



Third Sunday in Advent

December 13, 2020

## Welcome to St. John

*We are very pleased that you have joined us for worship today. If you are visiting for the first time, we have a welcome gift for you. We also appreciate any comments or suggestions that you may have. Thank you for coming today!*

Holy Communion is celebrated weekly, and we offer guidance for those visiting in the following pages underneath the heading “Communion Distribution.”

Our bulletin is all you will need for worship this morning. We have inserted helpful information in *italics* including when, if able, to stand and sit. Congregation responses are in **bold**.

Children are welcome at St. John. We have worship activity bags located at each sanctuary entrance. All children are encouraged to come forward during Children’s Time. Our parents of children are welcome to use the Family Room at any time during worship—it is located in the Nursery School wing (upstairs). The room is open for families to use as needed for their children. We also have a baby changing station in the restroom by the main office. Please ask an usher if you have any questions.

Following our services, we will have beverages, cookies and conversation in our Great Room. We hope that you will join us and introduce yourself to others.

St. John Lutheran Church 1802 Skippack Pike, Blue Bell, PA 19422

[www.stjohnbluebell.org](http://www.stjohnbluebell.org) [www.facebook.com/stjohnbluebell](https://www.facebook.com/stjohnbluebell)

Nursery School website: [www.stjohnsns.com](http://www.stjohnsns.com)

610-277-1086

### Staff:

Pastor Rachel Manke  
Lawrence Baker, Director of Music  
Ann Brennan, Visual Arts Program Coordinator  
Carrie Engel, Nursery School Director  
Katie Myers, Webmaster  
Barry Stock, Facilities Coordinator  
Marcie Godby, Bookkeeper  
Vincent Bruno, Youth & Family Director  
Sue Klosterman, Church Office Assistant

[pastorstjohnbluebell@gmail.com](mailto:pastorstjohnbluebell@gmail.com)  
[lawrencebaker22@gmail.com](mailto:lawrencebaker22@gmail.com)  
[annlb609@gmail.com](mailto:annlb609@gmail.com)  
[carrie@stjohnsns.com](mailto:carrie@stjohnsns.com)  
[stjohnbluebell@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnbluebell@gmail.com)  
[stock825@comcast.net](mailto:stock825@comcast.net)  
[stjohn1802bookkeeper@gmail.com](mailto:stjohn1802bookkeeper@gmail.com)  
[stjohn1802youth@gmail.com](mailto:stjohn1802youth@gmail.com)  
[stjohn1802@gmail.com](mailto:stjohn1802@gmail.com)

*Our Council Members are listed on our website.*

*Celebrating 250 years of mission and ministry, 1769-2019.*



Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

## Order for Worship

Prelude ~ “Come My Light”

Duet- Rob Laird and Jonathan Oehler

Oh come, oh come, Emmanuel. Jesus, the Light of the world!

Come, my light, and illumine my darkness.  
Come, my life, and revive me from death.  
Come, my physician, heal my wounds.  
Come, come, Jesus, the light of the world!

Come, flame of divine love, and burn up the thorns of my sins,  
kindling my heart with the flame of love.

Come, my king, sit upon the throne of my heart,  
Come and reign in my heart.  
For thou alone art my king and my lord.  
Come, come, Jesus the light of the world!

Text: Dimitri of Rostow, 17<sup>th</sup> century

Music: Anne Krentz Organ

### Confession and Forgiveness

P: *All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit,  
whose forgiveness is sure  
and whose steadfast love endures forever.

**C: Amen.**

P: Together let us honestly and humbly confess  
that we have not lived as God desires.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P: Loving and forgiving God,

**C: we confess that we are held captive by sin.  
In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray.  
We have not welcomed the stranger;  
we have not loved our neighbor;  
we have not been Christ to one another.  
Restore us, O God.  
Wake us up and turn us from our sin.  
Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.**

- P: People of God, hear this glad news:  
by God's endless grace  
your sins are forgiven, and you are free—  
free from all that holds you back  
and free to live in the peaceable realm of God.  
May you be strengthened in God's love,  
✠ comforted by Christ's peace,  
and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit.
- C: Amen.

### Gathering Hymn ~ "Prepare the Royal Highway"



1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!

3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!


4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!

Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.

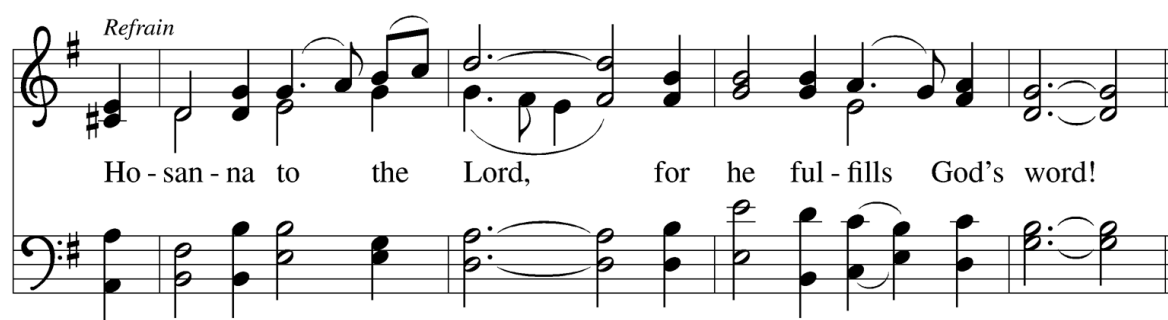
His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:

All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:

So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:



Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*  
 Music: BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.  
 Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

### Greeting

P: The grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

### Prayer of the Day

P: Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

### Children's Message

### Lighting of the Advent Wreath

#### Advent Blessing

Blessed are you, God of might and majesty, for you promise to make the desert rejoice and blossom, to watch over the strangers, and to set the prisoners free.

*As we light these three candles, satisfy our hunger with your good gifts, open our eyes to the great things you have done for us, and fill us with patience until the coming of the Lord Jesus.*

O ransomed people of the Lord, come,  
**let us travel on God's holy way  
 and enter into Zion with singing. Amen.**

# Word

First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

A: The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and release to the prisoners;  
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;  
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a garland instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.  
They shall build up the ancient ruins,  
they shall raise up the former devastations;  
they shall repair the ruined cities,  
the devastations of many generations.

For I the LORD love justice,  
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;  
I will faithfully give them their recompense,  
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.  
Their descendants shall be known among the nations,  
and their offspring among the peoples;  
all who see them shall acknowledge  
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.  
I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,  
my whole being shall exult in my God;  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.  
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring up before all the nations.

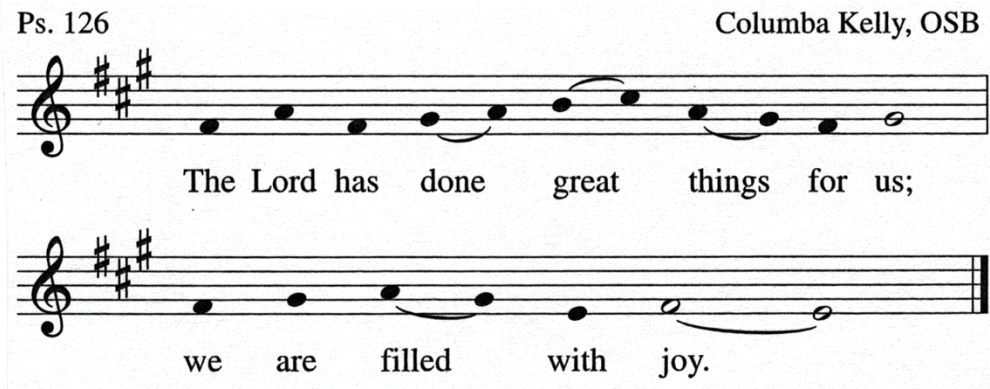
Word of God, word of life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 126

Refrain (Cantor, then ALL)

Ps. 126 Columba Kelly, OSB



The Lord has done great things for us;  
we are filled with joy.

When the Lord brought back the captives of Zion, we were like men dreaming.  
Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with rejoicing. **Refrain.**

Then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them."  
The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad indeed. **Refrain.**

Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the torrents in the southern desert.  
Those who sow in tears shall reap rejoicing. **Refrain.**

Although they go forth weeping, carrying the seed to be sown,  
they shall come back rejoicing, carrying their sheaves. **Refrain.**

Gospel: John 1:1-6-8, 19-28

P: The Holy Gospel according to John.

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

P: There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." <sup>22</sup>Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' " as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?” John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.” This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Sermon*

Pastor Rachel Manke

*Following a time of silence for reflection, the assembly may rise.*



## Hymn of the Day ~ “On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”



1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an - nounc - es  
2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the

4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us  
5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent



that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,  
way for God with - in. and let us all our

rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -  
has our free - dom won, whom with the Fa - ther



for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!  
hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.

on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.  
we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749; tr. composite

Music: PUER NOBIS, European tune, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621

## Apostles' Creed

A: *Together, let us confess our faith:*

C: **I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come 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.**

## Prayers of Intercession

A: God of power and might, tear open the heavens and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

*A brief silence.*

A: God of preachers and messengers, you have entrusted your church with the work of proclaiming good news. Strengthen the witness of bishops, pastors, deacons, church musicians, lay leaders, and all people who contribute their prayers and talents to public worship especially Rachel, our pastor and Larry, our music director. Embed your word in their hearts. Hear us, O God.  
**Your mercy is great.**

A: God of every living creature, you announce the year of your favor for all of creation. Extend your kindness and relief to endangered animals and plants. Strengthen the human beings who rely on the rhythms of nature to make their living. Hear us, O God.  
**Your mercy is great.**

A: God of all peoples and nations, you plant us as your oaks of righteousness and ask us to care for one another. Be present with the leaders of every nation as they govern. Give them a spirit of righteousness, that your goodness and mercy is revealed through their actions. Hear us, O God.  
**Your mercy is great.**

A: God of exiles and wanderers, you repair what was once destroyed. We pray for people who have been displaced from their homes by fire, flood, earthquake, or storm. Support the work of Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Disaster Response, and all disaster relief organizations in their recovery efforts. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

A: God of the powerful and helpless, you clothe us with strength when our spirits are weak and weary. Bestow your spirit upon this congregation and empower us to comfort the people who turn to us in times of need. Make your church a place of refuge and healing. As a community we pray for Ed, Maria, Cheryl, Susan, John, Martin, Jenny, Scott, Adina, Kathy, John, Eric, Tom, Jack, Jon, Sue, Lauren, Bill, Dave, Gladys, Dylan, Randy, Dorothy, Judy, Jim, Gerry, Hadley, Robert, Abby, Laura, and Donna. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

A: God of sinners and saints, you offer joy even in the midst of our grief. We are grateful for the beloved, imperfect people whose lives testified to your radiant love especially Lucy, martyr of the church. Anoint all who mourn with the oil of gladness. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

Peace

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

C: **And also with you.**

Anthem~ "Prepare Thyself, Zion"

MajaLisa Fritzhuspen, Mezzo-Soprano

Prepare thyself, Zion, with tender affection,  
the purest, the fairest, this day to receive.

Thou must greet him with a heart with love o'er flowing!  
Haste then, with ardor the Bridegroom to welcome.

Music: J. S. Bach (from *Christmas Oratorio*)

Text: Author unknown

## Presentation of Tithes and Offerings

*During our time away, we will not be passing the offering plates. We are grateful for all who are able to continue their support of St. John. There are three ways to share tithes and offerings:*

- 1. Simply giving - You can arrange for a regular gift (weekly, monthly, quarterly) to be deducted from a bank account. Please contact Marcie Godby, our bookkeeper, to arrange for this ([stjohn1802bookkeeper@gmail.com](mailto:stjohn1802bookkeeper@gmail.com)).*
- 2. You may go to St. John's website, <https://www.stjohnbluebell.org/>, and under "Quick Links" hit the "Online Giving and Donations" button.*
- 3. You may put your offering envelope (checks are preferred) in another stamped envelope and mail it to St. John: 1802 Skippack Pike, Blue Bell, PA 19422 (Attn: Marcie).*

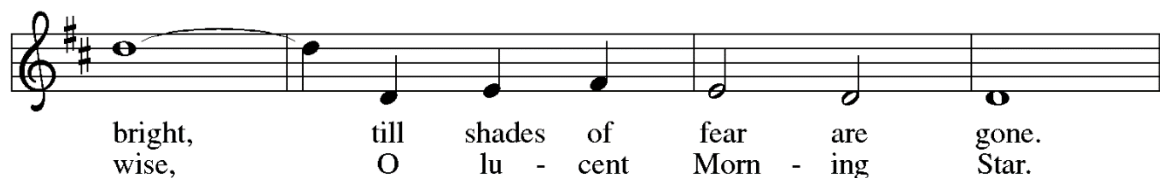
*Take a moment and reflect on the gifts we have received – even in these difficult days.*

## Voluntary~ “As the Dark Awaits”

Emily Maxson Porter

## Offertory Hymn~ “As the Dark Awaits the Dawn”





Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, b. 1953  
Music: LUCENT, Carl F. Schalk, b. 1929  
Text © 1996 Susan Palo Cherwien, admin. Augsburg Fortress.  
Music © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

## Offertory Prayer

**P:** Generous God,  
you have created all that is,  
and you provide for us in every season.  
Bless all that we offer,  
that through these gifts the world will receive your blessing.  
In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray.

**C: Amen.**

## Lord's Prayer

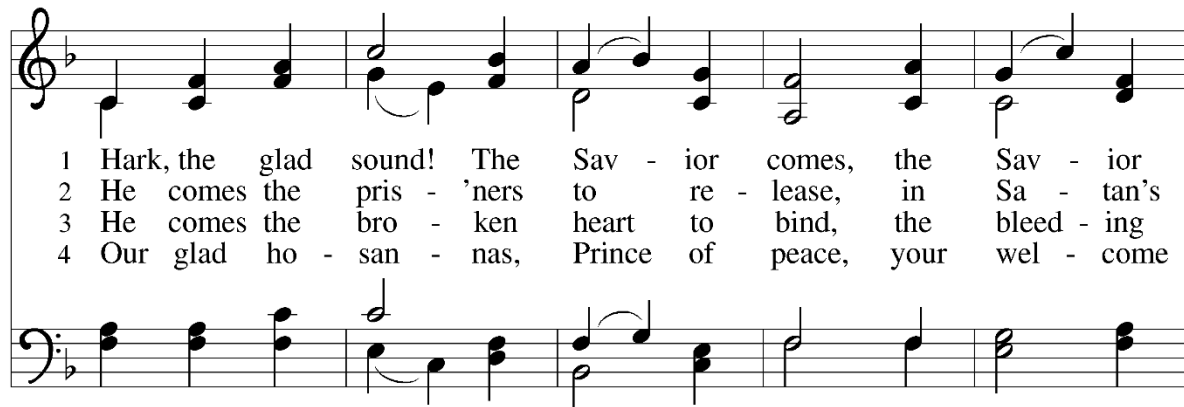
**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

## Benediction

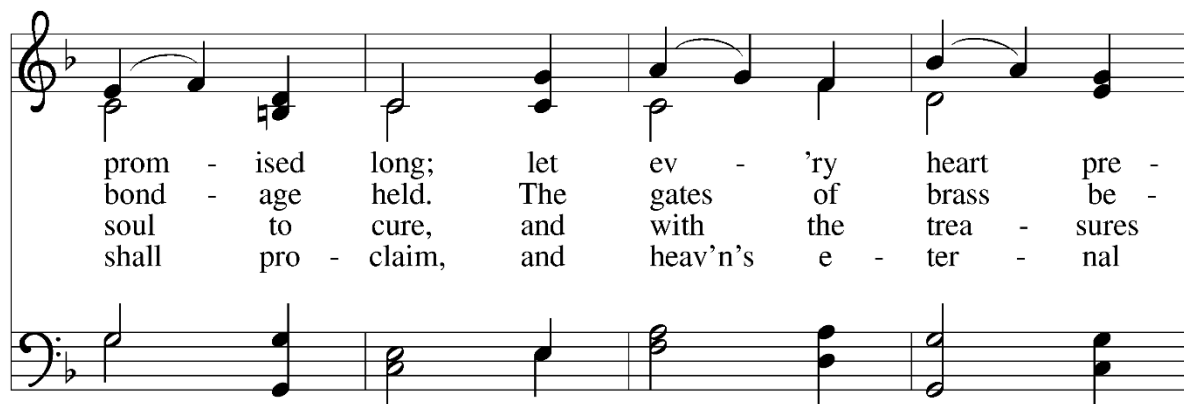
**P:** The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting,  
the long-expected Savior fill you with love,  
the unexpected Spirit guide your journey,  
✠ now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

# Sending Hymn~ "Hark, the Glad Sound"



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, your wel - come



prom - ised long; let ev - 'ry heart pre -  
 bond - age held. The gates of brass be -  
 soul to cure, and with the trea - sures  
 shall pro - claim, and heav'n's e - ter - nal



pare a throne and ev - 'ry voice a song.  
 fore him burst, the i - ron fet - ters yield.  
 of his grace to en - rich the hum - ble poor.  
 arch - es ring with your be - lov - ed name.

Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702-1751

Music: CHESTERFIELD, Thomas Haweis, 1734-1820

## Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude~ “Hark, the Glad Sound!”

Paul Manz

Additional music links:

**“O Nata Lux”**

<https://youtu.be/D8a-LYXVLnQ>

**“O Come, O come, Emmanuel”**

<https://youtu.be/iO7ySn-Swwc>

**“Rejoice Greatly”**

<https://youtu.be/bHQpeGzio4k>

## Assisting with Worship

Pastor

Director of Music

Lector

Prayers of Intercession

Apostles’ Creed

Trio

Pastor Rachel Manke

Lawrence Baker

Phil Vande Berg

Barry Stock

Rita Stock

Maja Lisa Fritzhuspen,

Robert Laird and Jonathan Oehler

**Advent – a season for preparation:** Here we are in Advent. Our worship services will include the lighting of the Advent Wreath with videos submitted by St. John families. Many families have a small wreath-lighting devotion each evening of Advent. We still have copies of a family devotional booklet at the church. There are also many organizations that make Advent devotions available on-line. Here are a few:

**Luther Seminary, Minnesota**

"O Lord, How Shall I Met You?"

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IJMVdn54\\_YGhTzIN7Atzwwgi9NWTDlexh/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IJMVdn54_YGhTzIN7Atzwwgi9NWTDlexh/view)

**ELCAWorld Hunger**

[https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/ELCA-AdventCalendar2020.pdf?\\_ga=2.237718660.528584357.1605802343-1589849684.1603378395](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/ELCA-AdventCalendar2020.pdf?_ga=2.237718660.528584357.1605802343-1589849684.1603378395)

**Liberty Lutheran**

<http://lutherancongregationalservices.blogspot.com>

**AdventFest** – The modified event will focus on a tree decorating celebration at St. John today from 2:00 – 3:00 pm. We are inviting members to come with their ornaments (and masks) to safely decorate the tree that will provide light to the neighbors (drivers on Rt. 73) and our congregation when we gather for Christmas Eve. We ask that you bring ornaments you made with the St. John craft bag materials or ornaments of your own. We will have floral wire available to affix the ornaments to the tree.

**Christmas Eve** - St. John will provide two in-person opportunities to celebrate the Nativity of our Lord on Thursday, December 24. At 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm, there will be outdoor "Shepherds in the Field" services. These will be short services (approx. 30 minutes) and include small bonfires and glowsticks in place of candles. We will retell the story of Jesus' birth and hear *Silent Night*. The service is short enough to stand but bring your own chair if that would prove a challenge. It's also "BYOB" or Bring Your Own Bell, we'll have a few opportunities in the service for you to share your Christmas joy by ringing your own bell. In addition to these services, there will be a pre-recorded Christmas Eve service featuring a more familiar liturgy, homily, and music which will be posted to the website.







