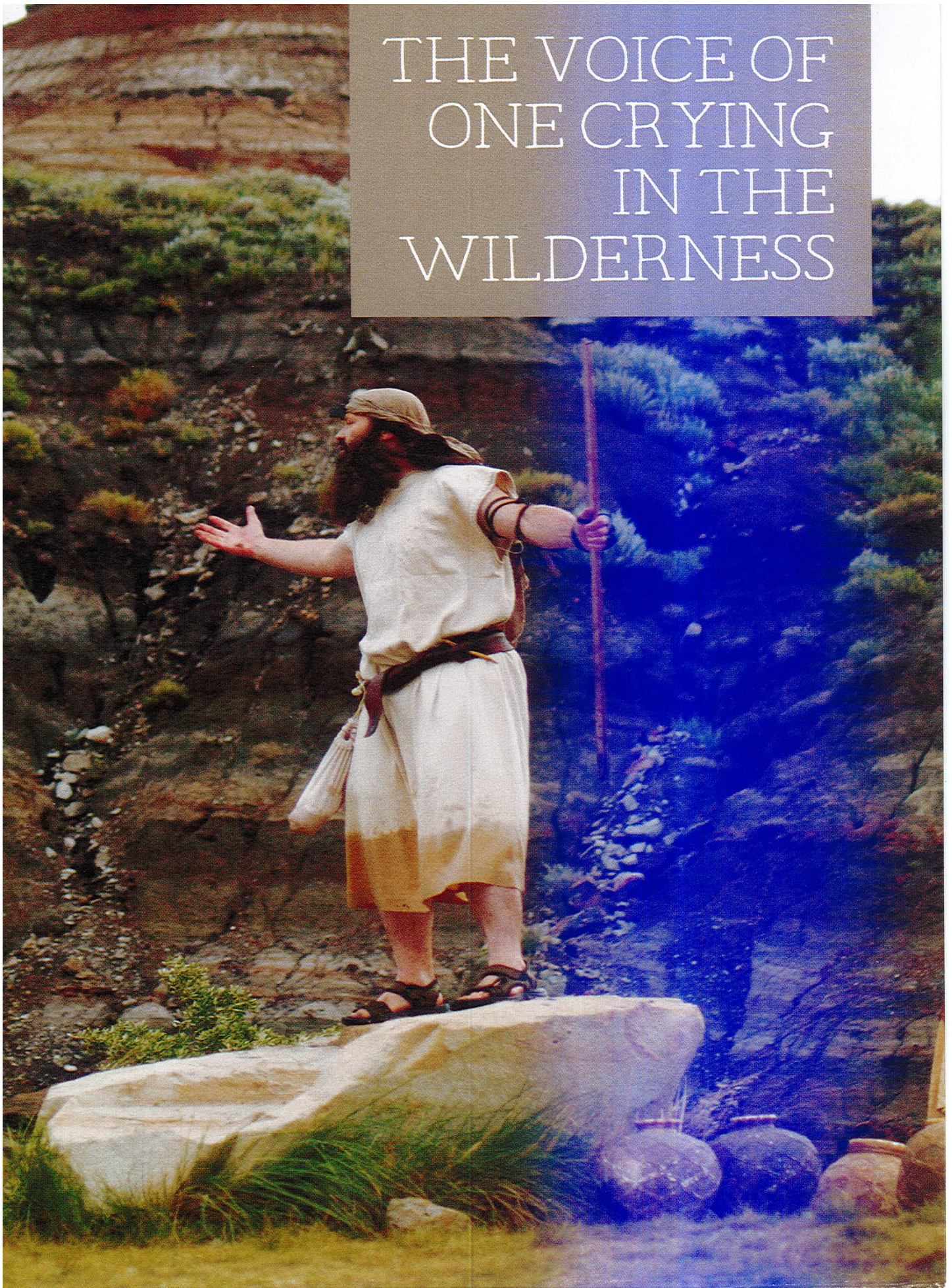


THE VOICE OF  
ONE CRYING  
IN THE  
WILDERNESS





# ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Second Sunday of Advent

December 6, 2020

**Greeter This Week:** Dickie & Cathie Bettge

**Greeter Next Week:** Candy Cowley

**Reader This Week:** Cathie Bettge

**Reader Next Week:** Wanda Hays

**Acolytes This Week:** Madyx Blain

**Acolytes Next Week:** Maverick Eckhardt

**Altar Guild This Month:** Betty Diebel & Virginia Jank

**Altar Guild Next Month:** Carol Ann Sagebiel & Cathie Bettge

**Communion Assistant This Month:** Glenn Ruschhaupt

**Communion Assistant Next Month:** Obert Sagebiel

## MISSION STATEMENT

We the members of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church of Meyersville, strive to be witnesses for Christ, a Christian family striving to be models and examples to others, loving one another and trying to be friendly to all; acknowledging that we are sinful, but being patient, faithful, giving, caring, forgiving, and forgiven believers.

## HOLY COMMUNION

You are invited to commune with us if, as a baptized Christian, you believe that you are a sinner and in need of God's forgiveness; that the body and blood of Jesus are truly present in the Sacrament; that this is more than a symbolic act, but a way God proclaims forgiveness to us who are repentant.

*May your participation increase your faith and strengthen your love for God and one another.*

## **HOLY COMMUNION**

*The Service begins with the first notes of the prelude. Please show your respect with silent meditation at this time.*

Worship Notes regarding Today's Service:

Thank you for attending. We thank God that we are once again able to gather inside the church. For those who are not comfortable entering the church we are also broadcasting as we have for the past several weeks and you are more than welcome to remain in your car. Today is a communion service and it will be station communion due to the restrictions. If you are listening to the broadcast and want to take communion please park on the west side of the church and notify the persons assisting with parking that you would like to commune, communion will be brought out to you. The service, the organ music, and Pastor John's message will be routed through the church's sound system and broadcast on your car radio on FM channel 101.5. Please follow the service in the bulletin.

The Service begins with the first notes of the prelude. Please show your respect with silent meditation at this time.

## **PRELUDE**

### **RINGING OF THE CHURCH BELL**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS PRAISES AND CONCERNS**

**Lighting of the Advent Candle** ~ *Brian Diebel Family*

**HYMN: LBW #58 2<sup>nd</sup> Verse**

***"Lo, How a Rose Is Growing"***

**The rose of which I'm singing, Isaiah had foretold.**

**He came to us through Mary Who sheltered him from cold.**

**Through God's eternal will This child to**

**us was given At midnight calm and still.**

## **BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

*Silence for Reflection and Meditation*

Most merciful God,

**We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen**

Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Hymn:

***“My Lord, What a Morning”***

WOV #627

**My Lord, what a morning; my Lord, what a morning;  
Oh, my Lord, what a morning, when the stars begin to fall.  
You'll hear the trumpet sound,  
looking to my God's right hand, When the stars begin to fall.**

**My Lord, what a morning; my Lord, what a morning;  
Oh, my Lord, what a morning, when the stars begin to fall.  
You'll hear the sinner cry, to wake the nations underground,  
looking to my God's right hand, When the stars begin to fall.**

**My Lord, what a morning; my Lord, what a morning;  
Oh, my Lord, what a morning, when the stars begin to fall.  
You'll hear the Christian shout,  
looking to my God's right hand, When the stars begin to fall.**

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

**And also with you.**

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

**Amen**

**This is the feast of victory for our God.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia  
Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,  
Whose blood set us free to be people of God.  
This is the feast of victory for our God.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.  
Power, riches, wisdom, and strength, and honor,  
Blessing and glory are his.  
This is the feast of victory for our God.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia  
Sing with all the people of God,  
and join in the hymn of all creation:**

**Blessing, honor, glory, and might be to God and  
the Lamb forever. Amen.**

**This is the feast of victory for our God.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**For the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign. Alleluia.**

**This is the feast of victory for our God.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

The Lord be with you

**And also with you**

Let us Pray

**Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of your only-begotten Son, that by his coming we may be enabled to serve you with pure minds; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**First Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11**

<sup>1</sup>Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. <sup>2</sup>Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. <sup>3</sup>A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." <sup>6</sup>A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. <sup>7</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows on it; surely the people are grass. <sup>8</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. <sup>9</sup>Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" <sup>10</sup>Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. <sup>11</sup>He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

**Responsive Reading**

**Psalm 85**

<sup>1</sup>You have been gracious to your land, O Lord,  
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

<sup>2</sup>**You have forgiven the iniquity of your people  
and blotted out all their sins.**

<sup>3</sup>You have withdrawn all your fury  
and turned yourself from your wrathful indignation.

<sup>4</sup>**Restore us then, O God our Savior;  
let your anger depart from us.**

<sup>5</sup>Will you be displeased with us forever?  
will you prolong your anger from age to age?

<sup>6</sup>**Will you not give us life again,  
that your people may rejoice in you?**

<sup>7</sup>Show us your mer-cy, O Lord,  
and grant us your salvation.

<sup>8</sup>**I will listen to what the Lord God is saying,  
for he is speaking peace to his faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to him.**

<sup>9</sup>Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him,  
that his glory may dwell in our land.

**<sup>10</sup>Mercy and truth have met together;  
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.**

<sup>11</sup>Truth shall spring up from the earth,  
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

**<sup>12</sup>The Lord will indeed grant prosperity,  
and our land will yield its increase.**

<sup>13</sup>Righteousness shall go before him,  
and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

### **Second Reading: 2 Peter 3:8-14**

<sup>8</sup>Do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. <sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. <sup>11</sup>Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, <sup>12</sup>waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! <sup>13</sup>But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. <sup>14</sup>Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

**Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.**

**Alleluia. Alleluia.**

### **GOSPEL READING: Mark 1:1-8**

The Holy Gospel according to Mark the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter

**Glory to you, O Lord**

<sup>1</sup>The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. <sup>2</sup>As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, <sup>3</sup>the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'" <sup>4</sup>John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup>Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

The Gospel of the Lord

**Praise to you, O Christ**

### **MESSAGE**

SERMON HYMN:

***"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"***

LBW #30

Come, thou long expected Jesus, Born to set thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us; Let us find our rest in thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation, Hope of all the earth thou art,  
Dear desire of ev'ry nation, Joy of ev'ry longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver, Born a child, and yet a king;  
Born to reign in us forever, Now thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By thine own eternal Spirit Rule in all our hearts alone;  
By thine all sufficient merit Raise us to thy glorious throne.

Let us confess our faith through the Apostles' Creed

**Apostles' Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
and born of the Virgin Mary,  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
He descended into hell.  
On the third day he rose again;  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
He will come again 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.**

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs

*Lord, listen to your children praying, Lord, send your Spirit in this place;  
Lord, listen to your children praying, send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.*

Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

The peace of the Lord be with you always  
**And also with you.**

OFFERING

**Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of blessing. Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life. Gather the hopes and the dreams of all; unite them with the prayers we offer now. Grace our table with your presence, and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.**

P Merciful Father,

**C we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us ourselves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

The Lord be with you  
**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts  
**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right and salutary.....we praise you name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might:  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna, Hosanna.  
Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth.  
In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son,  
That all those who believe in him should not perish,  
But have eternal life.  
We give thanks to you for the salvation

You have prepared for us through Jesus Christ.  
Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts,  
That we may receive our Lord  
With a living faith as he comes to us  
In his holy supper.

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

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.

Father remember us always and teach us to pray;

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
Hallowed by 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**

Come for the Lord's Table is ready.

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.**

May the body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**Amen**

**Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell everyone what he has done**

**Let all who seek the Lord rejoice and proudly bear his name.**

**He recalls his promises and leads his people forth in joy with**

**Shouts of thanksgiving. Alleluia, Alleluia.**

Let us pray;

We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life; and we pray that in your mercy you would strengthen us, through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you.

May the Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

Go in peace; serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

THE DOXOLOGY: Hymn #565 LBW

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;**

**Praise him, all creatures here below;**

**Praise him above, ye heav'nly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

## THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN

<b>Today 12/6</b>	<b>Second Sunday of Advent</b> 9:00 a.m. Confirmation Class 9:00 a.m. Sunday School (Christmas Program Practice during Sunday School) 10:15 a.m. Worship
<b>Mon 12/7</b>	<b>Office Closed</b>
<b>Tues 12/8</b>	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Pastor's Office Hours 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Office Hours
<b>Wed 12/9</b>	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Office Hours
<b>Thurs 12/10</b>	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Office Hours 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Pastor's Office Hours
<b>Fri 12/11</b>	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Office Hours
<b>Next Sun</b>	<b>Third Sunday of Advent</b> 8:00 a.m. Property Team Meeting 9:00 a.m. Confirmation Class 9:00 a.m. Sunday School (Christmas Program Practice during Sunday School) 10:15 a.m. Worship <i>*Called Congregational Meeting Following Worship</i>



*Welcome Visitors! We would like to extend a special welcome to all visitors. If you are looking for a church home, we pray you would consider St. John's.*

*Prayer request cards are available in the pews and can be filled out and handed to an usher during the first hymn for your request to be included in the day's prayer. If you have a private prayer request please fill out the appropriate side and give to the pastor.*

### **Wednesday, November 25, 2020 ~ Thanksgiving Eve Service**

General \$165.00, Building \$100.00 **Total: \$265.00**

**Attendance:** Worship - 24

### **Sunday, November 29, 2020**

General \$1,525.00, MOM-Christmas Family \$175.00, NALC \$10.00, Sunday School \$22.00, Youth \$10.00, Cemetery \$20.00, Building \$40.00, Reno. \$1,135.00 **Total: \$2,937.00**

**Attendance:** Worship - 60 Sunday School - 9 - Children, 9 - Adults Confirmation - 5

### **Called Congregational Meeting**

A called congregational meeting will be held immediately following the service next **Sunday, December 13th.** The sole agenda items will be consideration of the proposed St. John Budget for 2021, as approved by Council and the NALC Constitutional Amendments. There are copies of both of these items in the Narthex.

### **UPDATE - Worship Team Notes - UPDATE**

We will be having church in the sanctuary at 10:15 a.m. from now on, unless something changes. Communion will be by stations on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday until further notice. Please note there are certain guidelines that have to be followed. These specific guidelines are posted on our website & FaceBook page. The service will still be broadcasted on the radio station FM 101.5 for those who wish to stay in their vehicles. The service will also be videoed & posted to the church website on Sundays, after noon sometime. Please continue to check the church website & FaceBook page for updates.





## Mission of the Month of December



### Samaritan's Purse COVID-19 Response Mission Statement

In response to the COVID-19 international emergency Samaritan's Purse has set up medical tents and brought assistance to most of the world. At this moment they are responding to the Bahamas and other countries around the world who continue to have the spread of COVID-19.

All of the monies collected during this month for mission will go specifically to the COVID-19 Response.



*We hold LeAnn Jander & her family in our thoughts & prayers over the loss of her father, Larry Geffert. May God comfort them during this time of loss.*

### St. John Lutheran Christmas Program



ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH  
SUNDAY SCHOOL AND YOUTH GROUP  
INVITE YOU TO A STEP BACK IN TIME TO OUR  
**BETHLEHEM VILLAGE**  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20TH FROM 6 TO 7 PM  
IN FRONT OF ST. JOHN LUTHERAN  
CHURCH IN MEYERSVILLE

VISIT OUR DIFFERENT BOOTHS AND ENJOY HOT CHOCOLATE AND A LIVE NATIVITY  
DRIVE-BY OPTIONS ALSO AVAILABLE  
FOLLOW THE STAR TO BETHLEHEM!

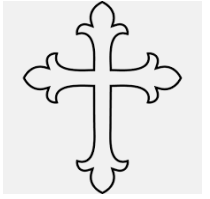


## Youth Group News

St. John's is looking for someone who enjoys working with young people to be our new youth leaders. Please prayerfully consider this and let Pastor John or Laurie Pokluda know if this is your calling.

### NALC Warehouse and Operation Christmas Child Shoe Boxes

We will be collecting for these charities all year. Each month we will feature items to be donated. We will start collecting again in January 2021. Thank you to all who donated in 2020.



St. John collected **86 shoe boxes** for Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child this year! How AWESOME!!! Thank you to everyone who participated in any way!



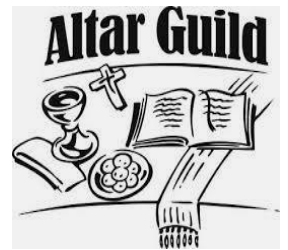
### Services:

*Communion Service 3:00 pm*

*Candlelight Service w/ Communion 10:00 pm*

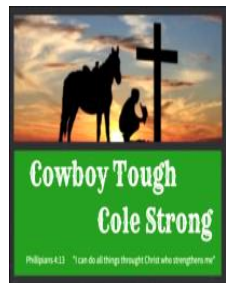
### ALTAR GUILD OPPORTUNITY/PLEA

One of our faithful Altar Guild teams is no longer able to serve. Therefore, the Altar Guild is urgently asking for each of you to prayerfully and seriously consider being a part of a team to serve on the Altar Guild. You and your teammate (as do the 5 other teams) serve approximately 2 months per year setting up communion before and cleaning up afterward and filling candles. Please contact Carol Ann Sagebiel (361)243-0122 or any Altar Guild member for more information, etc. Thank You.



### Special Prayers for Cole

Cole is at home doing well surrounded by the love and support of all his family. He continues to have therapy on a daily basis at his home and will soon also be doing therapy in Victoria. God continues to be with Cole each and every day strengthening his faith, patience, and courage as he travels down this long and difficult journey. We thank each and every one again for all your prayers, concerns, and support for Cole and his family. We ask for you to continue praying for Cole's healing and for strength and patience for him and his family. Thank you and God Bless.



**+Please pray at 12:00 PM daily for Cole+  
At his request, these are the prayers he has on his list:**

*Healing- physical, emotional & spiritual*

*To help family stay strong*

*Patience*

*Stay positive*

*The drive to keep trying (perseverance)*

### Church Renovation Update

Remaining items for the construction progress are to complete the canopy and final grade the site. After completion, a final walk through will be held to address any items that need to be touched-up. The estimated costs for construction, change orders, materials testing, architect, and incidentals is \$599,553. We are required to pay as construction progresses so the bills are coming in on a regular basis. This project received almost unanimous support so we ask that you prayerfully consider giving generously to this project. GOAL: \$599,553 RECEIVED AS OF November 29, 2020: \$559,458.30



**PRAYER REQUESTS:** If you have a prayer request please contact Evelyn Diebel (361)275-5979 Or Linda Ruschhaupt (361)275-4990 or the Pastor. We ask that you would update the prayer request regularly. If we do not have an update, in an effort to keep our list current and up to date, we will presume the situation has improved and remove the request after 30 days. We thank you for your cooperation in this matter. If you wish to receive the Prayer Chain requests, please contact Evelyn Diebel at (361)275-5979.

**Our Military and their families:**

Jeff Zengerle - U.S. Army NG, Kuwait  
Russell Copeland - U.S. Army Reserves  
Jonathon Albrecht - U.S. Army, Kentucky  
Chase Schroeder - U.S. Navy  
Austin Schroeder - U.S. Navy  
Lee Magruder - U.S. Army, 2-4 CaB, Charlie Company, Black Hawk Medevac Pilot, Fort Carson, Colorado  
Katrina Moritz - U.S. Air Force  
Michael Petrash II - 1<sup>st</sup> LT, United States Army  
Andrew Washington, L CPL - USMC, Pensacola, FL  
Jacob Redmond - USMC, San Diego, CA  
Koltyn Mayhall - USMC, North Carolina



**Please Pray for:** Adam Womble  
Nate Boehl  
Hunter Jacob  
Glynn Yurick  
Kenny Jacob  
Cole Ohrt  
Carly Waters  
Joy Hoy  
Marie Liner  
Bill Roeske  
Janice Turner  
Sarah Cooper  
Jimmy Caskey  
Britany Jank Tomas  
Dugan Chandler

**Nursing Home:**

Stevens Healthcare of Yoakum ~ Marjorie Ideus  
Cuero Nursing & Rehab. ~ Alfred Rangnow  
Twin Pines Nursing Facility-Victoria ~ Bette Jo Haun, Meta Bennett



**Keep up with St. John online**  
**St. John Meyersville**  
<https://www.facebook.com/Stjohnmeyersville>  
**Or visit our website at: [stjohnmeyersville.org](http://stjohnmeyersville.org)**



## Advent 2

December 6, 2020

### Second Sunday of Advent (Year B)

Repentance is key to receiving the coming Messiah. When we cling to our stubborn, idolatrous ways we resist noticing the sin in our hearts and lives. We are masters at justifying our sin, readily finding a reason to explain our actions that are against God's perfect will. Christ came to free us from our broken human condition. John's call to return to the Lord, is a call to live boldly in the faith of Christ our Savior.



## SOME WORDS FROM LUTHER

Some here take the “land” in a single sense... to mean the blessed Virgin...I believe that the word of the Holy Spirit is not thus to be limited to one of these three earths but refers to all three at once: the Virgin, mankind, and the literal earth. For in fact all three have been blessed at the same time... - Martin Luther -  
Lecture on Psalm 85