



ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

ORDER OF DIVINE SERVICE



THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 14, 2025



It is certainly easy to complain. We all do it. We look around and see all those things that are not what we think they should be. We look in the mirror and we see what we lack. When John sent his disciples to Jesus, Jesus called them to rejoice in what is already present. Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, had come. He brings healing and salvation to all who will receive Him. Quite literally, these miracles are still happening all around us. Those wounded by affliction and despair find healing in Christ. The dead in trespasses and sins are raised up to life. The weak are made strong, the poor are made rich, and those with only a past are given an eternal future. What do you see and hear? Look at the world, and you will find only complaint and fear; but look to Jesus, and you will find peace that surpasses all understanding and joy without end.

THE PRELUDE

THE TOLLING OF THE BELL & WELCOME

INVOCATION HYMN

338 Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus



1 Come, Thou long - ex - pect-ed Je-sus, Born to set Thy peo-ple free;
2 Born Thy peo - ple to de - liv-er; Born a child and yet a king!



From our fears and sins re-lease us; Let us find our rest in Thee.
Born to reign in us for-ev - er, Now Thy gra - cious king - dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con-so - la-tion, Hope of all the earth Thou art,
By Thine own e - ter-nal Spir-it Rule in all our hearts a - lone;



Dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na-tion, Joy of ev - 'ry long-ing heart.
By Thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it Raise us to Thy glo - rious throne.

BLESSING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

P In the name of the Father and of the ✙ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Beloved in the Lord, as we continue the season of Advent, let this wreath remind us that Jesus Christ came to conquer the darkness of sin and to lead us into the light of His glorious kingdom. As the prophet Isaiah says, “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.”

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth.

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, the true light who comes into the world to enlighten all people, bless us as we light the **THIRD** candle of this wreath in preparation for Your coming, and enkindle in our hearts the fire of Your love that we may receive You with joy and gladness and evermore remain steadfast in the faith; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

P The Lord Almighty, the Father, and of the ✙ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless this wreath for use in His Church throughout this holy season of Advent.

C Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.


C But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Kneel

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

C Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. 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. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. 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.

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the  Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Stand

SERVICE OF THE WORD

KYRIE

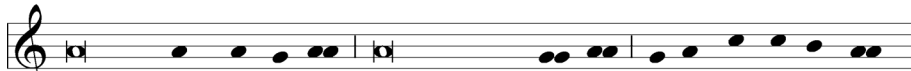
Mark 10:47



A In peace let us pray to the Lord.



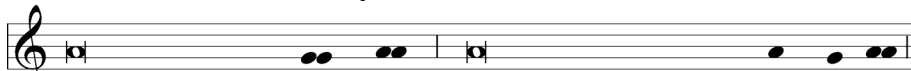
C Lord, have mer - cy.



A For the peace from a-bove and for our sal-va-tion let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



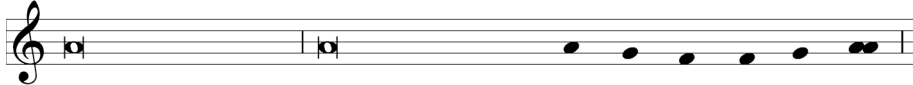
A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



and for the uni - ty of all let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



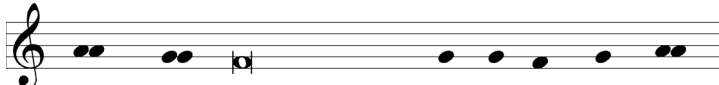
A For this holy house and for all who offer here their wor - ship and praise



let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



A Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



C A - men.

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

L The Old Testament Reading is from Isaiah, chapter 35.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus;
it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.
Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to those who have an anxious heart,
"Be strong; fear not!
Behold, your God
will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God.
He will come and save you."
Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then shall the lame man leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.
For waters break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.
And a highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Way of Holiness;
the unclean shall not pass over it.
It shall belong to those who walk on the way;
even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.
No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

And the ransomed of the LORD shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain gladness and joy,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 146; antiphon: v. 5

L Praise the LORD!

C Praise the LORD, O my soul!

L I will praise the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

C Put not your trust in princes,
in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.

L When his breath departs he returns to the earth;
on that very day his plans perish.

C Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD his God, who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever;
who executes justice for the oppressed,
who gives food to the hungry.

L The LORD sets the prisoners free; the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.

C The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;
the LORD loves the righteous.

L The LORD watches over the sojourners;
he upholds the widow and the fatherless,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

C The LORD will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the LORD!

EPISTLE

James 5:7–11

L The Epistle is from James, chapter 5.

Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the

early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Stand

ALLELUIA AND VERSE



HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 11:2–15

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the eleventh chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

When John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written,

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way before you.’

Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

WELCOME OF NEW MEMBERS | 10:45am

Kyle and Rachel Thoms
Elliot and Chloe

Sit

SERMON HYMN

345 Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding



1 Hark! A thrill - ing voice is sound - ing! “Christ is
2 Star - tled at the sol - emn warn - ing, Let the
3 See, the Lamb, so long ex - pect - ed, Comes with
4 So, when next He comes in glo - ry And the
△ 5 Hon - or, glo - ry, might, do - min - ion To the

near,” we hear it say. “Cast a - way the
earth - bound soul a - rise; Christ, its sun, all
par - don down from heav’n. Let us haste, with
world is wrapped in fear, He will shield us
Fa - ther and the Son With the ev - er -

works of dark - ness, All you chil - dren of the day!”
sloth dis - pel - ling, Shines up - on the morn - ing skies.
tears of sor - row, One and all, to be for - giv’n;
with His mer - cy And with words of love draw near.
liv - ing Spir - it While e - ter - nal a - ges run!

SERMON

"Act on Your Faith not your Doubts"
Pastor Mark Stapleton

Stand
APOSTLES' CREED

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life ✠ everlasting. Amen.

Kneel
PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

- P** As we wait for our Lord's return, let us pray for all people in their various needs and for the Church, here and around the world.
For any among us and all others who await freedom from the consequences of their past mistakes, from the injustices of their societies, and from their own worldly passions, that God would surround them with people of faith to apply the gracious news of God's forgiveness, love, and mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- C** Come, Thou precious Ransom, come, Only hope for sinful mortals!
- P** For our communities and country and for all the nations of the world, wherever people await an end to discord with their neighbors and calm across their borders, that God would use people in positions of power to order society at home and work for peace among the nations, let us pray to the Lord.
- C** Come, O Savior of the world! Open are to Thee all portals.

P For people still waiting to hear and understand the Gospel, that God would inspire artists and craftspeople, musicians and poets to creatively carry the news of Christ's advent in history, His presence with us now, and His promised return, let us pray to the Lord.

C **Come, Thy beauty let us see; Anxiously we wait for Thee.**

P For people who cry out to God, awaiting relief from long-term ills or sudden crises of health, seeking an end to unemployment and financial woes, or not knowing where to turn for help, *[including . . .]*, let us pray to the Lord.

C **Hail! Hosanna, David's Son! Jesus, hear our supplication!**

P For ourselves and everyone who eagerly await the return of our Savior, whose kingdom shall never end, let us pray to the Lord.




C **That forever we may sing: Hail! Hosanna to our King.**

P Into Your hands, heavenly Father, we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C **Amen.**

Sit

OFFERING

Ways to Give	IN-PERSON 	MAIL 505 S Park Road La Grange IL 60525	ONLINE VANCO 	zelle  directpay@stjohnslagrange.org
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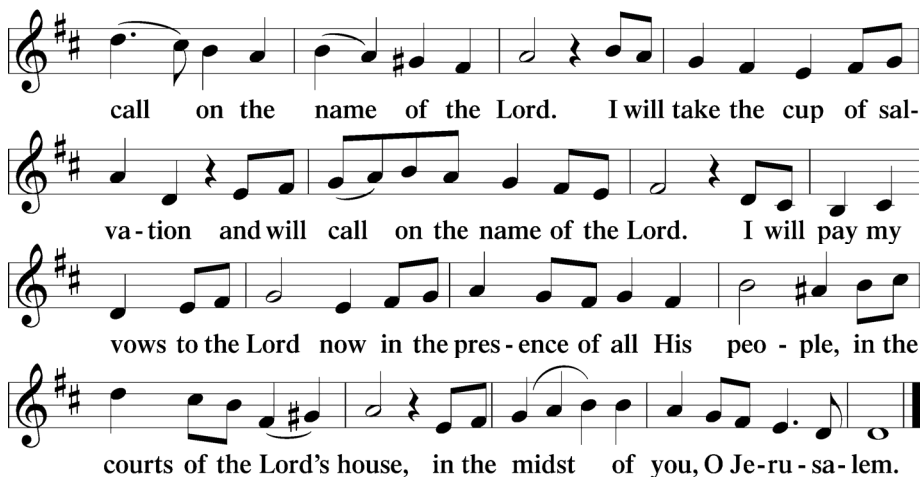
PRESCHOOL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT | 10:45am

Stand

OFFERTORY

Psalm 116:12–13, 17–19


C What shall I ren - der to the Lord for all His ben - e-fits to
me? I will of - fer the sac - ri - fice of thanks - giv - ing and will



LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6:9–13

- P** Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:
C **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.**


CONCLUDING COLLECT

- P** Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers
C **and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation;**
P for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and
 forever.
C **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

Numbers 6:24–26

- P** The Lord bless you and keep you.
 The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
 The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.
C **Amen.**



1 Hark the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, The Sav - ior
2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, In Sa - tan's
3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, The bleed - ing
4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of Peace, Thy wel - come

prom - ised long; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare a
bond - age held. The gates of brass be - fore Him
soul to cure, And with the trea - sures of His
shall pro - claim, And heav'n's e - ter - nal arch - es

throne And ev - 'ry voice a song.
burst, The i - ron fet - ters yield.
grace To en - rich the hum - ble poor.
ring With Thy be - lov - ed name.

Sit

ANNOUNCEMENTS

POSTLUDE



SERVING IN WORSHIP

Rev. Mark Stapleton, Homilist & Liturgist
Dr. Marc Brunelle, Director of Music/Organist
Joann Pyritz, Lector | 8:00am
Kirk Farney, Lector | 10:45am

2025-2026 PRESCHOOL CLASS

Magnolia Andrle	Blake Vasquez
Ramon Crisanto	Jetzabel Whiting
Johanna Donahue	Maeve Wojcik
Sloane Cervantes-Figueroa	Axel Zotti
Leona Ilievska	Teacher: Jennifer Robinson
Rose Ostafin	Aide: Sandra Hollandsworth
Jordan Sarris	



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ADVENT & CHRISTMAS at St. John's

Christmas Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols

Sunday, Dec. 14, 7PM

Advent Midweek Vespers Service

Wednesday, Dec. 17, 7PM

Christmas Eve Family Service

Wednesday, Dec. 24, 4:30PM

Choral Prelude

Wednesday, Dec. 24, 10PM

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Wednesday, Dec. 24, 10:30PM

Featuring the Cantata Choir & The Royal String Quartet

Christmas Day Service

Thursday, Dec. 25, 10AM



A Christmas Festival of
**NINE LESSONS
AND CAROLS**

Sunday, December 14
7:00pm

The Cantata Choir of St. John's
Jubilation Ringers
Dana Shinneman, Piano
Dr. Marc Brunelle, Director of Music

St. John's Lutheran Church & School
505 S. Park Road, LaGrange, IL 60525
708-354-1690 Ext. 222

Reception to follow
Free-will offering
Plenty of free parking

WITNESSING:

Lighting the path for friends and family

SEEK GOD:

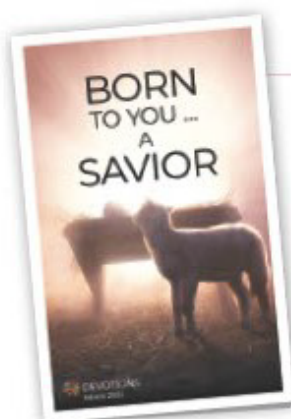
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to work in the heart of your friend.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to bless all interactions with your friends and family.

BE CREATIVE:

- Exchange stories of family Christmas traditions. You'll learn about others' current spiritual situation, and you can share what Jesus means to you.
- Invite your friends to make new traditions this year, especially if the Christmas season is stressful or depressing. Encourage them to read the devotions with you, go to Advent services, or participate in a servant event.
- Bring a friend or family member to help at a church activity before Christmas. Getting to know people in a non-threatening way makes them more likely to attend future worship.

FOLLOW UP:

Devotions from Lutheran Hour Ministries can help keep your faith conversations going. Read, listen, email, or print at lhm.org/advent.



God in His incomparable love has made a way for us through the wilderness. He did this in giving us His Son, our light in the darkness. In *Born to You ... a Savior*, we embrace the Christmas joy and wonder of Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

EQUIPPING ✝ ENGAGING ✝ ENCOURAGING

St. John's Lutheran Church and School
505 S. Park Rd. La Grange, IL 60525

www.sjlagrange.com

708-354-1690

