

Second Sunday in Advent

December 6, 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 www.facebook.com/stjohnbluebell

Nursery School website: www.stjohnsns.com

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Our Council Members are listed on our website.

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Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Order for Worship

Prelude ~ “Comfort Ye”

Rob Laird, Tenor

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.
Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her,
that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.
The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness,
Prepare ye the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Text: Isaiah 40:1-3

Music: G. F. Handel (*from Messiah*)

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 ~ "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"



1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Born thy peo-ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir-it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev-'ry na - tion, joy of ev-'ry long-ing heart.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer-it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788
Music: JEFFERSON, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

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 our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; 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 hope, for you promise to bring forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse who will bring justice to the poor, who will deliver the needy and crush the oppressor, who will stand as a signal of hope for all people.

As we light these two candles, turn our wills to bear the fruit of repentance, transform our hearts to live in justice and harmony with one another, and fix our eyes on the root of Jesse, Jesus Christ, the hope of all nations.

O people of hope, come,

let us rejoice in the faithfulness of the Lord. Amen.

Word

First Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11

A: Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

A voice says, “Cry out!”

And I said, “What shall I cry?”
All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.
Get you up to a high mountain,

O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;
say to the cities of Judah,
“Here is your God!”
See, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.
He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.

Word of God, word of life.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 85

Quartet

Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed.
Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.
Yea, the Lord shall show loving kindness, and our land shall yield her increase.
Righteousness shall go before him, and peace shall be the pathway of his steps.

Text: Ps. 85:10-13

Music: Ned Rorem

Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

P: The Holy Gospel according to Mark.

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

P: The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

who will prepare your way;

the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight.’”

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

The gospel of the Lord.

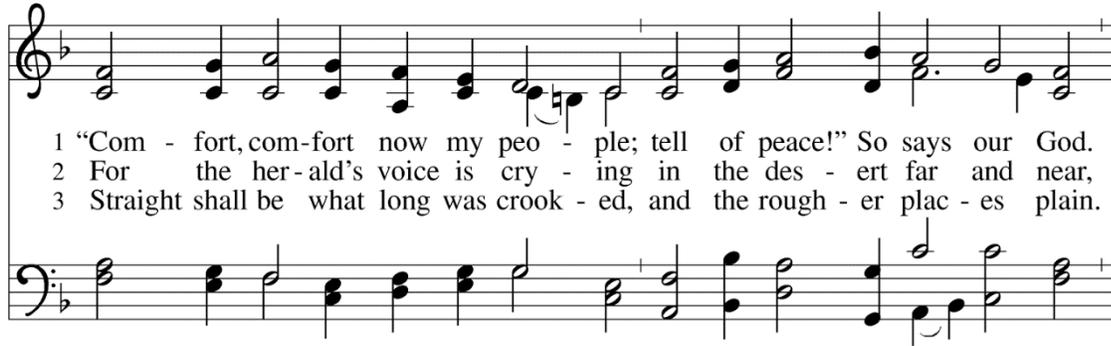
C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

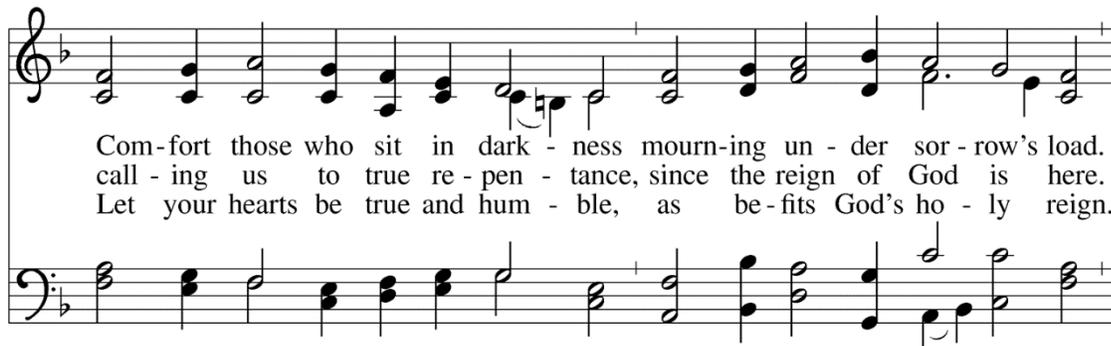
Pastor Rachel Manke

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

Hymn of the Day ~ “Comfort, Comfort Now My People”



1 “Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!” So says our God.
2 For the her - ald’s voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



Com-fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row’s load.
call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.
Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits God’s ho - ly reign.



To God’s peo - ple now pro-claim that God’s par - don waits for them!
Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.
For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for-ev - er.
Val - leys, rise to greet the Sav - ior; hills, bow down in hum-ble fa - vor.
and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God’s word is nev - er bro - ken.

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: Faithful God, you teach us to wait for you with faithfulness and patience. Sustain and support us in our doubts and questions. Nurture our faith as we discern and enact your mission. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

A: Loving God, you set the stars in the sky and breathe life into the earth. Renew the face of creation where it is in need of your healing touch. Mend the wounds of environmental damage and restore balance to ecosystems so that all creation can declare your praise. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

A: Steadfast God, you never tire of seeking justice. Where people suffer from discrimination, judgment, and injustice, speak words of truth and comfort. Lead us toward a world where faithfulness will sprout underfoot and righteousness rain down from above. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

A: Leading God, you ask us to make uneven ground smooth. Make even the disparities between your people. Sustain and support people with differing physical and intellectual abilities. Accompany their advocates who work for a world accessible to all. Teach us to celebrate the great diversity in our midst. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

A: Tender God, you know sorrow and joy alike. We pray for those in our families and congregation who are not joyful in this holiday season. Comfort those who grieve, be a companion to all who are lonely, tend those who are sick or struggling with depression, and gather all people in your healing embrace especially, 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: Eternal God, we give thanks for the saints who have prepared your way in the wilderness and taught us to continue their faithful work especially Nicholas of Myra. Make their generous lives an example for all. 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~ "The Lord Shall Come and Not Be Slow"

Quartet

The Lord shall come and not be slow; his light is soon appearing.
Prepare, you sinners, here below who are these tidings hearing:
Arise, O sleepers, trim your lamps! Their flames so swiftly burning
reveal the path to hope and peace, the dawn for which you're yearning.

Come forth, you weary, meek, and poor! Forget your strife and labor.
Messiah comes to those who toil, bestowing God's own favor.
Your king eternal, Lord on high, in humble form and lowly,
transforms a simple oxen stall into a throne most holy.

For Christ shall come and not be slow; his light is now appearing.
Rejoice, you saints on earth below! His reign of love is nearing.

Text and music: Zebulon M. Highben

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).

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~ “All Earth is Hopeful/Toda la tierra”

David Cherwien

Offertory Hymn~ "All Earth Is Hopeful"



1 All earth is hope-ful, the Sav-ior comes at last!
 2 Peo-ple of Is-rael, you heard the proph-et tell:
 3 Moun-tains and val-leys will have to be pre-pared;
 4 We first saw Je-sus a ba-by in a crib.



Fur-rows lie o-pen for God's cre-a-tive task: this, the
 "A-vir-gin moth-er will bear Em-man-u-el"; she con-
 new high-ways o-pened, new pro-to-cols de-clared. Al-most
 This same Lord Je-sus to-day has come to live in our



la-bor of peo-ple who strug-gle to see how
 ceived him, "God with us," our broth-er, whose birth re-
 here! God is near-ing, in beau-ty and grace! All
 world; he is pres-ent, in neigh-bors we see our



God's truth and jus-tice set ev-'ry-bod-y free.
 stores hope and cour-age to chil-dren of this earth.
 clear ev-'ry gate-way, in haste, come out in haste!
 Je-sus is with us, and ev-er sets us free.

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~ "Fling Wide the Door"

1 Fling wide the door, un - bar the gate; the King of glo - ry
3 Oh, hap - py towns and bless - ed lands that live by their true
4 Come, Lord, our Sav - ior, Je - sus Christ; our hearts are o - pen

comes in state; the Lord of lords and King of kings, the
king's com-mands. And bless - ed be the hearts he rules, the
wide in trust. Oh, show us now your love - ly grace, up -

Sav - ior of the world who brings his great sal - va - tion
hum - ble plac - es where he dwells. He is the right - ful
on our sor - rows shine your face, and let your Ho - ly

to the earth. So raise a shout of ho - ly mirth and
Son of bliss who fills our lives and makes us his, cre -
Spir - it guide our jour - ney in your grace so wide. We

praise our God and Lord, Cre - a - tor, Spir - it, Word.
 a - tor of the world, our on - ly strength for good.
 praise your ho - ly name, from age to age the same!

Text: Georg Weissel, 1590–1635; tr. Gracia Grindal, b. 1943
 Music: MACHT HOCH DIE TÜR, J. A. Freylinghausen, *Geistreiches Gesangbuch*, 1704; arr. hymnal version
 Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.
 Arr. © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.
 C: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude~ “Fling Wide the Door”

Nancy Raabe

Additional music links:

“Each Winter As the Year Grows Older”

<https://youtu.be/Nti9eOpHmcQ>

“Advent Fantasy”

<https://youtu.be/hkWuZSMFLC8>

“Light One Candle”

<https://youtu.be/pWXWNZLock4>

Assisting with Worship

Pastor

Director of Music

Lector

Prayers of Intercession

Apostles' Creed

Quartet

Pastor Rachel Manke

Lawrence Baker

Betty Jeanguenin

Cheryl Posen

Diane Stein

Deborah Swider, Maja Lisa Fritzhuspen,

Robert Laird, 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_YGhTzIN7Atzwgi9NWTDlexh/view

ELCA World Hunger

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

[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 on December 13 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.

Several of the AdventFest Team have assembled seasonal crafts and kits to make ornaments. The bags will be available for pick-up in the Great Room. If there are still bags to be distributed, the Great Room will be opened on December 6 from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

For December 13, you can 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.

