
burst, The i - ron fet - ters yield.  
grace To en - rich the hum - ble poor.  
ring With Thy be - lov - ed name.

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### ANNOUNCEMENTS | DISMISSAL

Pastor: Go in peace! Serve the Lord!

People: Thanks be to God.

Traditional Worship | 8:00 am  
Contemporary Worship | 10:30 am  
+ Education Time | 9:15 am +

