

**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
*A Family Connecting in Christ*

## **WELCOME TO ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**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. Our worship 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. If you have questions, please ask! We are blessed to have you with us!

### **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 Fellowship Hall are audio-equipped for you and your young children. After the children regain their composure, come back so we can all worship together.

### **We Care about Your Special Needs**

Hearing Assistance for those with hearing aids is provided through our Hearing Loop. More information is available from an usher. 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 and K-8 grade-school program. We are ministry partners with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) - [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net).

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Principal Jon Woldt  
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Christmas 2020  
Candlelight Service

## The Unchanging Hope of Christmas

*In the spirit of the evening,  
please be quieted when the music begins.*

### PRELUDE

OPENING HYMN *(Please stand after vs. 2)*

*"Once in Royal David's City"*  
Hymn 50

Once in royal David's city  
Stood a lowly cattle shed,  
Where a mother laid her baby  
In a manger for his bed;  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven  
Who is God and Lord of all,  
And his shelter was a stable,  
And his cradle was a stall;  
With the poor and mean and lowly  
Lived on earth our Savior holy. *(Please Stand.)*

But our eyes in truth should see him  
Through his own redeeming love,  
For that child so dear and gentle  
Is our Lord in heav'n above,  
As he leads his children on  
To the place where he is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable  
with the oxen standing by  
Shall we see him, but in heaven,  
Set at God's right hand on high.  
Then like stars his children crowned,  
All in white his praise will sound!

M: Dear people of God, in this Christmas season it is our duty and delight to hear again the message of the angels and, in heart and mind, to go to Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us—the Christ Child lying in a manger.

Let us read and learn in Holy Scripture the story of the loving purposes of God who in his right time sent a Savior to deliver us for all time.

But first, let us pray for people all over the world who would delight with us to know the good news of Jesus Christ, and who would join with us in singing his praises. Let us pray for the people of Lake County and for all those in our own congregation.

And, because this would please our Lord, let us remember, in his name, the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed, the sick and those who are sad, the lonely and the unloved, the elderly and the little children. We especially remember all those who do not know the Lord Jesus, or who do not love him, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Finally, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us in heaven, who live in greater light than we, that multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, who died in faith, and who live before the throne of God and praise him each day in his temple. We confess that we are united with them as we are united with one another. To sum up all these petitions, let us pray as Christ himself taught us.

#### 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.**

#### LESSON

Genesis 3:1-15,20

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

“You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

So the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this,

Cursed are you above all the livestock  
and all the wild animals!  
You will crawl on your belly  
and you will eat dust  
all the days of your life.  
And I will put enmity  
between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring and hers;  
he will crush your head,  
and you will strike his heel.”

Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

## DEVOTION 1 –

Let's go back in time before COVID, before masks (and pants and shirts and dresses), back before cooped-up brothers and sisters poked at each other, back before cooped-up moms and dads got on each other's nerves. We go back in time to when mom and dad got along perfectly, when mom and dad walked and talked with God himself. And everything, almost everything in the whole universe was good, very good.

Except somebody didn't like God's idea of good. He wanted his own twisted sense of good. He didn't want to have to answer to God. Perhaps he expected God to let him do his own thing. Perhaps he outright expected to replace God. Either way, when God refused evil a place in his home, when God refused the Devil a place in his home, the devil, that is Satan, set out to destroy the goodness God gave us. Satan set out to destroy what he couldn't have, what we did have with God - everything right, perfect peace, perfect togetherness with God.

Satan set out to destroy. How? Satan used lies to poison our relationship with God; he used lies to poison our relationship with each other. You know the lies. He still uses them today. He lies: "Be true to yourself. Do what you think looks good, sounds good, feels good. When God says 'no,' that's not your bad; that's his bad. He's just trying to hold you back, keep you down. Be true to yourself; that's the way to live."

Satan still uses those same lies today. He turns us in on ourselves and against each other. He turns us in on ourselves and against God. And what do we have? Life out there is no paradise, is it? And life in here is no paradise either. The more we listen to the devil's lies, the more we turn in on ourselves, the more we push God off, the more we get a taste of life without God and his goodness, the more we get a taste of hell. That's right, hell - God's answer, God's judgment for those who push him off.

Listening to Satan, Adam and Eve told themselves that they didn't need to listen to God. They swallowed the lie that they could do better for themselves by doing their own thing. And what happened? Instead of doing better for themselves, they got a taste of what happens when we choose our goodness over God's goodness, our way over God's way. And together we've been choking on the devil's lies ever since.

Adam and Eve chose their way instead of God's way, but God didn't give up on them so easily. He doesn't give up on us so easily. Instead of just turning his back on Adam and Eve and on us, God stepped in with a promise. "I will put enmity [hostility, warfare] ...." God wasn't about to let Satan get away with what he had done. He would fight back. He would reclaim Adam and Eve as his own, and then he would fight back at the devil through Adam and Eve, and then through their children. And then someday, he would fight back at the devil through a Champion who would crush the devil's head.

We know that Champion as Jesus. He fought a strange kind of battle. Instead of a pre-emptive strike against Satan from heaven, Jesus became one of us, like us. Standing in for us, taking our place in life, taking our place in death, he took the devil's best shots. But Satan couldn't take him. Taking our place, Jesus never once gave in or gave up. Instead Jesus stood in for us, stood up to Satan, and stood true to God.

Adam and Eve knew what that promise meant. Instead of life without God, instead of life with God against them, they would get to live life with God against Satan. They would get to live life knowing a Champion was coming to put their enemy in his place. They would get to live life looking forward to life made right again.

That promise hasn't changed. Instead of the promise changing, with Christmas, the promise is confirmed. Our Champion has come and he's crushed the enemy. From Christmas to Good Friday, to Easter, he's crushed the enemy and today he stands ready - when the time is right - to deliver for you.

Like Adam and Eve, we get to live a life of hope. It doesn't matter what happens in our world today, we get to live with this unchanging hope - Jesus will undo what the devil has done; he will undo what the devil is doing. Jesus, God's Champion for you, will deliver.

HYMN

*"Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising"*

**Hymn 42**

Come, your hearts and voices raising,  
Christ the Lord with gladness praising;  
Loudly sing his love amazing,  
Worthy folk of Christendom.

See how God, for us providing,  
Gave his Son and life abiding;  
He our weary steps is guiding  
From earth's woe to heav'nly joy.

Christ, from heaven to us descending  
And in love our race befriending,  
In our need his help extending,  
Saved us from the wily Foe.

Jacob's Star in all its splendor  
Beams with comfort sweet and tender,  
Forcing Satan to surrender,  
Breaking all the pow'rs of hell.

Gracious Child, we pray you, hear us,  
From your lowly manger cheer us,  
Gently lead us and be near us  
Till we join th' angelic choir.

## DEVOTION 2 –

What Israel was going through would make this COVID-time seem like child's play. Not just for weeks or months, but for years they were on the front line, the enemy coming in taking what they wanted. Some days they just took stuff; other days they took family, friends, neighbors, sons and daughters. Not just for weeks or months, but for years, they lived and died with a darkness inside - a hopeless, helpless darkness. Oh, they tried all the cures - blaming God, excusing self, lighting themselves up with drink, lighting themselves up with sex. They tried all the cures, but when all was said and done, they were still in the dark, empty and alone.

And then God gave them a light, a promise - he wouldn't leave them alone. A virgin would conceive and bear a son; he would be called Immanuel, God with us! That's right, this child, this miracle baby, would be God himself. As God, he wouldn't just make promises; he would keep his promises. He wouldn't just look out for himself; he would look out for his people. He wouldn't just set himself up; he would set his people up with justice and righteousness - he would make life right for his people. He wouldn't just be a flicker of light snuffed out, with hopes raised and then crashed and crushed. No, he will work his justice, his righteousness, his peace for his people forever. That is the unchanging hope that you get to have - no matter how dark things may seem, he will work his justice, his righteousness, his peace - he will make life right, forever.

### LESSON

Isaiah 9:2, 6, 7

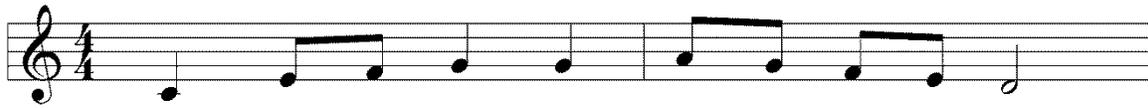
The people walking in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
on those living in the land of the shadow of death  
a light has dawned.

For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Of the increase of his government and peace  
there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne  
and over his kingdom,  
establishing and upholding it  
with justice and righteousness  
from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the LORD Almighty  
will accomplish this.



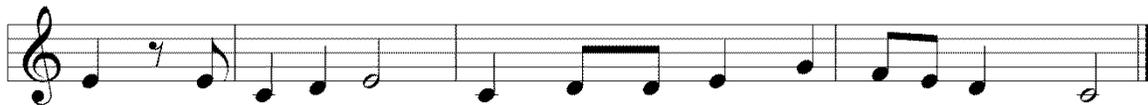
1 Peace came to earth at last that cho - sen night  
 2 And who could be the same for hav - ing held  
 3 You show the Fa - ther none has ev - er seen,  
 4 How else could I have known you, O my God!



When an - gels clove the sky with song and light And  
 The in - fant in their arms and lat - er felt The  
 In flesh and blood you bore our griefs and pain, In  
 How else could I have loved you, O my God! How



God em - bod - ied love and sheathed his might— Who could but  
 wound-ed hands and side, all doubts dis - pelled— Who could but  
 bread and wine you vis - it us a - gain— Who could but  
 else could I em - brace you, O my God! Who could but



gasp: Im - man - u - el! Who could but sing: Im - man - u - el!  
 sigh: Im - man - u - el! Who could but shout: Im - man - u - el!  
 see: Im - man - u - el! Who could but thrill: Im - man - u - el!  
 pray: Im - man - u - el! Who could but praise: Im - man - u - el!

## DEVOTION 3 –

Do you ever feel left out? Do you ever feel left out because you're not enough? Not smart enough, big enough, strong enough, funny enough, rich enough, just not enough? The little town of Bethlehem was not enough, not enough to matter much. Except to God. It didn't matter how small Bethlehem was, how poor, how insignificant, God had a promise for Bethlehem. It didn't matter how small Bethlehem was, how poor, how insignificant, God kept his promise to Bethlehem. In that little town out in sheep and shepherd country, God brought his Shepherd into world. He wouldn't be too small, too insignificant, too not enough. In the strength of the Lord, he would stand and shepherd his flock. In the strength of the Lord, the small, the poor, the left out and those not good enough - they would have a Shepherd to stand up for them and make life right for them.

Do you ever feel left out, forgotten, passed by, not good enough? If so, this promise is for you. Jesus was born in little, forgotten Bethlehem for you. He won't think himself too big and important for you. He won't think or make himself too busy for you. He came for you!

**LESSON**

Micah 5:2-5a

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
though you are small among the clans of Judah,  
out of you will come for me  
one who will be ruler over Israel,  
whose origins are from of old,  
from ancient times.”

Therefore Israel will be abandoned  
until the time when she who is in labor gives birth  
and the rest of his brothers return  
to join the Israelites.  
He will stand and shepherd his flock  
in the strength of the LORD,  
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.  
And they will live securely, for then his greatness  
will reach to the ends of the earth.  
And he will be their peace.

**HYMN**

*“To Shepherds as They Watched by Night”*  
Hymn 53

To shepherds as they watched by night  
Appeared a host of angels bright;  
“Behold the tender babe,” they said,  
“In yonder lowly manger laid,

“At Bethlehem, in David’s town,  
As Micah did of old make known.  
It is the Christ, your Lord and King,  
Who will to all salvation bring.”

Oh, then rejoice that through his Son  
God is with sinners now at one;  
Made like yourselves of flesh and blood,  
Your brother is th’eternal God.

What harm can sin and death then do?  
The true God now abides with you.  
Let hell and Satan storm and rave,

Christ is your brother - you are safe.  
Not one he will or can forsake;  
His cov'nant he will never break.  
Let ev'ry scheme the tempter try,  
You may his utmost pow'rs defy.

You shall and must at last prevail.  
God's own you are; you cannot fail.  
To God forever sing your praise  
With joy and patience all your days.

#### THE CHRISTMAS LESSON – PART 1

Luke 2:1-7

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

**HYMN**

*“O Little Town of Bethlehem”*

**Hymn 65 (vs 1,2)**

O little town of Bethlehem,  
How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy darkness shineth  
The everlasting Light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary,  
And, gathered, all above,  
While mortals sleep, The angels keep  
Their watch of wond’ring love.  
O morning stars, together  
Proclaim the holy birth,  
And praises sing To God the King  
And peace to all the earth.

**THE CHRISTMAS LESSON – PART 2**

Luke 2:8-14

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

HYMN

*"Go Tell It on the Mountain"*

Hymn 57

Go tell it on the mountain,  
Over the hills, and everywhere!  
Go tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching  
O'er silent flocks by night,  
Behold throughout the heavens  
There shone a holy light.  
Go tell it on the mountain ...

The shepherds feared and trembled  
When lo! above the earth  
Rang out the angel chorus  
That hailed our Savior's birth.  
Go tell it on the mountain ...

Down in a lowly manger  
Our humble Christ was born,  
And God sent us salvation  
That blessed Christmas morn.  
Go tell it on the mountain ...

THE CHRISTMAS LESSON – PART 3

Luke 2:15-20

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

## DEVOTION 4 –

I've hinted at it, said it in different words. I think our songs have said it better. We aren't here to celebrate the world's idea of Christmas. We're not here to celebrate family. We're not here to celebrate love and giving. We aren't here to get a warm, fuzzy feel on a cold, dark night. We're here to celebrate the birth of Jesus as our Savior. We heard how he came to be our Champion against sin and Satan; we heard how he came to give us the hope that better days are coming. We heard how he was born to be our Brother, to take our place as guilty, to take our place in life doing the right that needs to be done, to take our place in death paying for the wrong we've done. Why? This is how Jesus himself put it: **“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”**

Jesus was born so that we can have life with God. In that way we are here to celebrate family - a place with Jesus in God's family. And we are here to celebrate love and giving - God's love, God's giving in Jesus. With Jesus, we get to have life the way it's supposed to be - life with God looking out for us today, and life with God forever in heaven. That is the Unchanging Hope in Christmas!

## HYMN

*“What Child Is This”*

Hymn 67

What child is this who, laid to rest,  
On Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet With anthems sweet  
While shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the King,  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing.  
Haste, haste to bring him laud,  
The babe, the Son of Mary.

Why lies he in such mean estate  
Where oxen now are feeding?  
Good Christians, fear; For sinners here  
The silent Word is pleading.  
Nails, spear shall pierce him through;  
The cross he'll bear for me, for you.  
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,  
The babe, the Son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;  
Come, peasant, king, to own him.  
The King of kings Salvation brings;  
Let loving hearts enthrone him.  
Raise, raise the song on high;  
The virgin sings her lullaby.  
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,  
The babe, the Son of Mary.

*Distribution of candles (See back page.)*  
**Once your candle is lit, always hold it upright.**

*Please stand*

HYMN

*“Silent Night! Holy Night”*  
Hymn 60

Silent night! Holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright,  
Round young virgin mother and child.  
Holy infant, so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night! Holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight.  
Glories stream from heaven afar;  
Heavenly hosts sing, Alleluia;  
Christ the Savior is born!  
Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night! Holy night!  
Son of God, love’s pure light  
Radiant beams from thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord at thy birth,  
Jesus, Lord at thy birth.

**PRAYER**

M: When all was still in the midst of the night, Emmanuel, the Prince of Peace, descended from the almighty throne to dwell among us. May we receive him in the peace of forgiven hearts and proclaim your gracious goodwill to all people on earth, for he is God with us, Emmanuel, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

*Extinguish candles (please hold upright until the wax hardens)*

**BLESSING**

M: Go forth into the world in peace, be of good courage, hold fast to that which is good, render to no one evil for evil, strengthen the fainthearted, support the weak, help the afflicted, honor all people, love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And the blessing of God Almighty—the Father, the Son, † and the Holy Spirit—be upon you and remain with you forever.

C: **Amen.**

**CLOSING HYMN**

*“Joy to the World”*

**Hymn 62**

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let ev’ry heart prepare Him room  
And heav’n and nature sing,  
And heav’n and nature sing,  
And heav’n, and heav’n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ,  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make his blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, wonders of His love.

**OFFERING – A Gift for Our Savior**

If you would like to leave an offering for your Savior, we have an offering plate near the front door and our old wood church in the Narthax.

*If you prefer online giving, you may scan this code with your mobile device.*



*Thank you to our choir and musicians this Christmas week!  
Beth Rockwell: flute and keyboards; Monica Wintrone: violin and keyboards; Justin Wintrone: trombone; Louis Luedtke: trumpet; Steve Lemerand: percussion; Greg Haak: flute and recorder;  
Tim Samelson: guitar and keyboards; Lucas Luedtke: saxophone; and Anna Hirons: harp.*

**Join Us In Worship This Christmas Season!**

Sunday, December 29 - 9 am Worship  
New Year's Eve Service - 5 pm



## **For Your Safety During the Candle Lighting in This Service**

- The Village of Libertyville and the Libertyville Fire Department require us to follow some rules when using hand-held candles. This is for your safety and the safety of all who worship here.
- The ushers will hand out wax candles only to adults and teenagers. Children under 10 should not be allowed to hold a lit candle. LED candles are available for children and all who prefer them.
- Ushers will be stationed to observe the whole worship area while the hand-held candles are lit. They are ready with fire extinguishers should any problem develop.
- Note where the exits are. In case of a fire, calmly proceed to the nearest exit.
- **Once your candle is lit, always hold it upright.**
- Keep the flame away from hair and clothing.
- When the lights come on after the prayer, blow the candle out and hold it upright until you exit. After the service ushers will be waiting with metal cans at the exits for candle disposal.
- Please keep pieces of wax from falling on the floor. It will make the after-service cleanup much easier.

***In the Peace and Joy of the Christ-child,  
Have a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year***