

We Join Together in Worship

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church – Dickinson, ND
Sunday, December 11, 2011 – 3rd Sunday of Advent

Gathering

Prelude, Welcome, Announcements, Confession & Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who shapes the whole creation, who comes with might and mercy, who fills the hungry with good things. **Amen.**

Let us approach the throne of grace with repentant hearts. Faithful God,

we confess that we have been unfaithful to you. Like dry leaves and withered grass, our lives are blown about by our sins and the powers of evil around us. Restore us, O God; let the light of your face shine on us, and we shall be saved. Amen.

God is patient, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. In the name of + Jesus Christ, I bring you this good news: You are free from all that imprisons you; your sins are forgiven; God heals your broken hearts. Live in peace and harmony as you wait for the day of God. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn – *Joy to the World*.....**#267**

Prayer and Lighting of Three Advent Candles

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. Your prophets spoke of a day when the desert would blossom and waters would break forth in the wilderness. Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath. Strengthen our hearts as we prepare for the coming of the Lord. May he give water to all who thirst, for he is our light and our salvation. Blessed be God forever. **Amen.**

Greeting and Prayer of the Day

Word

Scripture Readings – see insert (*response*: The word of the Lord; **Thanks be to God.**)

Gospel Verse: **Alleluia. I am sending my messenger before you, who will prepare your way before you. Alleluia.** (*Matt. 11:10*)

Gospel (*before reading*: **Glory to you, O Lord.** *after reading*: **Praise to you, O Christ!**)

Sermon Rev. Arnold M. Hilpert from Food for the Poor, Inc.
Hymn of the Day – *People, Look East* **#248**
Nicene Creed, Prayers, Greetings of PeacePage 126
Gathered as the Body-of-Christ, we are joined into a fellowship and a Holy Communion

Meal

Offering (An offering basket will be passed around for gifts designated to Food for the Poor)
Offertory Hymn – *Here is Bread (Verses 1)* **#483**
Prayer and Great ThanksgivingPage 161
Holy, Holy, Holy **#190**

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Distribution of Bread and Wine (*Advent Hymns*) **#250, #251, #714**
All the baptized are welcomed to receive the bread and wine offered at the Lord's Table. Please come forward down the center aisle (in two lines). Take a place at the rail as space becomes available. Receive the bread and wine. Return by the outside aisles. As God's people we are empowered to BE the presence of Christ in the world.

Communion Blessing and Prayer

Sending

Blessing and Hymn – *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (Verse 3)* **#257**
Dismissal – Go in peace. Remember the poor. **Thanks be to God.**
Postlude

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

146 Sixth Ave. West – Dickinson, ND 58601

701-225-6747

Website: StJohnELC.org

Mission: “Living in Service to Christ”

*Worship: 7 p.m. on Thursday // 8:00 & 10:30 a.m. on Sunday
(10:30 a.m. Sunday Service Broadcast on KDIX Radio)*

For Sunday, December 11, 2011

Presiding Minister: Pastor Lisa Lewton
Preaching: Rev. Arnold M. Hilpert
Assisting Ministers: Marya Skaare (Thursday)
Jan Wilkie (8:00 a.m.)
Margaret Marcusen (10:30 a.m.)
Deacons: Steve Lervik & Sandy Beaudoin (8:00 a.m.)
Marcy Decker
Organist: Barb Arneson
Cantor: Cheryl Hewson (8:00 a.m.)
Servers: Chase Ballard (Thursday)
Annie Praus & Shellby Collins (8:00 a.m.)
Ryan Schaefer & Paige Schweitzer (10:30 a.m.)

WELCOME TO WORSHIP: All the baptized people of God are invited to the Lord’s Table. You may stand or kneel to receive the elements. Children who commune should extend their hands to receive the elements. Children who are not communing are asked to have hands folded to receive a blessing. *You may ask a server to provide a gluten-free wafer or grape juice if needed.* Come to the table; all are welcomed!

WORSHIP INFORMATION: Attendance last week was 441 . . . Transmitters are available for the hearing impaired. Ask an usher for help . . . If it is uncomfortable for you to stand during the service, please feel free to remain seated . . . If you are a visitor, or if you simply forgot your offering envelope and wish to designate your contribution, please use a **pew envelope** . . . The nursery is located in the Commons Area. *Children’s worship bags are available during worship in the Commons Area and in the church entry.*

THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

(Check out our website for more information at www.stjohnelc.org)

Tuesday: 9:00 a.m. Quilting
Wednesday: 12:10 p.m. Noon Bible Study
6:30 p.m. Church School
7:00 p.m. Mentor Groups
Thursday: 6:00 p.m. Circle 4/Kathy Lowe Home
7:00 p.m. Midweek Worship
Friday: 6:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast/Bible Study/Ramada
Saturday: 9:30 a.m. Circle 6/Fellowship Room

FOOD FOR THE POOR, INC.: Thank you to Rev. Arnold M. Hilpert for traveling to Dickinson (from Florida) to deliver the sermon on Sunday. Food for the Poor seeks out the poorest of the poor in 17 countries. Their ministry includes feeding the hungry, building water wells, building houses, aiding impoverished elderly, raising orphans, healing the sick, and overcoming illiteracy by supporting schools. You may leave a gift for Food for the Poor in an offering basket at one of the entry tables, or in one of the offering baskets that will follow the regular collection plates during the offering.

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday, Dec. 18 ~ 7:00 p.m. Children's Christmas Program
Wednesday, Dec. 21 ~ 7:00 p.m. The Longest Night Worship Service
Saturday, Dec. 24 ~ 3:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship
5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship
10:00 p.m. Candlelight Worship
Sunday, Dec. 25 ~ 10:00 a.m. Christmas Day Worship

KDIX RADIO STATION will broadcast live the 3:00 p.m. St. John Lutheran Church Christmas Eve worship service.

CHRISTMAS EVE SPECIAL MUSIC: Families and individuals are invited to share special music during the prelude for the 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. worship services. If you would like to sing or play an instrument, please let Pastor Lisa know. Thank you for sharing your gifts of music!

THANK YOU TO THE ALTAR GUILD, who decorated the church, for helping us prepare for the birth of Christ!

2012 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES are available in the Commons Area. Please pick yours up by December 25. If you do not have offering envelopes and would like to receive them, please call Pam Weidner, Financial Secretary, in the church office ~ 225-6747.

A CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL FUND has been established for gifts in memory or honor of loved ones. Money will be used to purchase poinsettias for Christmas and the remaining money being donated to the Flood of Love campaign through Lutheran Disaster Response. Contributions to the Flood of Love campaign are designated to assist people and congregations affected by the flood in the Mouse River Valley. You may use envelopes provided in your offering envelope booklet, or forms that are available on the tables in the church entrances and the Dec. newsletter. **Return them by Thursday, December 15.**

BOOK OF SERMONS written by Pastor Steve Tangen has sold out! Thanks to those who purchased the book for supporting the ministry of the Trust Fund.

THANK YOU for your generous contributions to the ministry of St. John Lutheran Church. Giving through Dec. 4, 2011:

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>Budgeted 2011</u>
General Offerings	\$392,004	\$357,614	\$425,524
Outreach	\$91,587	\$82,575	\$88,400

As the Congregation Council works to prepare the 2012 budget, we ask congregation members to please prayerfully consider their annual pledge.

COME MAKE A DIFFERENCE: As of Dec. 7 we have received 299 total pledges. (Last year at this time we'd received 317 pledges). As you may know, our goal is to reach 350 pledging units by the end this year. With your pledge for 2012, you will provide our congregation's leaders with resources to enable our congregation to continue its broad range of programs, its vibrant worship, and its outreach to people in need. Please return your pledge card to the church office when you have decided on your 2012 pledge. You may also make your pledge online by clicking on **PLEDGE** on the **Faith in Action** link at www.stjohnelc.org. If you need a pledge card, please call the church office. If you choose not to make a pledge, please return a pledge card with only your name on it so we do not mail you a follow-up letter.

THERE IS NO CHURCH SCHOOL on Wednesday Dec. 21 or Dec. 28, or Sunday, Dec. 25 or Jan. 4.

NOON BIBLE STUDY will continue on **Wed., Dec. 14 at 12:10 p.m.**
We will **not** meet on Wed., Dec. 28 but will resume on Wed., Jan. 4.
Bring a sack lunch. Questions: Call Jodeen Myers at 225-6747.

CALLING ALL ANGELS!: St. John is again helping others in need. Many of us are fortunate enough to enjoy an abundance of loved ones and gifts during the Christmas season. However, this is not the case for many in our community. The Angel Tree is a ministry that provides gifts at Christmastime as an offering of compassion and a sign of hope. Please support the St. John Angel Tree Ministry by visiting the Angel Tree in the Commons Area. Please return all gifts to the church by Sunday, December 11. If you need additional information, contact Faith Simonieg, Director of Congregational Stewardship.

CHURCH SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM: The Church School Christmas Program will be on Sunday, Dec. 18 at 7:00 p.m., followed by snacks and fellowship in the basement. Students who attend on either Sundays or Wednesdays will participate in the program. There will be a rehearsal for ALL students on Sun., Dec. 18 at 9:15 a.m.

MENTOR GROUPS meet on **Wednesday, December 14 from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. (note later dismissal time)** for the Fun Night! All confirmation students are expected to attend and you won't want to miss it!

ADVENT FAMILY ACTIVITY BOOKLETS: For those of you with young children, there are advent family activity booklets on the tables in the narthex and commons area to take home and use during this Advent season.

JUNIOR HIGH YOUTH QUAKE: The deadline to sign up for Youth Quake Wednesday, Dec. 14. Youth Quake is February 24-26 for all 7-8 graders and costs \$70. Please make checks out to St. John Lutheran and money can be dropped off at the church office.

TRUST FUND GIFTS IN ACTION: Outreach gifts from the Trust Fund were recently distributed. \$1600 was contributed to the Best Friends Program which matches youth in southwest North Dakota with adult mentors to improve peer relationships, behavior or academic issues. \$1200 was contributed to the AMEN Food Pantry. Your gifts to the St. John Trust Fund make an important difference in the community and to the ministries of St. John Lutheran Church for generations to come.

Sunday, December 11, 2011

Third Sunday of Advent

INTRODUCTION

"Rejoice always," begins the reading from First Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. "All God's children got a robe," go the words of the spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes that make us feel happy just to put on. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God's party.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,
who shapes the whole creation,
who comes with might and mercy,
who fills the hungry with good things.

Amen.

Let us approach the throne of grace with repentant hearts.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Faithful God,
we confess that we have been unfaithful to you.
Like dry leaves and withered grass,
our lives are blown about by our sins
and the powers of evil around us.
Restore us, O God;
let the light of your face shine on us,
and we shall be saved. Amen.

God is patient, not wanting any to perish,
but all to come to repentance.
In the name of + Jesus Christ,
I bring you this good news:
You are free from all that imprisons you;
your sins are forgiven;
God heals your broken hearts.
Live in peace and harmony
as you wait for the day of God.

Amen.

GREETING

Grace and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the promised gifts of the Holy Spirit,
be with you all.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY (ELW)

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY (LBW)

Almighty God, you once called John the Baptist to give witness to the coming of your Son and to prepare his way. Grant us, your people, the wisdom to see your purpose today and the openness to hear your will, that we may witness to Christ's coming and so prepare his way; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (3)

PRAYER OF THE DAY (LBW) (ALTERNATE)

Lord, hear our prayers and come to us, bringing light into the darkness of our hearts; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. (4)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW)

Alleluia. I am sending my messenger before you,* who will prepare your way before you. Alleluia. (Matt. 11:10)

VERSE (LBW)

Alleluia. See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you. Alleluia. (Matt. 11:10)

READINGS

Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11

Psalm 126

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

Luke 1:46b–55 (Alternate)

You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly. (Luke 1:52)

1 Thessalonians 5:16–24

John 1:6–8, 19–28

FIRST READING: Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11

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 the Lord, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.

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;
²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
³to 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.
⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.
⁸For 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.
⁹Their 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.
¹⁰I 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.
¹¹For 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.\

PSALM (ELW): Psalm 126

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

¹When the LORD restored the for- | tunes of Zion,
then were we like | those who dream.
²**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."
³The LORD has done great | things for us,
and we are | glad indeed.
⁴**Restore our for- | tunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses | of the Negeb. R**
⁵Those who | sowed with tears
will reap with | songs of joy.
⁶**Those who go out weeping, carry- | ing the seed,
will come again with joy, shoulder- | ing their sheaves. R**

PSALM (ELW) (ALTERNATE): Luke 1:46b–55

You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly. (Luke 1:52)

^{46b}My soul proclaims the greatness of | the Lord,
⁴⁷my spirit rejoices in | God my Savior,
⁴⁸**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your | lowly servant.**
From this day all generations will | call me blessed;
⁴⁹you, the Almighty, have done great | things for me,
and holy | is your name.
⁵⁰**You have mercy on | those who fear you,**

from generation to | generation. R

⁵¹You have shown strength | with your arm;
and scattered the proud in | their conceit,
⁵²**casting down the mighty | from their thrones
and lifting | up the lowly.**
⁵³You have filled the hungry | with good things,
and sent the rich | away empty.
⁵⁴**You have come to the aid of your | servant Israel,
to remember the prom- | ise of mercy,**
⁵⁵the promise made | to our forebears,
to Abraham and his chil- | dren forever. R

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:16–24

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.

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

²³May 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. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

GOSPEL: John 1:6–8, 19–28

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.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,
'Make straight the way of the Lord,'"

as the prophet Isaiah said.

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

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Walking in the light of the coming Savior, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who await God's justice.

A brief silence.

God of love, you have clothed all the baptized in garments of salvation; equip us to bear witness to the Light of the world, that all might believe. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of goodness, all creation proclaims your glory; open our eyes to see your power and majesty in the detailed beauty of our world, and open our hearts to be gentle caretakers of the earth. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of justice, you anointed prophets to proclaim liberty to captives and release to prisoners; by your Spirit raise up prophetic voices today to challenge all that enslaves people and condemns many to lives of poverty. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of peace, you promise to turn mourning into dancing. Comfort all who mourn, bring healing to the sick (*especially*), and give hope and reconciliation to those estranged from family. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of joy and gladness, you desire that we give thanks in all circumstances. In this season of preparation for the coming of your Son, open us to experience your grace in unexpected places. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of faithfulness, you have covered your saints with the robe of righteousness; we give you thanks for those who have died (*especially*), and we entrust them to your keeping. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your steadfast love and faithfulness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

OFFERING PRAYER

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to Christ,
who comes to us in this holy supper.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord God, we give you thanks
that you have fed us even now
with the banquet that is yet to come.
Keep us alert for signs of your presence
in the world around us.
Send us as healing oil and sheltering comfort
to those in need,
and make us bold in testifying to the light
of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

SENDING OF COMMUNION

Gracious God,
whose mercy endures from generation to generation:
As Mary set out to visit Elizabeth
before she gave birth to her son,
bless those who go forth to share your word and sacrament
with our sisters and brothers who are
sick/homebound/imprisoned.
In your love and care, nourish and strengthen
those to whom we bring this communion,
that through the body and blood of your Son
we may all know the hope of your promised coming
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

BLESSING

God most high,
God with us,
God poured out on us,
Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

Thanks be to God.

COMMEMORATIONS FOR THE WEEK

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Lucy, martyr, died 304

Lucy was a young Christian of Sicily who was martyred during the persecutions under Emperor Diocletian. Her celebration became particularly important in Sweden and Norway, perhaps because the feast of Lucia (whose name means "light") originally fell on the shortest day of the year.

Wednesday, December 14

John of the Cross, renewer of the church, died 1591

John was a member of the Carmelite monastic order, and worked to reform it. His writings reflect a deep interest in mystical thought and meditation.

Friday, December 16

Las Posadas (LLC)

This celebration, long popular in Mexico, takes its name from the "posadas," or lodgings, sought by Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem. Their search is reenacted in a neighborhood, unsuccessfully, until finally they are welcomed in, and a party commences.