

# Welcome to St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lancaster



## Sunday Worship

Rev. Jamie Retallack  
716-848-9683



Fourth Sunday of Advent  
Sunday, December 21, 2025

The Prelude  
The Greetings



The Lighting of the Advent Wreath

We praise you, O God, for this circle of light that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, kindle within us the fire of your Spirit, that we may welcome others as you have welcomed us. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**



4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!



## Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,  
whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God  
and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Long-expected God,

**we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake.**

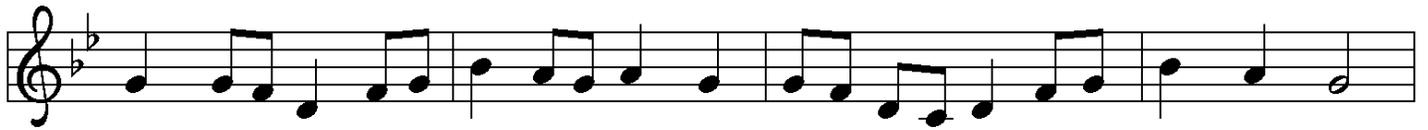
**Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.**

God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. + You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior. **Amen.**



*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;  
 2 Born thy peo-ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.  
 born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,  
 By thine own e - ter - nal Spir-it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev-'ry na-tion, joy of ev-'ry long-ing heart.  
 by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer-it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

Music: JEFFERSON, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

## The Prayer of the Day

**Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## The Alleluia

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

## The Gospel Reading Matthew 1:18-25 **Glory to you, O God.**

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

“Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”

which means, “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

This is the Word of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

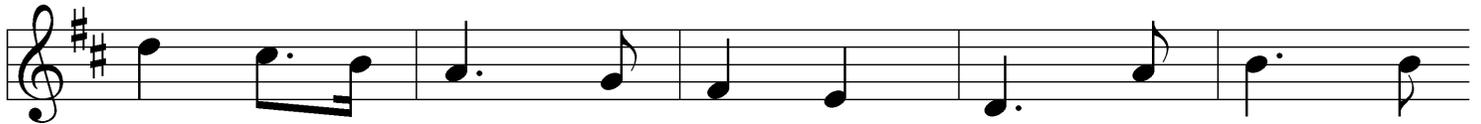
# The Pageant

Pastor's Message  
Rev. Jamie Retallack

Hymn of the Day

LBW 39

*"Joy to the World"*



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -  
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their  
3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -  
4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive its King; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him  
songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and  
fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings  
na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture  
plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing  
flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n and heav'n and na - ture sing.  
joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
found, far as, far as the curse is found.  
love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

## Prayers of Intercession

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

*A brief silence.*

In the anticipation of these days, prepare our hearts for your arrival. Stir our spirits through the gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, as together we proclaim your advent among us. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. May we meet the Christ-child we seek in the faces of our neighbors. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill (especially Edna Mann, Tom Morse, Jackie Wolfram, Dave, Lee Babirad, Sara Hermsmeyer, Eoin Mast, Arden Kruger, Jillian Graap, Anna Hart, Kelly R., Bryce, Mary Anne, Bob Valois, Paul Rudz, Pat Spanitz, Carl M., Dawn, Dave McNeight, Jake Miller, Carolyn Yarrington, and the family and friends of Arno Konstabel) God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your love. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. **Amen.**

## The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended into hell.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again 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.**

## The Prayers of the Church

**God of grace, hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray,  
trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. **Amen.**

## The Sharing of the Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always.  
**And also with you.**

# The Offering

## The Offering Music

## The Offertory Hymn



- 1 Ac - cept, O Lord, the gifts we bring to place up - on your ta - ble.
- 2 The vines were plant - ed, seeds were sown. They grew in your good plea - sure.
- 3 Our hopes and dreams, our toils and cares we lift in prayer be - fore you.



We do not wor - ship as we ought but on - ly as we're a - ble.  
What once was com - mon, dail - y food be - comes a ho - ly trea - sure.  
Lord, by your grace now come to us, as hum - bly we a - dore you.

Text: Beth Bergeron Folkemer, b. 1957  
Music: BARBARA ALLEN, English folk tune  
Text © 1990 Augsburg Fortress

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## The Offertory Prayer

Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come. **Amen.**

## The 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 God thanks and praise.**

## The 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:



## The Sanctus

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

**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.**



## The Communion Blessing

May the body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

## The Lord's Prayer

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

**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 Sending Prayer

God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

## The Benediction

*Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel*



1 Oh, come, oh, come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive  
 2 Oh, come, oh, come, great Lord of might, who to your tribes on  
 3 Oh, come, strong Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's  
 4 Oh, come, blest Day - spring, come and cheer our spir - its by your  
 5 Oh, come, O Key of Da - vid, come, and o - pen wide our



Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here  
 Si - nai's height in an - cient times once gave the law  
 tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save  
 ad - vent here; dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night,  
 heav'n - ly home; make safe the way that leads on high,



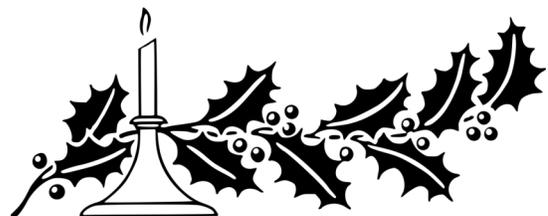
un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.  
 and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave. Re - joice! Re - joice!  
 and death's dark shad - ows put to flight.  
 and close the path to mis - er - y.



Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

Text: *Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. John M. Neale, 1818–1866, alt.  
 Music: VENI, EMMANUEL, French processional, 15th cent.

The Sending  
 Go in peace. Keep awake.  
**Thanks be to God.**



## **The People of St. John's Welcome You for Worship Today!**

If you would like a **pastoral visit** for any reason, please call the office or call Pastor directly on his cell @ (716) 848-9683.

Melissa will have regular office hours in Lancaster on Mon, Wed, and Thurs, from 10am to 3pm. However, the Church Office will be closed from December 22 - January 4. It will reopen on Monday, January 5th @ 10 am. During that time, you may leave a message by phone or email for any business that can wait until the office is open, or for emergent issues, you may call Pastor Jamie on his cell @ 716-848-9683. Happy Holidays!

**Offering** 12/14/2025 \$ 3132.68

### **QR Code for Offering**

Using your camera app you can scan the QR code to go to **St. John's donation page** where you can make a one-time or recurring **offering!** Thank you for giving!



The **Annual Congregational Meeting** is scheduled for Sunday, January 25th, 2026, following the 10am worship service. This year there are 3 incumbent seats, and 1 open seat for Council. If you are interested in serving, you **MUST** contact Pastor or Janet Sincebaugh. We look forward to your participation!

The flowers on the altar are in celebration of the 60th Wedding Anniversary of Greg and Bunny Wildridge. Congratulations!

2026 Offering Envelopes are ready for pick-up in the narthex.

**Altar Guild:** RaeAnn Jakubowski & Timmy Gierlinger

**Deacon:** RaeAnn Jakubowski

**Ushers:** Linda Costa & Kathy Burr

**Available Altar Flower Dates:**

Jan 4, 11, 25 & Feb 1, 8, 15, 22

Edna Mann, Tom Morse, Jackie Wolfram, Dave, Lee Babirad, Sara Hermsmeyer, Eoin Mast, Arden Kruger, Jillian Graap, Anna Hart, Kelly R., Bryce, Mary Anne, Bob Valois, Paul Rudz, Pat Spanitz, Carl M., Dawn, Dave McNeight, Jake Miller, Carolyn Yarrington, and the family and friends of Arno Konstabel.

The Food Pantry thanks everyone for their generous donations for holiday meals. We were able to give even more than anticipated. Our current needs are: pasta sauce, cereal, and sugar-free items. Thank you!

Please join us for “**The Un- Hanging of the Greens,**”

AKA un-decorating the church after Christmas, on

**Sun. 1/4 after 10 am service.** Many hands make light work.

See Kathy Snyder with any questions.

**BOOK CLUB:** Please join us at the Conference Table downstairs in the Chapel Hall at St. John’s Lancaster (using the ramp entrance) on Wednesday, January 21st at 2:30 PM to discuss the novel, THE FIRST LIE WINS, by Ashley Elston.

**Christmas Eve 12/24 Worship**

5pm @ Elma

7pm @ Lancaster & 10:30pm @ Lancaster

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

*St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church provides  
an inviting environment for spreading God's Word  
through worship, teaching, and fellowship to address  
the spiritual needs of our congregation and community.  
Open - Inviting - Alive in Christ!*

Pastor Rev. Jamie Retallack (716-848-9683)  
Pastors Emeriti -Rev. John Swanson -Rev. John Scarafia  
*St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church*  
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**Office 683-8972 (Mon-Wed-Thurs 10am-3pm)**  
www.stjohnslanc.org  
stjohnslancaster55@gmail.com

## **Congregation Council**

Janet Sincebaugh (President)  
Carol Graham (Vice-President)  
Karen McClintock (Secretary)  
Kathryn Snyder (Treasurer)

Pauline Bauer	Jeff Miller
Sam Gierlinger	Rich Rice
RaeAnn Jakubowski	Paul Rudz
Jamie Kloc	Kelly Sieracki
Marjorie Kruger	

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