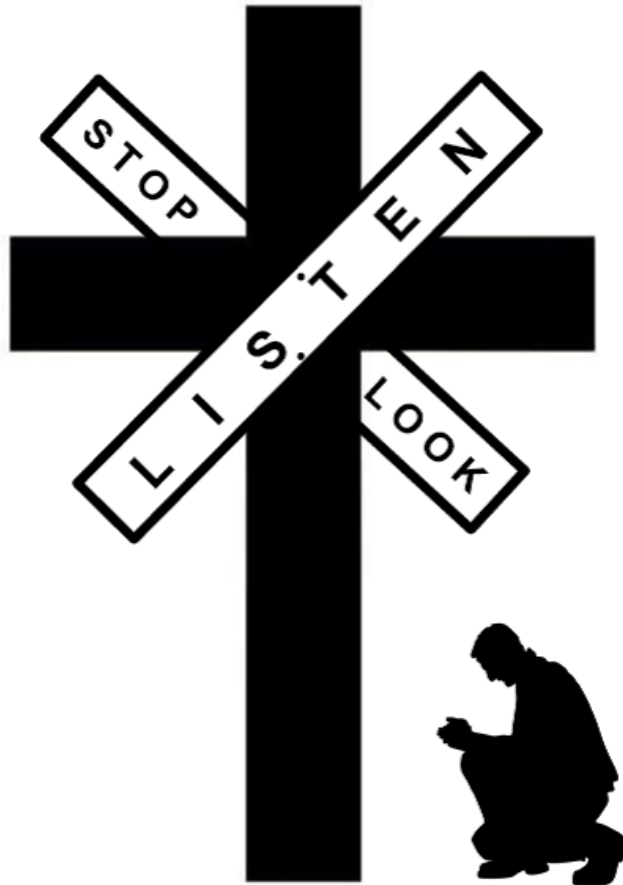


St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

A Family Connecting in Christ



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WELCOME TO ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

At this time our services are for people wearing masks and social distancing!

Please know that even as we experience this awkwardness, your Good Shepherd holds you close to his heart and goes with you to share his love!

To Our Guests

- We pray that you receive a warm welcome and are blessed by the message of God's Word in our lessons and hymns. If you have questions, please ask!
- Our service is designed to focus us on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit does that by exposing our need for Christ and by showing us the wonders of God's grace in Christ – forgiveness and peace, help and hope for life in this world, and life forever with God in heaven.

Our Communion Practice

We practice close communion, the Biblical and ancient practice of the church.

We invite our congregation members and visitors from sister WELS or ELS congregations to join us, but ask Christians from other denominations to kindly respect our practice. Further explanation is in the pew racks or from our pastor.

We Care about Your Children

We love to have children with us in worship.

- If your children are crying loudly, our nursery, Gathering Area (back of church), and downstairs Fellowship Hall are audio-equipped for you and your young children. When your children are ready, come back so we can worship together.

We Care about Your Special Needs

- **Large Print** Service Folders are available from an usher.
- **Hearing Assistance** for those with hearing aids is provided through our Hearing Loop or personal hearing devices available at the "sound table."
- A **wheelchair lift** is available for your assistance; please ask an usher.



Our Facilities

Restrooms are in our Fellowship Hall, downstairs and to the right of the kitchen.

Our Ministry

St. John offers an excellent preschool-8th grade school program. We are members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) - www.wels.net.

October 18, 2020

DIVINE SERVICE II

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... we are losing connections with so many people. How are your family, friends, and neighbors doing?

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY we are encouraged to find ways to reconnect, for the glory of God and the good of his people.

OPENING HYMN

"Son of God, Eternal Savior"

Hymn 492

Son of God, eternal Savior,
Source of life and truth and grace,
Word made flesh, whose birth among us,
Honors all our human race,
You our head, who, throned in glory,
For your own will ever plead:
Fill us with your love and pity;
Heal our wrongs and help our need.

Come, O Christ, and reign among us,
King of love and Prince of Peace;
Hush the storm of strife and passion;
Bid its cruel discords cease.
By your patient years of toiling,
By your silent hours of pain,
Quench our fevered thirst for pleasure;
Stem our selfish greed for gain.

Bind us all as one together
In your Church's sacred fold,
Weak and healthy, poor and wealthy,
Sad and joyful, young and old.
Is there want or pain or sorrow?
Make us all the burden share.
Are there spirits crushed and broken?
Teach us, Lord, to soothe their care.

As you, Lord, have lived for others,
So may we for others live.
Freely have your gifts been granted;
Freely may your servants give.
Yours the gold and yours the silver,
Yours the wealth of land and sea;
We but stewards of your bounty
Held in solemn trust will be.

INVOCATION

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

CONFESSION

M: Dear friends, let us approach God with a true heart and confess our sins,
asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

C: **Lord of life, I confess that I am by nature dead in sin.**

For faithless worrying and selfish pride,

For sins of habit and sins of choice,

For the evil I have done and the good I have failed to do,

I deserve to be cast away from your presence forever.

O Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me, for Jesus' sake.

ABSOLUTION

M: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. In his great mercy,
God made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in our sins. Hear the
word of Christ through his called servant:

I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of
the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

LORD, HAVE MERCY † (*Kyrie*)

M: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

For the well-being of all people everywhere, that they may receive from you all they need to sustain body and life, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: For the spread of your life-giving gospel throughout the world, that all who are lost in sin may be brought to faith in you, hear our prayer, O Christ.

C: **Christ, have mercy.**

M: For patience and perseverance in this life, that we may not lose the hope of heaven as we await your return, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: Lord of life, live in us that we may live for you.

C: **Amen.**

† Kyrie is the Greek word for Lord. The expression "Lord, have mercy" is one of the oldest worship responses in the Christian church.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, you have promised to be with your Church forever. We thank you for those who founded this community of believers and for the signs of your favor over these past years. Increase our faith, knit us together in the bonds of love, and make our fellowship an example to all people; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

FIRST LESSON

2 Corinthians 1:3-7

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

SECOND LESSON

Galatians 6:9-10

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 10:25-37

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

He answered: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

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 fully 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.

HYMN OF THE DAY

“O Master of the Loving Heart”

Hymn 491

O Master of the loving heart,
The friend of all in need,
We pray that we may be like you
In thought and word and deed.

Your days were full of kindly acts;
Your speech was true and plain;
Of those who ever sought you, Lord,
None came to you in vain.

Your face was warm with sympathy;
Your hand God's strength revealed;
Who saw your face or felt your touch
Were comforted and healed.

Oh, grant us hearts like yours, dear Lord,
So joyous, free and true,
That all your children, ev'rywhere,
Be drawn by us to you.

SERMON

Luke 10:25-37

“Should I stay or should I go now? If I stay it will be trouble; if I go it will be double.” You know the struggle. Even if you’re not a lover of fine punk-rock music, even if you can’t appreciate the finer things of English culture, even if you’ve never heard of The Clash ... you know their struggle: “Should I stay or should I go now; if it stay it will be trouble; if I go it will be double.”

You know the struggle. What you might not know is that almost 500 years ago, Martin Luther was strumming on his lute with that same question: “Should I stay or should I go now.” I should say, that part about Luther on his lute, I made that up. But I’m not making this up - almost 500 years ago, September, October, 1527, Luther was struggling with that same question - “Should I stay or should I go now. If it stay it will be trouble; if I go it will be double.” For Luther it wasn’t a question of breaking up from his band or breaking up with his girlfriend. For Luther and people all across Germany, it was a question of life or death. The Black Plague was rolling across Germany and was striking home in Wittenberg. People wore masks; they quarantined; they tried to keep their distance; and they died - where the plague hit, anywhere from 30-90% of the

people who got the plague died. In Wittenberg, across Germany, it was no small question: "Should I stay or should I go now? If I stay it will be trouble; if I go it will be double."

In our lesson we don't hear that question. But it's there, isn't it? Jesus tells this beautiful story that starts so ugly. A man is hiking down the mountain from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way he is attacked, mugged, beaten, and left for dead. It gets worse. A priest - a man of God - comes along. He sees the man who was beaten and left for dead, and he crosses to the other side and goes on his way. A Levite - another man of God - comes along and does the same thing. He sees the man who was beaten up and left for dead, and he crosses to the other side and goes on his way.

Did you hear the question in their minds? "Should I stay or should I go? If I stay it will be trouble..." It seems they get stuck there on trouble, doesn't it? So what do they do? They go! That's why I think of this parable as the parable of the unholy butts. We have these holy men of God. They see someone - if he's still alive - he's hurting, in trouble, in need. But all these holy men of God can seem to think is "but." "But it might be too dangerous to help." "But I don't have time." "But I'm too busy." "But there's nothing I can do." "But I don't know what to do." "But I don't know him." "But it's not my problem." "But, but, but."

This parable is so damning, isn't it? This COVID-time, how many people haven't we passed on by? - looking the other way, too busy, too afraid something bad might happen if we check in. Like the priest and the Levite, we have our unholy butts - "I know I should, but this, but that..." Listening to our excuses, watching us walk by, can you imagine how that makes God feel? Half-way into the parable, Jesus has me; he has me damned. But Jesus isn't done with me. He's not done with us. He's not ready to let us off too soon.

A Samaritan comes along. Almost as a rule, Jews looked down on Samaritans, looked down on them and treated them like filthy dogs to be kicked away. So after the two men of God pass on by, who comes along? A Samaritan! He sees the man who was beaten and robbed. And he takes pity on him. He goes to him, cleans his wounds with wine, soothes the torn-up skin with oil, bandages his wounds. He puts the man on his own donkey, takes him to an inn,

takes care of him. And then the next day, he doesn't just go on his way. No, he pays the innkeeper two days wages - **"Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have."**

Jesus turns the ugly story beautiful, and he damns me all the more. After all of our unholy buts, but this, but that ... how many times haven't we been shown up? How many times haven't we been shown up by someone who could have so easily walked on by, but instead they stopped to help when we wouldn't? How many times haven't we been shown up by someone we've looked down on, only to have them step in and step up far better than we ourselves? How many times haven't we been shown up by someone busier than we are who made the time to step in to do what we should have but didn't get done? How many times haven't we been shown up by someone worse off than we are; yet even though they're worse off, they're the ones who stepped up to give what was needed? How many times haven't we been shown up and shamed for our excuses?

I need to hear that. It can be so easy to be like the expert in our lesson, so easy to rest on our excuses, to rest on our goodness, so easy to take what God is looking for from us and to shrink it down, so we can imagine ourselves good enough for God. Jesus doesn't let us do that here, does he? Instead, Jesus opens our eyes to see that God wants so much more from us. We hear that word "more" and we might think: "I'm already at wit's end; I can't do any more." But Jesus didn't come to squeeze more out of us. He came to give more to us, to give better to us.

In our parable, what does Jesus show us? Someone unexpected shows up. He steps in, steps up, takes responsibility, cares, shares; he doesn't worry about the danger or the cost or inconvenience; he does what needs to be done, and more. Does that remind you of anybody else? Someone even more gracious and generous - Jesus himself. Jesus didn't just pass on by. Jesus didn't answer the Father's call to serve with a list of unholy buts - "But it's not my thing. But I hardly know them. But it won't do much good. But this, but that." No, Jesus saw us and he knew what we deserved, but he didn't leave us for dead. He

stepped in and stepped up for us. He knew it would cost him, but he didn't count the cost to be too much. Instead, he knew what we needed, and he paid the cost. Like the man in our lesson - stripped, beaten, and left for dead. But worse. Jesus was stripped, beaten, and left for dead by God. Why? Instead of judging us and taking his anger out on us, God the Father judged Jesus and took his anger out on him. And Jesus paid the cost. Why? So that instead of walking on by, he can hold you, so he can wash your guilt, so he can soothe your heartaches, so he can take you home to be his, forgiven full and free.

Forgiven - what a relief! We don't have to stand before God as someone who walked on by. We don't have to beat ourselves up as someone who dropped the ball, who didn't get it right. We don't have to hide in the corner as someone who's been shown up. No, we get step in, step up; we get to check in, check up - like Jesus did for us.

That's why Luther stayed, even when people were dying around him. Luther stayed to step in, to step up, to check in, to check up, to share the love of Jesus. So among your people, who has been beaten down by these COVID-times? Among your people, who might be feeling left behind? Among your people, who has been hijacked by the devil, hijacked by the world, who has gone all Stockholm-syndrome in love with the world that is taking them away from God? Among your people, who needs someone to check in and check up on them? We don't have to cross to the other side. We don't have to keep on our way. We don't have to feed ourselves excuses - but this, but that. We don't have to Clash: "Should I stay or should I go now?" And we don't have to get stuck on trouble - "if I stay it will be trouble." No, we're with Jesus. So let's stop, look, listen, and love. Let's step in, step up, check in, check up. Whom will you check in with first? Amen.

HYMN

"I Hear the Savior Calling"
Hymn 560 vs 1,2,3,5

I hear the Savior calling! The gospel comes to me.
My eyes once closed in blindness Are opened now to see.
That I myself was helpless To live eternally,
But, dying, Christ did save me, And now he calls for me!

I hear the Savior calling! He leads a soul to me,
A soul in bitter anguish, One needing to be free.
The gift I have to offer Is Christ, my Lord's decree
That all have been forgiven - My Savior calls for me!

I hear the Savior calling! He gives this charge to me;
To serve the best I'm able, What-e'er the call may be.
Thus hand in hand with others Who share the gospel key
We spread the gospel tidings - My Savior calls for me!

I hear the Savior calling! His call has urgency!
Each moment souls are dying; Soon comes eternity.
And so, my precious Savior, This is my humble plea;
Prepare me for my mission For you are calling me!

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: Eternal God and Father, we give you thanks for the blessings we share as members of your holy Church, for your gracious Word and sacraments, for opportunities to worship and to grow in faith and knowledge, for occasions to serve and be served, for fellowship with believers in our congregation and in our synod.

C: **Help us to rejoice in these blessings, dear Lord, and to use them faithfully.**

M: Jesus Christ, Lord of the Church, you give grace to your people by calling us to be your witnesses in the world. Open your eyes to see the great and noble mission that lies before us. In the hurting eyes of lonely, in the pained eyes of the sick, and in the searching eyes of the lost, help us to see your face, O Jesus, and to serve others as we would serve you.

C: **Awaken us to the opportunities you give to proclaim your message of love.**

M: Holy Spirit, giver of life, through Word and sacrament bestow on us the wisdom and power we need to witness clearly and to act boldly. Help us to

speaking the truth in love, to give the reason for the hope we have, and to conduct ourselves with gentleness and respect.

C: Set our hearts on fire as we work and witness for Christ.

M: Hear us, Lord, as we pray for a family member, an acquaintance, a neighbor, or a friend who does not believe in you, or whose faith is weak or troubled.

Silent prayer

M: Bless the Church with men and women who are willing to proclaim your Word in places where we cannot go. Keep them and their loved ones in your care, and let nothing hinder their work. By the power of the gospel, restore their spirits each day, so that they do not lose heart as they serve us and others.

C: Move us to support them with our sincere prayers and generous offerings.

M: Wherever your Word is proclaimed, O Lord, grant it success. Let your kingdom come to us and others, so that we and many more might join the assembly of saints and angels to sing your praise forever.

C: Savior of all, hear our prayer and help us in our mission. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

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 SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

M: The Lord be with you.

C: (Spoken) And also with you.

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them up unto the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: **It is good and right so to do.**

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who rose from the dead in glorious triumph to bring forgiveness to the world and everlasting life to all who believe.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: 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."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: **Amen.**

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BEFORE COMMUNION PRAYER

Lord, I am not worthy to be a guest at your holy table. But you are the friend of sinners, and you will not cast me out. This bread is your body, which bore my sins upon the tree. This wine is your blood, which purifies me from all guilt. At your invitation, I come rejoicing. Receive me, my Savior.

AFTER COMMUNION PRAYER

Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ, for nourishing me in this sacrament with your body and blood. You have given me forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Let me always remain in you as a branch remains in the vine. Send me out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory.

M: We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet that you have given us to eat and to drink 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.

BLESSING

M: 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.

CLOSING HYMN

*“Sent Forth by God’s Blessing”
Hymn 318*

Sent forth by God’s blessing, Our true faith confessing,
The people of God from his dwelling take leave.
The supper is ended; Oh, be now extended
The fruits of this service in all who believe.
The seed of his teaching, Receptive souls reaching,
Shall blossom in action for God and for all.
His grace did invite us; His love shall unite us
To work for God’s kingdom and answer his call.

With praise and thanksgiving, To God ever living,
The tasks of our ev’ry-day life we will face.
Our faith ever sharing, In love ever caring,
Embracing his children of each tribe and race.
With your feast you feed us; With your light now lead us;
Unite us as one in this life that we share.
Then may all the living With praise and thanksgiving
Give honor to Christ and his name that we bear.

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