



## St. John's Lutheran Church, ELCA

*"A Legacy of Worship and Outreach in San Antonio since 1857"*

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Phone 210-223-2611

**December 1, 2019**  
**First Sunday of Advent**



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### GATHERING

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God*

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**Prelude**      **Improvisation on "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"**

**Bells**

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Advent Litany**

As our days grow shorter and the nights longer,  
we, who are people of faith,  
turn to symbols such as candles and chrismons, evergreens and wreaths,  
to prepare and proclaim our hope  
in the coming of our Lord.

**As we begin our Advent journey,  
we confess that our lives do not often reflect the Reign God.  
We, at times, are distant from the One who is Father to us all,  
the One in whose hands we are like clay.  
Yet, even now, our longing for the  
God who comes among us  
kindles like a fire in our souls.  
Even now, as we wait, we dare to hope.**

Indeed, anticipation rises up within us,  
for the first candle now shines in our midst,  
and we name it Hope.

**Amen. Come Lord Jesus.**

**Gathering Hymn**

**"Fling Wide the Door"**

**ELW #259**

**Greeting**

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 mer - cy.**

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

**Lord, have mer - cy.**

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 mer - cy.**

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. **A - men.**

**Prayer of the Day**

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection save us from the threatening dangers of our sins, and enlighten our walk in the way of your salvation, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

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## WORD

*God speaks to us in scripture and preaching; we respond in profession of faith and prayer*

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### First Reading: Isaiah 2:1-5

*The visionary message presented in this reading focuses on a future day when God establishes a universal reign of peace. Divine decisions will make war obsolete, and the worshipping community responds: "Let us walk in the light of that Lord now!"*

<sup>1</sup>The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>In days to come the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. <sup>3</sup>Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup>He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. <sup>5</sup>O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!


Word of God, word of Life.  
**Thanks be to God.**

### Psalm 122



I was glad when they said to me,  
"Let us go to the house of the LORD."

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- <sup>1</sup>I was glad when they | said to me,  
"Let us go to the house | of the LORD."  
<sup>2</sup>**Now our | feet are standing  
within your gates, | O Jerusalem.**  
<sup>3</sup>Jerusalem is built | as a city  
that is at unity | with itself;  
<sup>4</sup>**to which the tribes go up, the tribes | of the LORD,  
the assembly of Israel, to praise the name | of the LORD. R**



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- <sup>5</sup>For there are the | thrones of judgment,  
 the thrones of the | house of David.  
<sup>6</sup>**Pray for the peace | of Jerusalem:**  
**"May they pros- | per who love you.**  
<sup>7</sup>Peace be with- | in your walls  
 and quietness with- | in your towers.  
<sup>8</sup>**For the sake of my kindred | and companions,**  
**I pray for | your prosperity.**  
<sup>9</sup>Because of the house of the | LORD our God,  
 I will seek to | do you good." **R**

## Second Reading: Romans 13:11-14

*Paul compares the advent of Christ to the coming of dawn. We live our lives today in light of Christ's coming in the future.*

<sup>11</sup>Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; <sup>12</sup>the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; <sup>13</sup>let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup>Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Word of God, word of life.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## Gospel Acclamation

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the  
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

*Cantor: Alleluia. Show us your steadfast | love, O LORD,\* and grant us | your salvation. Alleluia. (Ps. 85:7)*

## The Holy Gospel: Matthew 24:36-44

*Jesus describes his second coming as a sudden, turbulent event that will bring about deep change to our normal, day-to-day lives. Therefore, he urges people to stay awake, be aware, and wait expectantly, because the Son of Man will come unannounced.*

The good news of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St. Matthew:  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples,] <sup>36</sup>“About that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>37</sup>For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup>For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup>and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>40</sup>Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. <sup>41</sup>Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. <sup>42</sup>Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. <sup>43</sup>But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. <sup>44</sup>Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.”

The Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Children are invited to go to their Sunday lesson and activity. They will return at Holy Communion. Parents are welcome to accompany them.*

**Sermon**

**Pastor James Dew**

**Hymn of the Day**

**“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”**

**ELW #254**

## **Apostles' Creed**

With the whole Church in heaven and on earth, we confess our faith...

**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**

*Each petition concludes: "Hear us, O God." The congregation responds: **"Your mercy is great."***

*We hold in prayer: Bob Cauble, Frances Bara, Chris Gates, Danny Myers, Rev. Louise Shaw,  
Jet Smith, Ralph Detwiler.*

*For prayer request updates, please contact the church office by phone or email at (210) 223-2611  
or [info@StJohnsSA.org](mailto:info@StJohnsSA.org)*

## **Peace**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*(Please share with those nearest you these or similar words: "Peace be with you.")*



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## MEAL

*We bring our "first fruit" offerings to the Table of the Lord  
where we are strengthened and nourished with the Body and Blood of Christ*

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**Offering**

**"Stir Up Your Power"**

**Canle Shute**

**Offertory Hymn**

**"Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful"**

**ELW #182**

### Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful *Offering Song*

Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of  
bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be  
fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -  
nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your  
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

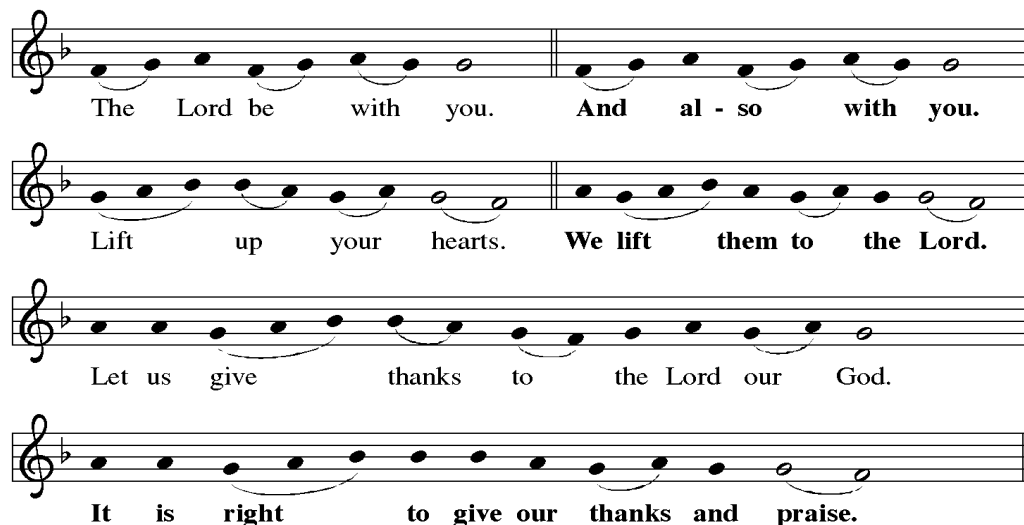
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### Offertory Prayer

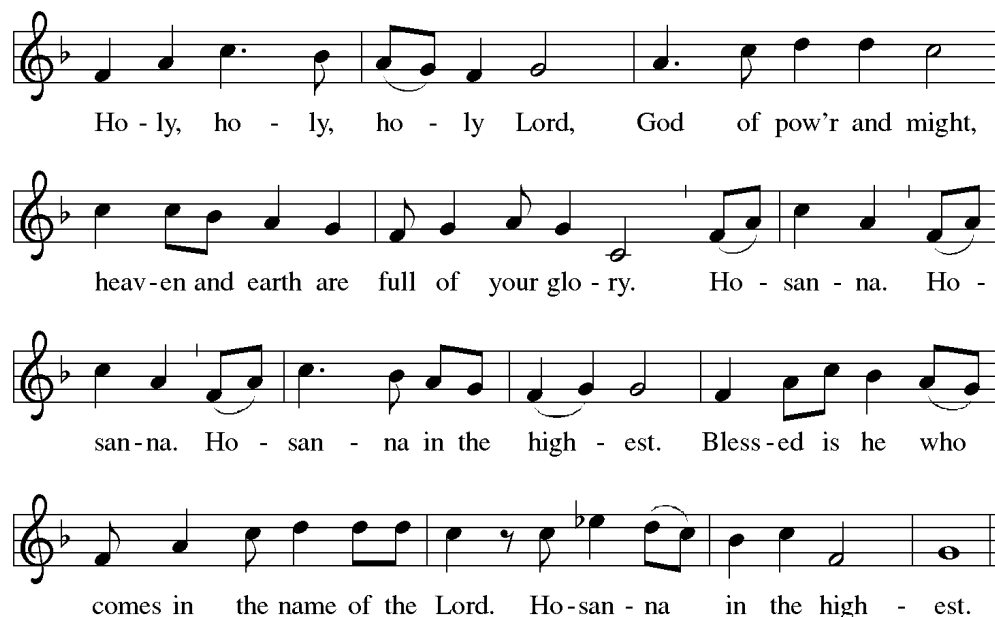
Giver of every good thing, we set before you the gifts that you have already given to sustain our lives and to share with others. Help us to be good stewards of the earth and all that is in it, and let our lives be a testimony to the abundant feast you prepare for all who hunger. **Amen**

## Great Thanksgiving



The Lord be with you. And al - so 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 our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



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.

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: Blessed are you for the birth of creation. Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light. Blessed are you for your promise to your people. Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams. Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:



**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

**Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Remember us, Lord, in your kingdom, and help us to pray:

**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.**

Come to the table where Christ meets you, and where all are welcomed.

**Agnus Dei**

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have  
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the  
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
sin of the world; grant us peace.

## Holy Communion

*We believe that Christ is truly present in the consecrated bread and wine and we welcome all who wish to receive the Holy Sacrament. Please follow the direction of the ushers. A gluten free host is available upon request.*

## Communion Hymns

ELW #253 *He Came Down*  
ELW #464 *Bread of Life, Our Host and Meal*  
ELW #488 *Soul Adorn Yourself with Gladness*

## Communion Blessing

## Communion Prayer

God of abundance, we give you thanks that in this holy meal you have invited us to feast with you and one another. May the taste of your love remain with us, and may our words and our work in your name invite others into your bountiful grace. Send us from your table to proclaim your presence, even as we await the glorious coming of Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

## Sending of Eucharistic Ministers

Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, assist those who set forth to share your word and sacrament with those who are sick and homebound. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us all the comfort of your abiding presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

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## SENDING

*God blesses us and sends us out in mission to the world*

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## Benediction

May God, who gathers us in love,  
lead you in pathways of righteousness and justice.  
May God, who knows us more deeply than we know ourselves,  
lead you in pathways of forgiveness and freedom.  
May God, who fills us with good things,  
lead you in pathways of equity and abundance.  
The blessing of the holy Trinity, † one God,  
be upon you and remain with you forever.  
**Amen.**

## Sending Hymn

**"Soon and Very Soon"**

**ELW #439**

## Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you.  
**Thanks be to God!**

## Postlude

**"Praeludium and Fugue in C Major"**

**J.S. Bach**

## Worship Leaders

Presiding Minister + Pastor James Dew

Assisting Minister + Julie Shadrock

Lector + Susan Dickson

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*Worship is central to who we are as a people of God. Every time we gather to hear and respond to the Word, to offer up our prayers for the needs of many, and to receive Christ's living presence in the consecrated bread and wine, we seek to "become what we receive", namely, the Body of Christ for the sake of the life of the world. As we are gathered, fed, and then sent back out in mission, God empowers us to be bearers of blessing and vessels of grace, commissioning us to intentionally live out the reign of God throughout the course of our weekly living.*

### This week at St. John's

Sun 1 • Hanging of the Greens 10:45 AM

Mon 2 • Executive Committee Meeting 6:00 PM

Wed 4 • Mid-Week Word and Prayer 12:15 PM

Wed 4 • Campus Ministry Dinner 6:00 PM

Wed 4 • Choir Practice 7:00 PM

Fri 6 • First Friday Concert Series 12:05 PM

Sun 8 • St. John's Choir Advent Program  
9:30 AM

Sun 8 • Cookie Walk 11:00 AM

Sun 8 • Confirmation Instruction 11:00 AM

*Please see our online calendar at [stjohnssa.org](http://stjohnssa.org) (under the Home tab) for weekly recurring events and the current month's Tidings.*

**Financial Reports and Council Minutes are available in the Member Section of the church website, and in the church office by request.**

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**ELCA World Hunger Advent Calendars are available on the large First Floor table. ELCA Good Gifts Catalogs are also available.**

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### Let the Children Come

The first Sunday of Advent provides an opportunity to remind children that a new church year begins today. Create a large black-and-white pie chart (the bigger, the better) with the seasons and holy days outlined in black. Prepare matching colored paper or fabric wedges to affix to the chart. Add a new colored "pie piece" at the start of each new season, or invite the children to help you assemble the entire color wheel during a children's message or in Sunday school. Consider making it out of sturdy cardstock, laminating the pie pieces, and attaching hook and loop fasteners so the wheel can be used and handled repeatedly and frequently. Like the Advent wreath, the circular calendar helps children to visualize the cyclical and eternal nature of the Christian life.

## **Theological Reflection**

Today's passage from Romans calls us to commit to a life of restraint, avoiding "reveling and drunkenness debauchery and licentiousness . . . quarreling and jealousy." For many people, these things have become rather a hallmark of the "holiday season," with parties, family gatherings, and gift exchanges sometimes calling forth the worst in human nature. Given that Advent was, at one time, more of a penitential season to prepare us for the return of Christ, worshipers might be invited to reflect on how they might intentionally practice "giving up something for Advent"—perhaps the temptation to drink or eat too much, get into familiar family arguments, or overspend on gifts.

## **Liturgical Calendar Commemorations**

**Francis Xavier, missionary to Asia, died 1552**

**Tuesday, December 3, 2019**

A native of the Basque region of Spain, Xavier became a missionary to India, Southeast Asia, Japan, and the Philippines. He also helped to found the Society of Jesus (Jesuits).

**John of Damascus, theologian and hymnwriter, died around 749**

**Wednesday, December 4, 2019**

A monk in an abbey near Jerusalem, John wrote many hymns as well as theological works. One of his works, *The Fount of Wisdom*, remained influential for centuries.

**Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, died around 342**

**Friday, December 6, 2019**

Little is known about Nicholas, except that he was a bishop in present-day Turkey. According to legend, he was famous for his giving to the poor, and so has become a symbol of anonymous gift-giving.

## **The Artwork of the Week**

The rededication of St. John's sanctuary last Sunday highlighted some of its most important features including the pulpit and lectern. These represent the "Place of the Word"—where the Word of God is delivered to the assembled congregation. The lectern features a beautiful carved angel with folded hands, suggesting the attitude with which the word of God should be heard. The pulpit is carved with figures of the four evangelists—Matthew, the winged man; Mark, the winged lion; Luke, the winged ox; and John, the winged eagle. Like the baptistry and Last Supper carvings, the lectern and pulpit are the work of Alois Lang, a master carver born in Oberammergau, Bavaria who came to the United States as a young man. Lang joined the American Seating Company in 1903 and was responsible for ecclesiastical carvings in many American churches, including St. John's.



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.