

THE ST. JOHN NEWS

December 2024

The Advent Wreath History and Understanding

Another church year has begun with the season of Advent, a time of preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord. The sanctuary has been decorated and the season's color of blue dominates the altar. With the Christmas tree and the Nativity scene on display comes the presence of the Advent wreath. The Advent wreath stands next to the lectern in our sanctuary and is used to mark the weeks of the season.

Use of candles to track the time of Advent date back to the years just prior to the Reformation in the 1500s and originate in eastern Germany. There are typically four candles that are used to represent the four Sundays in Advent. Traditionally, Advent begins on the Sunday closest to the celebration of St. Andrew's day, which is November 30. The last Sunday in Advent is the Sunday that occurs before Christmas Day.

In the past, the color for Advent's season has been purple, as a correlation to the other preparatory church year season which is Lent. Blue has been used more prominently in recent history to help distinguish the two seasons. The word "Advent" means coming and the various comings of Christ are emphasized: his birth, the Means of Grace, and the Last Day. As all of these give hope for the Christian, the color blue is said to represent that promising emotion.

Advent wreaths are often decked with greenery to remind worshippers of the liveliness of faith in Christ. Most Advent wreaths will use color of the season, whether blue or purple. Some may be seen using white candles only. Those with blue or purple candles may also contain a pink or rose-colored candle. This candle is to be lit on the third Sunday in Advent (not the fourth) to reflect the more joyful theme illustrated in the opening word of the Introit for the day, which is "rejoice," or *Gaudete* in Latin.

Normally at the center of the Advent wreath will be a singular white candle. This is reserved for lighting at the Christmas Eve services, on Christmas Day, and for all other services in the twelve day season of Christmas.

There is no set order for which Advent candles are to be lit. What is to be followed is that one candle is lit on the First Sunday in Advent, two candles are lit on the Second Sunday in Advent, and so on. We have opted to follow the progression of moving upward toward the climax of the season as we have an angled Advent wreath. The bottom candle is lit first and the top candle lit last, when the Fourth Sunday in Advent arrives. We have designated the left-side candle as the second candle and the right-side candle as the third candle.

The overall purpose of the Advent wreath is to mark the Sundays in Advent in preparation for the celebration of Christmas. As each passing day builds the excitement of the return of Christ Jesus, so each passing week in Advent builds the excitement of Christ's coming at Christmas. Candles have always been used in the church as continuation of the candles used in the Old Testament tabernacle and temple. Christians are taught that Jesus Christ is the light of the world, as John writes in his Gospel's first chapter. Our candles always serve to remind us of the great truth that Jesus Christ always shines, even in the darkness of our fallen world.

I pray that you are able to join us for this great season of preparation and especially for the celebration of the feast of our Lord's nativity as we worship our Savior and King, which is good and right so to do! Please find a schedule of key events printed below for your convenience. The Lord's blessings to you and your family throughout this blessed holy season!

In celebration of Christ's coming to us,
Pastor Caithamer

Advent Midweek Services Theme and Readings

His Name Shall Be Called *Isaiah 9:1-2, 6-7*

| | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Advent Midweek | December 4, 2024 | <i>Wonderful Counselor</i> | Matthew 7:24-29 |
| Advent Midweek 2 | December 11, 2024 | <i>Mighty God</i> | John 5:16-18; 8:48-59 |
| Advent Midweek 3 | December 18, 2024 | <i>Everlasting Father</i> | John 14:1-11 |

Advent and Christmas Events

| | | |
|--------------|-------------------|--|
| Wed, Dec 4 | 3:30pm and 7:15pm | Advent Midweek 1 and Dinner |
| Fri, Dec 6 | 5:30pm–7:00pm | Advent Family Night |
| Sat, Dec 7 | 8:00am to 12:00pm | Cookie Walk |
| Tues, Dec 10 | 6:30pm | Day School Christmas Program |
| Wed, Dec 11 | 3:30pm and 7:15pm | Advent Midweek 2 and Dinner |
| Sun, Dec 15 | 9:45am | Sunday School Christmas Program |
| | 3:30pm | Christmas Caroling |
| Wed, Dec 18 | 3:30pm and 7:15pm | Advent Midweek 3 and Dinner |
| Tues, Dec 24 | 3:00pm | Christmas Eve Family Service |
| | 5:00pm | Christmas Eve Family Service |
| | 7:15pm | Christmas Eve Divine Service |
| | 10:00pm | Lessons and Carols-Candlelight Service |
| Wed, Dec 25 | 10:00am | Christmas Day Communion Service* |
| Tues, Dec 31 | 7:15pm | New Year's Eve Divine Service |

*Please note: There will be no Wednesday evening service on December 25!

Let Us Pray

For Strength, Hope, and Peace: Melvin -father of Greg

For Healing and Recovery: Cindy, Lois, Carol, Larry, Kyle, Barbara, David, Karla, Jon, Mary Jane, Kim, Terry, Merv, Danny-brother of Fawn, Robin, Patty, Kaylianna-great granddaughter of Bob & Joan, Charlene, Brian, Teresa- god-child of Bob & Joan, Barbara-family friend of Bob & Joan, John, Hendricks -grandson of Joanie, Maria, Roy- father of Anne, Todd- grandson of Harold, Brett -cousin of the Kindts'

For Successful Treatments: Mark, Nancy, Barb, Earl, Linda, Joan, Jeanette

For our Military: Nick D, Nick F, Andy, Brandon, Zachary, David

For our Missionaries: Pastor Randrianasolo Dembiniana Havanjanakary and the Madagascar Lutheran Seminary, Pastor Magnus Bengston and Lielsalaca Lutheran Church in Latvia, Pastor Obot Ite and the Lutheran Mission in Kingston, Jamaica



Family Advent Night— All St. John Families are invited to begin their Christmas preparations by joining us for Family Advent Night on Friday, December 1st, from 5:30-7:00pm. We will have a pizza dinner, crafts for kids, devotions, singing of Christmas carols and cookie decorating. Please sign up on the bulletin board outside the Fellowship Hall.

Young Adults Group will be having a Christmas party on December 13th in the Fellowship Hall at 5:00pm. There will be food, devotion, and a gift exchange. Anyone between the ages of 18-40 are welcome. Please bring a gift totaling no more than \$15. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Sara.

Sunday School Christmas Program – The Christmas Program will be presented by the Preschool - 8th grade children on Sunday, December 15th during the Sunday School hour. They will practice during Sunday School on December 1st and December 8th. We look forward to their message.

Please join us for Christmas Caroling on Sunday, December 15th at 3:30pm. We will meet in the Fellowship Hall and carpool to each location.

Advent Dinners will be served after the 3:30 services.

We welcome you to come and enjoy fellowship with other Christian friends and families. The December 4th meal will be provided by the Fellowship Board. There is a sign-up sheet for desserts to accompany the meal. The School Board will be hosting the meal on December 11th.

There is a sign-up sheet for soups/chili posted on the bulletin board by the church office. LWML will be hosting the final Advent Dinner on Wednesday, December 18th.

LWML Cookie Walk - December 7, 2024, 8:00am to Noon, as well as between services on Sunday in the Fellowship Hall. The Christmas cookies donated by all women of St. John will be sold providing a great variety of cookies without baking more than on batch and assisting the LWML with their mission projects. Mission projects discussed-past mission projects – St. John Lutheran Church & School; missionaries – Jamaica, Papua New Guinea, Deaconess Kim; confirmation banners, gift cards for our college students, church banners, Empty Tomb, Men's shelter, homeless bags, equipment for the kitchen, etc. Please sign up on the bulletin board and bring your donation of one recipe (3-5 dozen home-baked) Christmas cookies for the Cookie Walk to the kitchen Friday, December 6th, between 2:30-7:00pm. Return Saturday, December 7th to fill your container with a variety of Christmas cookies. Questions contact Linda T



December Music Notes



As we make our way through Advent, I am reminded of just how much of our Lutheran musical heritage stems from the musical treasures of the Church in the centuries that preceded the Reformation.

Some of our hymns we regularly sing today are pretty much as Luther would have heard and sung them as a youngster and Priest, including:

LSB 351 Creator of the Stars of Night

LSB 357 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Many others are transliterations of Latin hymns, such as LSB 355. The Latin text (*Rorate Coeli*) is based in part on Isaiah 45:8 (Drop down, ye heavens from above, and let the skies reign down righteousness.) This serves as the Introit on the 4th Sunday of Advent in the Latin Rite. Our Prelude on December 22 will be based on the Latin chant, and we will sing the hymn, whose first verse is *O Savior, rend the heavens wide; Come down, come down with mighty stride; Unlock the gates, the doors break down; Unbar the way to heaven's crown.*

Among the most familiar of our Advent hymns is one of many which Luther himself translated and which we sing to a tune adapted by one of the first Lutheran composers, Johann Walter. The original text *Veni, redemptor gentium* dates from the 4th century, and is attributed to St. Ambrose. Luther brought this into our tradition as LSB 332 Savior of the Nations, Come. There will be special music for all of the Christmas Eve services and on Christmas morning as well!

Singers!

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Sunday, December 1 | Mixed Choir | 10:00 rehearsal |
| Sunday, December 8 | Mixed Choir | 7:30 rehearsal & 8:00 service |
| Sunday, December 15 | Mixed & Men's Choir | Noon rehearsal |
| Sunday, December 22 | Men's Choir | 9:30 rehearsal |
| Sunday, December 22 | Mixed Choir | 10:00 rehearsal & 10:45 service |
| Sunday, December 22 | Mixed Choir (& bells) | 12:00 rehearsal (for Christmas Eve) |

Ringers!

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Wednesday, December 4 | 6:00 rehearsal |
| Wednesday, December 11 | 6:00 rehearsal |
| Sunday, December 15 | 7:30 warmup for 8:00 service (+ 10:45 Prelude) |
| Wednesday, December 18 | 6:00 rehearsal (Christmas Eve ringers only) |
| Sunday, December 22 | 12:00 rehearsal with Choir (Christmas Eve ringers only) |

Soli Deo Gloria,

Keith



December E.A.T. Night - El Rancho Grande, Monday, December 9, ALL DAY

Bring in the flyer or show an electronic copy to make sure that 20% of the proceeds will be donated to St. John Lutheran School.

Gift card and alcohol sales are excluded. Flyers are available on the narthex table and on the school website.

*El Rancho Grande is located in Savoy, behind Aldi.



**DECEMBER 23
THROUGH JANUARY 6**

CHAPEL OFFERING for 2024-2025

This year, St. John Lutheran School will support Orphan Grain train with their weekly chapel offering.

You won't want to miss *Symbols of Salvation*,
the Day School Christmas
Service on

Tuesday, December, 10 at 6:30pm
in the gymnasium.



Students will tell of Jesus' birth
with joyful hearts, songs, and
readings. See you there!

Save the Date!

Friday, February 22, 2025



More
information
will be
announced
soon.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Chris | 25 Sandy, Christian, Jessy |
| 2 Joan, Kim, Ellen, Noelle, Zara | 26 Eileen , Rory |
| 3 Nicholas | 29 Larry, Mariah, Ryan, Terry , Makenzie, Steve |
| 4 Jonathon | 30 Anna , Harold , Shirley , Aman |
| 6 Jackson, Jesse Cyndy | 31 Rachel |
| 7 Cheryl, Paul, Joyce, Elizabeth, Holly, Lydia | |
| 8 Starley, Jim, Rick, Alma, Cindy, Jeanette | |
| 9 Heath, Gary, Lauren, Kayson | |
| 10 Larry, Russell, Barb, Mark, Jeff, Miles | |
| 11 Robert, Megan, Natalie, Bob, Charlie, Merv, Josh | |
| 12 Liam, Susan, Nathan, Aidan | |
| 13 Bryce, Jeff, Linda, Camilla, Noah | |
| 14 Carol | |
| 15 Ethan, Mark, Vicki, Chris | |
| 16 Cole, Ann | |
| 17 Cynthia, Kate, Mark, Joy Lou | |
| 18 Lindsey, Mechell | |
| 19 Kelsi, Marvin, Abby, Neal, Dee | |
| 20 Eric, Ryan, Dan, Dan | |
| 21 Lee, Amanda, Christian | |
| 22 Steve | |
| 23 Ellie, Ruby, Karla, Christy, Lindsay, Logan | |
| 24 Barry, Wendy | |

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 4 John & Bonnie (48); Norm & Karla (25) | 27 Charles & Sharon (55) |
| 8 Jim & Jennifer (12), Ron & Kathy (34) | 29 Trent & Leah (34) |
| 9 Timm & Patty (30) | 30 Andy & Susan (35) |
| 21 David & Debra Wurl (22) | |
| 22 Michael & Britta Kresca (12) | |

Hat and Mitten Tree

The school will be collecting new hats, mittens, gloves and scarves (any size), and the congregation is invited to participate! Items will be collected Monday, November 18 through Friday, December 13. Donations may be placed on the tree by the school office or on the tree in the Fellowship Hall. All items will be donated to local charities.



Boys-Coed Basketball Home Games

Thursday, Dec. 12 - JV & Varsity vs. Next Generation, 6p
Saturday, Dec. 14 - Round Robin Tournament w/ Trinity, Bloomington
 & Trinity, Danville, 10a
Tuesday, Dec. 17 - JV & Varsity vs. St. John's, Buckley, 6p
Thursday, Dec. 19 - JV & Varsity vs. DeLand-Weldon, 5:30p

GO RAMS!

Altar Guild will meet between services on December 8th to go over the 2025 schedule. We plan to keep the meeting short. If you plan on attending, please contact Jan

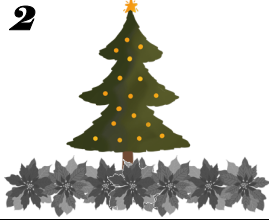


Mission Statement:

United in faith, we serve the Kingdom of God by building lives that are rooted in the Word, centered on Christ, and motivated by Grace; to reflect Christ's love and share His Gospel with all.

DECEMBER

^{2a}The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; ⁶For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:2a; 6

2024

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 1 1st Sunday in Advent New Member Sunday 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:00 Mixed Choir Rehearsal 10:45 Holy Communion | 2  | 3 10:00 Adult Bible Class 5:15 Fellowship Board 6:30 School Board | 4 8:08 Chapel 3:30 Advent Service 5:45 Midweek School 6:00 Handbells 7:15 Advent Service | 5 | 6 5:30 Family Advent Night | 7 8:00 LWML Cookie Walk | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 2nd Sunday in Advent 7:30 Mixed Choir Rehearsal 8:00 Holy Communion (Mixed Choir) 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:45 Holy Communion 1:00 Voter's Budget Meeting/ Constitution Q&A to follow | 9 All Day - E.A.T. Night @ El Rancho Grande | 10 6:30 School Christmas Program <i>Newsletter Deadline</i> | 11 8:08 Chapel 10:00 Adult Bible Class 3:30 Advent Service 5:45 Midweek School 6:00 Handbells 7:15 Advent Service | 12 7:00 Men's Prayer Breakfast @ Sammy's | 13 5:00 Young Adults Christmas Party | 14 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 3rd Sunday in Advent 7:30 Alleluia Ringers Rehearsal 8:00 Holy Communion (AR) 9:30 Sunday School Christmas Program 10:45 Holy Communion (AR) 12:00 Mixed & Men's Rehearsal 3:30 Christmas Caroling | 16 | 17 10:00 Adult Bible Class | 18 8:08 Chapel 3:30 Advent Service 5:45 Midweek School 6:00 Handbells 7:15 Advent Service | 19 | 20 | 21  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 22 4th Sunday in Advent 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School, Men's Choir Rehearsal 10:00 Mixed Choir Rehearsal 10:45 Holy Communion (Mixed Choir) 12:00 Mixed & AR Rehearsal | 23 <i>Day School Christmas Break Dec 23— Jan 6</i> | 24 Christmas Eve 3:00 Family Service 5:00 Family Service 7:15 Holy Communion 10:00 Candlelight Service | 25 Christmas Day 10:00 Holy Communion <i>No Evening Service</i> | 26 | 27 | 28 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Church Office Closed 12/25 - 1/1</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 29 1st Sunday after Christmas 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Adult Bible Class, Sunday School 10:45 Holy Communion | 30 <i>Church Office Closed 12/25 - 1/1</i> | 31 New Year's Eve 7:15 Holy Communion | Jan. 1  <i>No Evening Service</i> | Church Office 359-1123 School Office 359-1714 | November 2024 <table> <tr> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr> <td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td></tr> <tr> <td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td></tr> <tr> <td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td></tr> <tr> <td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td></tr> </table> | S | M | T | W | T | F | S | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | January 2025 <table> <tr> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr> <td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr> <td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr> <td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td></tr> <tr> <td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> | S | M | T | W | T | F | S | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | | |
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