

# ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH BARTLETT, TX

## ELW Setting Four - Sunday, Dec. 17, 2023

### Third Sunday of Advent

#### Announcements

#### Prelude

#### Confession and Forgiveness (ELW p. 94)

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who forgives all our sin,  
whose mercy endures forever.

#### 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.

Gracious God,

**have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

#### Amen.

#### Gathering Song-Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn-ELW Hymn #242

#### Greeting (ELW p. 147)

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.**

#### Kyrie (ELW p. 147)

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.**

**Canticle of Praise (ELW p. 148)**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to God's people on earth.

**Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you,  
we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ,  
only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High,  
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

**Prayer of the Day (ELW p. 150)**

Let us pray.

**Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**Song-O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts-ELW Hymn #658**

**First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11**

A reading from Isaiah.

*Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.*

<sup>1</sup>The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners;

<sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;

<sup>3</sup>to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

<sup>4</sup>They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

<sup>8</sup>For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

<sup>9</sup>Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

<sup>10</sup>I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

<sup>11</sup>For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **Psalm: Psalm 126**

*Refrain: The LORD has done great things for us. (Ps. 126:3)*

<sup>1</sup>When the LORD restored the for- | tunes of Zion, then were we like | those who dream.

<sup>2</sup>**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with | shouts of joy.**

**Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great | things for them."**

<sup>3</sup>The LORD has done great | things for us, and we are | glad indeed.

<sup>4</sup>**Restore our for- | tunes, O LORD, like the watercourses | of the Negeb.**

**R The LORD has done great things for us.**

<sup>5</sup>Those who | sowed with tears will reap with | songs of joy.

<sup>6</sup>**Those who go out weeping, carry- | ing the seed,**

**will come again with joy, shoulder- | ing their sheaves.**

**R The LORD has done great things for us.**

### **Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24**

A reading from 1 Thessalonians.

*Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ's coming.*

<sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Do not despise the words of prophets, <sup>21</sup>but test everything; hold fast to what is good; <sup>22</sup>abstain from every form of evil.

<sup>23</sup>May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

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

### **Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah - ELW Hymn #240 (v. 1-3)**

**Light one candle to watch for Messiah:  
let the light banish darkness.  
He shall bring salvation to Israel,  
God fulfills the promise.**

**Light two candles to watch for Messiah:  
let the light banish darkness.  
He shall feed the flock like a shepherd,  
gently lead them homeward.**

**Light three candles to watch for Messiah:  
let the light banish darkness.  
Lift your heads and lift high the gateway  
for the King of glory.**

### **Lighting of the Third Advent Candle**

Praise to you, O God, who holds our joy and sorrow.  
You bring water to parched ground and life out of death.

**Bless us as this light grows,  
and send sorrow and sighing to flee away.**

Give us strength and patience,  
trusting that you are true to your promises.

**Transform the lives of all who suffer  
with your wonders near at hand. Amen.**

### **Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28**

The holy gospel according to John.  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*John's gospel describes Jesus as the "light of the world." John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.*

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

<sup>19</sup>This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup>He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." <sup>21</sup>And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." <sup>22</sup>Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup>He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,

'Make straight the way of the Lord,'"  
as the prophet Isaiah said.

<sup>24</sup>Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup>They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" <sup>26</sup>John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, <sup>27</sup>the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." <sup>28</sup>This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

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

**Children's Sermon (ELW p. 151) - Pastor Jeremy Ullrich**  
**Sermon (ELW p. 151) - Pastor Jeremy Ullrich**  
**Hymn of the Day-Hark, the Glad Sound!-ELW Hymn #239**

**Creed (ELW p. 152)**

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.

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\*Or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use.

### **Prayers of Intercession**

With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

Fill our mouths with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy as we bear witness to the great things you have done. Give your church a spirit of gladness as we gather and as we are sent.  
Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Let the trees of the field sing your praise. Protect forests, orchards, rainforests, and all wooded areas from disease and deforestation. Keep us grateful for their gifts of oxygen, food, shade, and shelter. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

You love justice and promise your favor to those who are oppressed, brokenhearted, and incarcerated. Grant wisdom and compassion to those who work for public safety and all who work within prisons, jails, and courts, that mercy may increase and violence wither away.

Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Give us strength to pray for our world without ceasing and provoke us toward love and good deeds for all who are in need. Provide for all without adequate housing, food, employment, or access to health care. Empower us as helpers and advocates. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Open our hearts to those who serve as truth-tellers in our church and in our society. Bless leaders in church and society in their task of proclamation. Amplify voices of peacemakers, advocates, and especially those whose voices are ignored or marginalized. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

With gratitude we rejoice in the saints who witnessed to your life in all circumstances, in whom your Spirit was not quenched, even in death. Through them, teach us always to hold fast to what is good. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy.

**Amen.**

### **Peace (ELW p. 152)**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

### **Offering (ELW p. 152)**

**Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.**

**Cast me not away from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.**

**Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and uphold me with your free Spirit.**

### **Offering Prayer (ELW p. 152)**

Let us pray.

**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. Amen.**

### **Lord's Prayer (ELW p. 154)**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach 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.

**Blessing (ELW p. 155)**

The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.  
Amen.

**Sending Song-Fling Wide the Door-ELW Hymn #259**

**Dismissal (ELW p. 155)**

Go in peace. Share the good news.  
Thanks be to God.

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**OFFICIATING & SERVING - Dec. 17th**

<i>Pastor:</i>	Jeremy Ullrich	<i>Organist:</i> Debra Caldwell
<i>Pastor Asst.:</i>	Amanda Harper	
<i>Communion Asst:</i>	Don Bruggman	
<i>Lector:</i>	Garrett Kurtz	
<i>Usher Captain:</i>	Alan Shepherd	
<i>Ushers:</i>	Retha Shepherd, Rick & Pam Fleming, Lenard & Gloria Steglich	
<i>Greeters:</i>	Duane & Sharon Kurtin	
<i>Altar Care:</i>	April Marek & Amanda Harper	
<i>Teller Captain:</i>	Sharon Koonsen	
<i>Tellers:</i>	Duane & Sharon Kurtin	

**OFFICIATING & SERVING - Dec. 20th  
ADVENT SERVICE 12 Noon in TRC**

<i>Pastor:</i>	Jeremy Ullrich	<i>Organist:</i> Debra Caldwell
<i>Usher Captain:</i>	Weldon Kurtz	
<i>Teller Captain:</i>	Judy Gersbach	
<i>Tellers:</i>	Dorothy Marwitz & Cedralia Kurtz	

**OFFICIATING & SERVING - Dec. 24th 10:30 a.m.**

**Pastor:** Jeremy Ullrich **Organist:** Debra Caldwell  
**Lector:** Michael Kurtz  
**Usher Captain:** Michael Kurtz  
**Ushers:** Melinda & Garrett Kurtz, Brandon & Debi Janke  
**Greeters:** Robert and Dorothy Marwitz  
**Altar Care:** Debi & Courtney Janke  
**Teller Captain:** Imogene Morris  
**Tellers:** Dorothy Marwitz & Cedalia Kurtz

**OFFICIATING & SERVING - Dec. 24th 5:30 p.m.**

**Pastor:** Jeremy Ullrich **Organist:** Debra Caldwell  
**Pastor Asst.:** Weldon Kurtz  
**Communion Asst:** Wayne Zieschang  
**Lector:** Michael Kurtz  
**Usher Captain:** Michael Kurtz  
**Ushers:** Melinda & Garrett Kurtz, Brandon & Debi Janke  
**Greeters:** Alan & Retha Shepherd  
**Altar Care:** Debi & Courtney Janke  
**Teller Captain:** Imogene Morris  
**Tellers:** Dorothy Marwitz & Cedalia Kurtz

**OFFERING & ATTENDANCE**

	<u>Worship Attendance</u>	<u>Offering</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Dec. 3	61	\$2,886.50	\$179,849.92
Dec 10	140	\$5,698.00	\$185,547.92

**IN OUR PRAYERS**

Garland Wentreck Stanley Glaser Janie Barron Lange Eldon Lange  
Celeste Gamrod Pansy Lange Coby Sodek Jeanell Janke  
Letty Rose Taylor(Steven Wentreck’s grandbaby) Darrell Kurtz(Twin Brother of Harold Kurtz)  
Monica Blane(Pastor Daniel Blane’s daughter) Mike Bartek (friend of Alan and Retha)  
Risa Steglich James Chapman(Dorothy Marwitz’s Brother-in-law)  
Dolores Muske (Dorothy Marwitz Sister-in-law) Ruth and Ray Janke

**FUTURE HAPPENINGS**

Thursday: Piece Makers meet each Thursday in the TRC @ 1:00 pm

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Piecemakers Request**

The Piecemakers have asked for any sewing, crocheting, knitting, and supplies for sewing quilts. This would include sewing machines, scissors, rotary cutters, fabric, thread, pins and needles or anything that pertains to quilting.



### **Pastoral Visits**

We are encouraging those hospitalized, nursing home residents (or, their family members), and the homebound members and friends who wish to schedule an in-person pastoral visit or phone call to contact Pastor Jeremy Ullrich @ 979-421-3303 or the church office @ 254-527-3341.

**NOTE:** Pastor Ullrich will need to be listed as a “visitor of choice” in hospitals or nursing homes. This will need to be established by a family member.

### **Sunday School**

Adult Sunday School is at 9:15am in the TRC.

### **Family Promise**

Please donate as you are able for families in crisis. Needed items are cleaning/disinfecting products, female products, diapers, paper goods, and Laundry Pods (\*not liquid\*) etc. For further information contact Cedalia Kurtz at 254-657-2588. In addition, Cedalia and Family Promise wants to thank everyone for all of the donations given to those in need.

### **Articles for the Newsletter**

Please submit your articles for the monthly newsletter before the 19th of the month, as they are mailed out the following week. Thank you!

### **Prayer Requests**

When you make a prayer request for a non-member, please provide the church office with contact information so that we can send them a card. Thank you.

### **Will-O-Bell Nursing Home Worship**

Thank you to everyone who has been supporting the residents of our local nursing home! Through communion and a 30-minute hymn sing-along, we are currently the only opportunity that nursing home residents have to worship! Please show these residents they are not forgotten by joining us on the first Wednesday of each month at 2pm in Granger and on the third Thursday of each month at 10AM in Bartlett. Please come and make a resident smile.

### **Live Stream Learning**

St. John has purchased a camcorder to help with our live stream. We are looking for tech-inclined volunteers interested in testing out different settings. We will use an apprenticeship model for training, so you will have a mentor helping as long as you wish. For more information, contact the church office (254-527-3341).

### **Martha's Circle Bible Study**

Martha's Circle Bible Study will be taking a break until January 24, 2024, for more information contact Janice Atchison (254-721-8477).

### **Flag Donations**

3x5 U.S. Flags with grommets are appreciated for our church. In memory of loved ones, you may donate flags, or make cash donations, at the church office. For further information contact Walt Saverse @ 254-770-8381, or contact the church office @ 254-527-3341.

### **Sisters in Christ Bible Study**

The Sisters in Christ Bible study (Saturday Bible Study) will be taking a break until the third weekend in January. We will resume on January 20, 2024 as we begin a new series titled “Fierce” by Jennifer Cowart. This study covers lesser known ladies in the Bible and the ways they changed the world by living into God’s calling.

### **Men’s Bible Study**

The Men’s Bible Study will be on break through December 2023. The Study will resume at the usual 7:30am time on Wednesday January 3, 2024.

### **Congregation**

I want to thank everyone for their continued prayers, words of encouragement, cards and love sent to me. My family at St. John is amazing, as you continue to lift me up in prayer. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for making my days brighter and easier. God Bless You All,  
Celeste Gamrod

### **Friendly Reminder**

There are dishes left in the TRC Kitchen ready for pick up.

### **Milk and Cookies with Santa**

TODAY!!! Sunday December 17th after worship service.

### **TODAY!**

December 17th Congregational meeting before worship service.  
We will discuss the 2024 Budget.

### **Congregation Thank you!**

Janell Janek would like to thank everyone for the prayers, thoughts, visits, cards and phone calls checking on her the past few months and always.

### **Christmas Day Home Bulletin**

St. John has created a Christmas Day bulletin that will be used on December 25th (9am) and can be used in your home. Christmas Day elements of baking and lighting are incorporated into this liturgy. The resource can be found on our website (<http://www.stjohnbartlett.org/bulletin.html>) or via the QR code below.

