



Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 19, 2021

8:15 a.m. -spoken

10:30 a.m. - with music

Welcome to St. John

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

www.stjohnbluebell.org www.facebook.com/stjohnbluebell

Nursery School website: www.stjohnsns.com

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Ray Hopkins, Director of Youth and Family

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Our Council Members are listed on our website.

Celebrating 252 years of mission and ministry, 1769-2021.



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

Parents with young children: Please know that your children are welcome and cherished in worship! Wiggles and all! If you find a need to step out with them during worship, we have arranged a special corner in the Great Room down the sanctuary stairs. We are working to connect our livestream to the TV in that space for you as well. As things improve with covid we will move back toward a staffed nursery room.

This service is livestreamed on the church's YouTube page.

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"My Heart Shall Sing" Advent Candle-Lighting by Barn Geese Worship is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0. [edited for length].

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Order for Worship

Prelude~ "Hail, Holy Mary"

Kurt Klinger-Wilensky, Tenor

Hail holy Mary, mother most gracious,
most favour'd lady: amongst women thou art blessed over all,
and blessed is the holy child thou bearest, Jesu.

Most holy Mary, God's dear mother, we sinners beg thee pray for us today:
O pray now, and when the death's dark hour is near us. Amen.

Music: Rene Atkinson (b. 1920)

We ask that members and visitors please take a moment and sign in using the red information folders located in each pew and pass it on to your neighbor.

The assembly may rise.

Confession and Forgiveness

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

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who alone does wonders,
who lifts up the lowly,
who fills the hungry with good things.

C: **Amen.**

P: Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: God for whom we wait,

C: **in the presence of one another,
we confess our sin before you.
We fail in believing that your good news is for us.
We falter in our call to tend your creation.
We find our sense of self in material wealth.
We fear those different from ourselves.
We forget that we are your children
and turn away from your love.
Forgive us, Blessed One,
and assure us again of your saving grace.
Amen.**

P: God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you!
Through the power of the Holy Spirit,
✠ your sins are forgiven.
You are children of the Most High,
inheritors of the eternal promise,
and recipients of divine mercy.
God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace.

C: **Amen.**

Greeting

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

P: Even when God is active in this world,
hope is a work in progress.

Each candle on our wreath
represents a person
or a place
or a moment in time
that still awaits God's goodness.

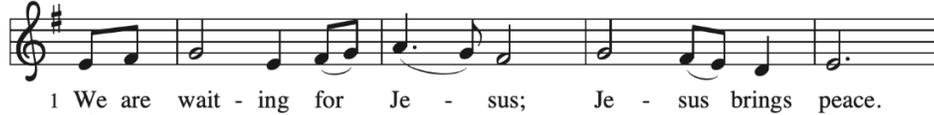
P: God, through your love,
C: **a familiar light
can banish the fear of the other;**

P: Through your love,
C: **the warmth of good cheer
can extinguish cold-hearted injustice.**

P: Through your love,
C: **the song of faith
can rekindle hope for the hopeless.**

P: We light this candle
as a small act of our great anticipation.

(10:30)



Text: John Helgen, b. 1957
Music: JESUS BRINGS PEACE, John Helgen
Text and music © 2013 Augsburg Fortress

A: Each week these candles have reminded us
that God counts every heart
that waits for mercy.

One flame at a time,
God's work spreads through this world.

The flame builds
like whispers that becomes a rush;
notes that become a chord;
droplets that become a river.

We are like these candles,
baptized children of God
who shine together
until the day God's goodness
shines in every place under heaven.

Prayer of the Day

P: Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

The assembly may be seated.

Children's Message

Word

First Reading: Micah 5: 2-5a

A: But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.
Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.
And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth;
and he shall be the one of peace.

Word of God, word of life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

(8:15 spoken/10:30 sung)

Psalm~ Magnificat

David Haas



All that I am sings of the God who brings new
life to birth in me. My spir- it soars
on the wings of my Lord.

My soul gives glory to the Lord, rejoicing in my saving God;
Who looks up me in my state, and all the world will call my blest;
For God works marvels in my sight, and holy, holy is God's name! **Refrain.**

God's mercy is from age to age, on those who follow in fear.
Whose arm is power and strength, and scatters all the proud of heart;
Who cast the mighty from their thrones, and raises up the lowly ones! **Refrain.**

God fills the starving with good things,
the rich are left with empty hands; protecting all the faithful ones,
Remembering Israel with mercy/the promise known to those before,
and to their children forever! **Refrain.**

Second Reading: Hebrews 10: 5-10

A: Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,
"Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body you have prepared for me;
in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.
Then I said, 'See, God, I have come to do your will, O God'
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me)."

When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), then he added, "See, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Word of God, word of life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

The assembly may rise.

Gospel Acclamation

Sung Once by All.



Choir: Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.
(Repeat Alleluia)

Gospel: Luke 1: 39-45 [46-55]

P: The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

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

P: In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." [

And Mary said,
"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

P: The gospel of the Lord.

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

The assembly may be seated.

Sermon

Pastor Rachel Manke

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

(10:30) Hymn of the Day ~ "People, Look East"

1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the crown - ing
2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is
3 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the
4 An - gels an - nounce with shouts of mirth him who brings new

of the year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble,
plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to nour - ish,
bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y weath - er,
life to earth. Set ev - 'ry peak and val - ley hum - ming

trim the hearth and set the ta - ble. Peo - ple, look
that in course the flow'r may flour - ish. Peo - ple, look
bright as sun and moon to - geth - er. Peo - ple, look
with the word, the Lord is com - ing. Peo - ple, look

east, and sing to - day— Love, the Guest, is on the way.
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Rose, is on the way.
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Star, is on the way.
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881–1965

Music: BESANÇON, French carol; arr. Barry Rose, b. 1934

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The assembly may rise.

Apostles Creed

P: *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: In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

A brief silence.

A: Nurturing God, you give us life and care for our every need. Use the church's gifts and ministries for your service, bringing your word to all who seek your transforming grace. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Creator God, you proclaim your boundless love for all that you have made. Renew barren lands, polluted waters, and melting ice caps. Heal and comfort those affected by tornadoes and floods. Make us servants of your creation that brings forth abundant life. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Righteous God, you bring down the mighty and lift up the lowly. Strengthen those who seek justice. Bless the work of community organizers, activists, journalists, and all who call our attention to imbalances of power. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Compassionate God, you proclaim your love and mercy. Show your lovingkindness to teen parents and those who are pregnant. Comfort any struggling with infertility and those who await test results, are in treatment and hospice care, and others in need especially Bill, Bob, Alyssa, Marilyn, Marie, Diana, Gerry, Amy, Melissa, Tom, Kimberly, Jim, Joshua, Carolyn, Jean, Lois, George, Robert, Susan, Randy, Dorothy, and Donna. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

A: Gracious God, you fill the hungry with good things. Bless the feeding ministries of this congregation and community. Guide us to share your bounty with those who hunger or live in poverty. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: Faithful God, you stir up the hearts of those who love you. We give you thanks for those who, like Mary, were courageous in their witness. Give us such courage until that day when you fulfill all things. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

A: God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.

C: **Amen.**

Peace

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

C: **And also with you.**

(10:30) Anthem~ "Mary's Magnificat"

Chancel Choir

Softly a light is stealing, sweetly a maiden sings,
Ever wakeful, ever wistful,
Watching faithfully, thankfully, tenderly her King of kings.

My soul doth magnify the Lord:
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

Mary her song to Jesus softly, serenely sings:
"I will love you, I will serve you,
May my lullaby glorify, magnify my King of kings.

Words and Music: Andrew Carter

Presentation of Tithes and Offerings

During this time, 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 four 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).*
- 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).*
- 4. You may make use of the offering plate located on the table in the back of the sanctuary.*

***For communion:** Be sure to take a pre-packaged cup/wafer from the usher on your way into worship. If you forgot please alert an usher who will help bring you one. Pastor will indicate when in the service we will receive the elements together. All are welcome to Christ's table.*

The assembly may rise.

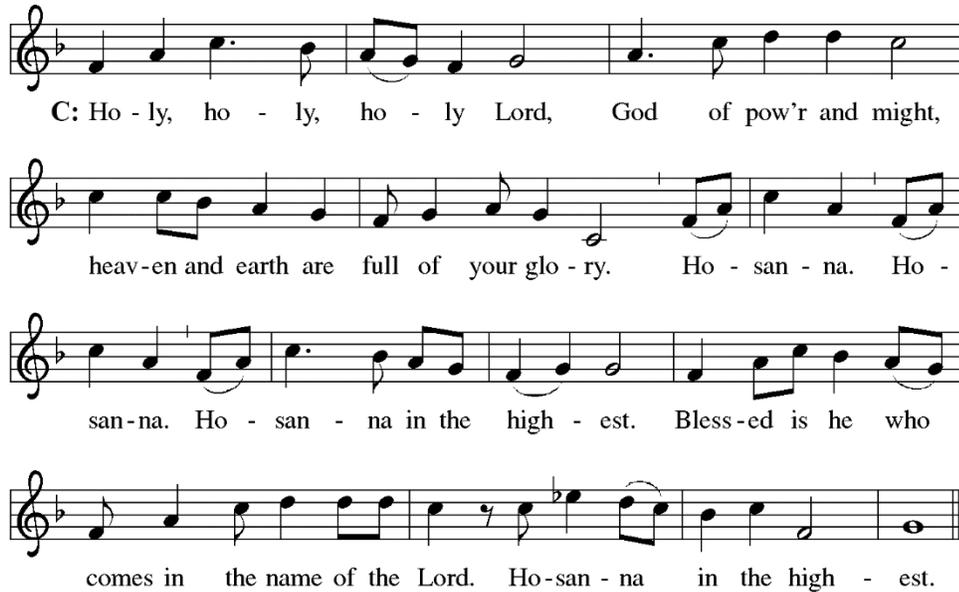
Offertory Prayer

- P:** God of abundance,
we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation,
and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope
as we care for all those in need
until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord.
- C:** **Amen.**

The Meal

- P:** The Lord be with you.
C: **And also with you.**
P: Lift up your hearts.
C: **We lift them to the Lord.**
P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
 that we should at all times and in all places
 give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
 through our Savior Jesus Christ.
 You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,
 through whom you will also make all things new
 in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.
 And so, with all the choirs of angels,
 with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
 we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



C: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
 heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
 san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
 comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

P: In the night in which he was betrayed,
 our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
 broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
 Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
 Do this for the remembrance of me.
 Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
 and gave it for all to drink, saying:
 This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
 shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
 Do this for the remembrance of me.

P: Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C: **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 meal is shared together with the pastor leading with the words, "The body of Christ, given for you." then, "The blood of Christ, shed for you."

The assembly may be seated.

(10:30) Communion Hymn~ "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things
3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on
4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's



Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
far - and nigh: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;
Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law
tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,



un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
teach us your will and guide our way. Re-joice! Re-joice!
in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.
and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.



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

Announcements

The assembly may rise.

Benediction

P: The God of hope
fill us with all joy and peace in believing,
so that we may abound in hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
✠ through Christ Jesus for whom we wait.

C: **Amen.**

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Christ is near.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude~ “Finale on People, Look East”

Roberta Rowland-Raybold

Assisting with Worship

Pastor	Pastor Rachel Manke
Director of Music	Lawrence Baker
Lector 8:15	MaryEllen Scheffey
Usher 8:15	Charlie Sowers
Lector 10:30	
Wreath lighters 8:15	Stein family
Wreath lighters 10:30	Schwab family
Soloists	Kurt Klinger-Wilensky
	Deborah Swider

Our Prayer List is printed separately from the bulletin. You may find a copy of the list in the Great Room.

Flowers are given today by the Nordmeyer family in memory of loved ones.

Announcements

December 24 Christmas Eve three Services:

4 p.m. the "ABC's of Christmas" is a family oriented interactive liturgy for the young at heart. 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. will be a "Traditional" candlelight service.

As part of our continuing effort to keep our run-time of services shorter, we will not have the 30 minutes of pre-service music. Please remember that we continue to wear masks inside and especially in worship. Sunday, December 26 we will have one service of Lessons and Carols at 9:30 a.m.

Greening of the Church! Join us after late worship today to help us fully decorate the church for CHRISTMAS.

Good Gift Advent Program is buzzing! This year's Good Gift Advent challenge is going to the bees! Not the birds, but to those sweet, little, buzzing insects. You know, the producers of delicious honey. They offer a unique food to eat and to sell. Our support also provides new hives of bees which aids in reducing the disappearance of another of God's creatures. Stop by the yellow bee table in the Great Room and make a donation to this project. Our goal is five new hives for \$100.00.

Reminders...

***Giving envelopes for 2022** are available for pick up in the Great Room.

***Poinsettias-** You can sponsor/dedicate a poinsettia to beautify the font this Christmas. Prices: small (\$7.50), large (\$25), or very large (\$35) plant. Envelopes are available in the Great Room and can be placed in the offering plate or sent to the office.

***Christmas Collection for our Staff-** There are envelopes on the table at the bottom of stairs in the Great Room. Please return by placing your envelope in the offering plate. Thank you for remembering our staff.

St. John Collectible Pint Glasses & Facemasks- We have St. John Collectible etched 16 oz. pint glasses for sale just in time for the holiday season. Just 25 glasses left! We have St. John Collectible etched 16 oz pint glasses for sale just in time for the holiday season. You can pick up (1) for \$12 each or (2) for \$20. There are also reusable tie-dyed masks remaining for a \$5 donation.

Worship Assistance Help Needed EVERY WEEK - We are looking for volunteers to act as ushers, readers, flower/bulletin sponsors and technology team volunteers. Get in touch with the Church Office if you can help in any way.

Annual MLK day of Service is January 17- This year's event will once again be a virtual event due to the continuing pandemic. Please take a moment to look at the Christmas tree located in the Great Room with tags that have items that are needed for the various activities we will be completing that day.

The projects will be posted on the church website (watch for updates). Like the in-person event held in the past there will be projects for all ages, and we encourage your whole family to participate. You will be able to choose the project(s) which interest you the most, and you can certainly complete multiple projects.

Once you have completed your chosen activities, please drop them off to the church on Monday, January 17. Drop-off will be contactless. Volunteers will then sort all of the delivered materials and deliver them to the various agencies that we will be serving.

Our 4th Annual MLK Day of Service is a great opportunity for us to serve others. We look forward to your participation and welcome you to spread the word about the event to your family and friends.

Coat Collection for MLK Day of Service - St. John will be hosting a coat collection as part of January's MLK Day of Service. Coats and winter gear will be given to economically insecure adults working in the Mural Arts Program. Coat collection will begin **January 1**. Also, Rita Stock has kits for no-sew blankets for one of the MLK projects. See her for details.

Youth News...

Today- Youth in grades 6 - 12 are invited to our ADVENT PARTY and gift exchange. We will meet at 5 p.m. and celebrate and hold a white elephant gift exchange. Those who want to take part can either purchase a gift at \$5 (be creative) or regift an item from your home. Come dressed in festive gear, an ugly sweater, your favorite Christmas costume, or whatever is most comfortable to you! Friends are welcome to join us and may even decorate something for Christmas.

Winter Retreat Event- Depending on interest of our teens and families, we are considering attending the Southeastern Penn Youth **Tuscarora Retreat at the Tuscarora Retreat Inn on March 25 - 27, 2022**. It is open to all 6-12 grade-youth but will require vaccination verification to attend. If interested in knowing more, talk with Ray.

National Gathering Group News- Monthly news will be coming via the constant contact emails, so please keep your eyes peeled. We will be ramping up with more details and dates after Jan 1. There are a few notes below:

Sunday School Teachers for Winter & Spring Term- We are in need of folks to help with both the elementary class and the teenager class each week starting again on January 9th and Ray is hoping to get a crew to help with both groups and allow Ray to work with both of them. All materials, planning information, and help to plan and lead is available. We just need some teachers who are willing to commit to being there on Sunday Mornings. Please talk to Ray, as we would love to develop a team of teachers to split up the weeks and allow them to take part in other activities or the adult class if that is something they want to be a part of also.

This Week at St. John...

Sunday, December 19 Fourth Sunday in Advent

8:15 Worship
9:15 Sunday School for Children & Youth
9:15 Adult Bible Study
10:30 Worship
5:00 Youth Group Advent Party

Monday, December 20

9:00 Nursery School Closed
7:00 Property Committee Meeting

Tuesday, December 21

9:00 Nursery School Closed
10:30 Pastor's Bible Study

Wednesday, December 22

9:00 Nursery School Closed
9:30 Spirit Walkers [Wentz Park]
6:45 Handbell Choir [TR]

Thursday, December 23

9:00 Nursery School Closed

Friday, December 24

9:00 Nursery School closed

Saturday, December 25

4:00 Family Service
7:00 Traditional Candlelight
9:00 Traditional Candlelight

Sunday, December 26

9:30 Lessons and Carols

Locations:

[FH] Fellowship Hall
[TR] Troster Room
[GR] Great Room
[YC] Youth Classroom

