

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.

NEW MORNING PRAISE

IN OUR WORLD AND IN OUR WORSHIP... After six months of COVID-time, we've taken time for a Stop! Look! Listen! Check-up. Today, as we wrap up our series, we ask ourselves: Now what? What will we do? How will we follow through?

OPENING HYMN

"Awake, My Soul, and with the Sun"

Hymn 582

Awake, my soul, and with the sun
Your daily stage of duty run;
Shake off your sleep and joyful rise
To bring your morning sacrifice.

All praise to you, who safe have kept
And have refreshed me while I slept.
Grant, Lord, when I from death shall wake,
I may of endless light partake.

Lord, all my prayers ascend to you:
Disperse my sins as morning dew,
Guard my first springs of thought and will,
And with your light my spirit fill.

Direct, control, suggest this day
All I design or do or say
That all my pow'rs with all their might
In your sole glory may unite.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, you heav'nly host--
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION OF SINS

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: **Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

C: **Amen.**



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COME, OH, COME, LET US SING TO THE LORD

①

Come, oh, come, let us sing to the Lord,

②

let us shout with joy to our sav - ing Rock;

③

come, en - ter in with our songs of praise,

Repeat for use with canon

come, en - ter in with thanks - giv - ing.

Verses

1. You are a great and a won - drous God,
2. Come, let us wor - ship and, bow - ing low,

cup - ping in your hands all the depths of earth.
kneel be - fore the One who has made us all.

You made the hills and the moun - tains high,
You are the God whom we call our own,

to Refrain

you made the seas and the dry land.
we are the flock that you shep - herd.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- M:** Lord, we pray that your mercy and grace may always go before and follow after us that, loving you with undivided hearts, we may be ready for every good and useful work; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C:** **Amen.**

LESSON

2 Peter 1-11

Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.

Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe 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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there 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.

O Christ, who called the Twelve
To rise and follow you,
Forsaking old, familiar ways
For ventures bold and new:
Grant us to hear your call
To risk security
And bound in heart and will to you,
Find perfect liberty.

O Christ, who taught the Twelve
The truth for ages sealed,
Whose words and works awakened faith,
The ways of God revealed:
Instruct us now, we pray,
By your empow'ring Word.
True teacher, be for all who seek
Their light, their life, their Lord.

O Christ, who sent the Twelve
On roads they'd never trod
To serve, to suffer, teach, proclaim
The nearer reign of God:
Send us on ways where faith
Transcends timidity.
Where love informs and hope sustains
Both life and ministry.

O Christ, th' apostles' Lord,
The martyrs' strength and song,
The crucified and risen King
To whom the saints belong:
Though generations pass, Our tribute still we bring,
Our hymns a sacrifice of praise, Our lives an offering.

Now what? What's next? It doesn't look good, does it? Another day of cold, wet, dreary. Another week with COVID rates up, hospitals filling up; if this goes on, restaurants and businesses shutting down. Nine days until the election, and no matter whom we're voting for, most all of us have a sense of dread over what will happen if the other guy wins. And for some of you, that's not the worst of what's bothering you. Because no matter what happens with the weather or with COVID, no matter what happens with the election, you see the world around you and inside you really mixed up and messed up - and it hurts, it scares. You look around you, you look inside you, and you wonder: "Now what? What's next?" I didn't want to go there. I wanted to tell you a nice happy story that would have you sitting on the edge of your seats. Instead, what I have is the bitter pill of reality. So now what? What's next?

I tell you about some people who would understand. They didn't have COVID, but they did have plagues and famine and pestilence, and something far worse - a world set against them. They didn't have election nastiness like we have, but they did have tyrants and governments who one day would protect them, and then another day turn dead-set against them, prosecutors and persecutors who might feed them to the lions, or burn them at the stake, or skin them alive, or crucify them. Why? For being Christian, for living like Christians, for not fitting in. That's right, for being Christian, for living as Christians, for not fitting into their mixed-up, messed up world, the world turned against them.

So why not fit in? Why not go along? Wouldn't that be easier? Because they knew that life with Jesus was better than whatever they would get by fitting in. They knew what it was like to live the life of the world, mixed up, messed up - no peace, no justice, no hope. They knew what it was like to live wondering: "Why? What's the point?" They knew what it was like to live with a sense of dread and doom - "Now what? What's next?" - and to face death with that same sense of well-deserved dread and doom. And they knew that giving up Jesus to fit in with the world wouldn't fix any of that. And so do we, don't we?

That's why you're here, isn't it? Like Peter and his people, you know what it's like to be rescued from dread and doom, don't you? You know how good it is to leave that old life behind, to have your old life forgiven in the blood of Jesus, to be chosen by God, called by God, loved by God, held by God. In this mixed up, messed up world, in our mixed up, messed up minds, you know how good it is to have peace - maybe not peace with the world, but - peace with God, peace with your Judge. And if not, even if you don't feel it or know it, you get to.

Why? Because like Peter and his people, Jesus died for you. Like them, Jesus has washed your sin away. Like them, you get to hear Jesus invite you close - "Come to me; follow me; live life with me forever!" He says that to you! Like them, with Jesus you get to hear the Father say to you: **"You are my son, my daughter, whom I love; with you I am well-pleased."** For them, for you, Peter put it this way: **"You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of him who had called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."** That's right, you are treasured and forgiven by God; your life has a purpose, a divine purpose that never ends; God has a purpose for you here today and life with him forever in heaven. That's what Peter had in mind when he wrote: **"Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."**

What did that mean for Peter and his people? They didn't have to face life with dread and doom - "Now what? What's next?" - disillusioned, disappointed, frustrated. They didn't have to face life running, chasing - "Now what? What's next?" trying to find that something more, something better, something different that would make them feel good about life. No, God already had for them ..., God already has for us a better, a divine "something more, something better, something different!"

We get to live a life in partnership with God! In our mixed-up, messed-up world, a world so short on real goodness, so mixed up on real love ... partnering with God, we get to show the world the goodness of God. In the way we love, we get to show the world the love of God. In a world of stress and worry, dread and doom, we get to show the world what a relief it is to have peace with Jesus. Yes, in this dying world, we get to live a life that shows people, that gives people

a taste of heaven.

Yes, we get to do that! You get to do that! Isn't that wonderful? Or with all that's going on in your life, does it sound overwhelming? Or both? Peter tells us that God has already given us everything we need to live that life. How? With God's promises, we get to share in the divine nature! As we tap into God's Word, we get to tap into God and all he is and all he has. Think of your favorite miracle - you get to tap into that power. Think of how Jesus showed his kindness and love - you get to tap into that kindness and love. Think of Jesus' confidence, how much he trusted his Father, our Father - he took on the body of a little baby and trusted God to take care of him with Mary and Joseph. Think of Jesus' confidence in the face of trouble: "Father, not my will, but your will be done." Think of his confidence in the face of death: "Father, into your hands, I commit my spirit." You get to tap into that same confidence.

How? It sounds like a contradiction. First, Peter says that - in his promises - God has already given you everything you need to live that life. But those promises don't unleash all their power unless you use them. So, then Peter says: **"make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love."**

Over these past few weeks, we have heard some great promises. We started with our identity; who are you? In baptism: **"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.... You are heirs of God"** - think heaven and all that heaven has to offer. Then we asked: "how are you?" In our stressed world, we heard Jesus' invitation, his promise: *"Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest."* Then we looked in the mirror and asked again: "How are you doing?" and we heard God's promise: **"the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control."** Last week we asked about the people in your life, and we heard how we can share the love of Jesus. Today we heard Jesus promise: **"I am the vine; you are the branches. ... If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. [Why?] This is to my**

Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

Those are some big promises, aren't they? Would you like to unleash the power in those promises? Peter tells us how: **"make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love."** So, what's next? How will you unleash the power of God's promises in your life? Amen.

HYMN

"When Jesus Came From Nazareth"

Hymn 772



1 When Je - sus came from Naz - a - reth, he
 2 He led them o - ver un - known ways whose
 3 We make our vows, O Christ, to - day to
 4 Lord, grant us grace to walk your way and,
 5 Good Shep - herd, ris - en from the grave, in



walked be - side the sea. He saw four
 end they could not see And, when they
 serve you faith - ful - ly. For you have
 fal - ling, rise a - gain Re - stored, for -
 death our com - fort be: Call out, from



fish - er - men and called, "Come, fol - low,
 fal - tered, called a - gain, "Come, fol - low,
 called us each by name, "Come, fol - low,
 giv - en, hear - ing still, "Come, fol - low,
 heav'n, where you have gone, "Come, fol - low,



fol - low me! Come, fol - low, fol - low me!"
 fol - low me! Come, fol - low, fol - low me!"
 fol - low me! Come, fol - low, fol - low me!"
 fol - low me! Come, fol - low, fol - low me!"
 fol - low me! Come, fol - low, fol - low me!"

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Tune: FOLLOW ME (14 14 6) Randall Sensmeier © 1999 GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved.
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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.

M: O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to this new day. Defend us with your mighty power, and grant that this day we neither fall into sin nor run into any kind of danger; and in all we do, direct us to what is right in your sight, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

C: Amen.

BLESSING



L The Lord bless and keep you.



C A - men.



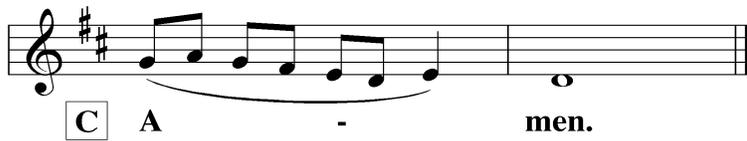
L The Lord's face ev - er shine up - on you.



C A - men.



L The Lord grant you peace for all your days.



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CLOSING HYMN

“Ready, Lord” (V 1,3,4 from songbook)

Ready, Lord, I'm ready, Lord,
to follow where you lead;
Oh, show me, Lord, just show me, Lord,
the service you will need.
Ready, Lord, I'm ready, Lord,
I'm ready, come what may,
So call me, Lord, just call me, Lord,
and I'll be on your way.

More than words, yes, more than words,
I know you want from me;
Moving, Lord, I'm moving, Lord,
I'm moving eagerly.
Take my heart and take my hands,
my feet, my life, my all;
I'm ready, Lord, so ready, Lord,
to follow till I fall.

If today's my final day,
My final day on earth,
Thank you, Lord, oh, thank you, Lord,
For life, for breath, for birth.
If this town is gonna be
my final resting place,
I'm ready, Lord, yes, ready, Lord,
to meet you face to face.

OFFERING

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Morning Praise *Texts revised from The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941. "Blessing," "Come, Oh, Come, Let Us Sing to the Lord,"*

Prayer Response, "You Are God; We Praise You" ...Marty Haugen. Text, Tune, Setting: © 1995, 1996 by GIA Publications, Inc.

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