Welcome to
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

By God's example, St. John's invites and welcomes everyone to be ignited by the Spirit and to grow in God's love. May all those seeking love, acceptance and support find it here.

First Sunday of Advent • November 29, 2026 - 10:15 AM



The Season of Advent marks the beginning of the Church Year. Traditionally, advent is the four Sundays before Christmas where we wait for the coming of Christ. Advent is not a part of the Christmas season but rather it is a time that we prepare our hearts for the coming King. In fact, the word "Advent" comes from the Latin word adventus which means coming. Now during these four Sundays of Advent, that is to say the four Sundays before Christmas, we are preparing our hearts for the coming of Jesus the Messiah, the newborn King, the arrival that happened 2000 years ago and we're also preparing for the coming of Jesus in the future. Therefore, Advent is a season of waiting. However, in this series we are asking, "why wait?" Of course we know, theologically, there is "already" and "not yet." What would it look like if we leaned into the "already?" Jesus is here.

Our Mission:
Ignited by Spirit, Growing in Love

We strive to be a community that is open to the Spirit of God that moves, changes and inspires us to connect with God and one another, everyday, everywhere.

WELCOME

We are so glad you are here with us this morning. We pray that you will meet God in worship and that your faith will be strengthened as you prepare to go out into the world in the coming week. If you are a guest with us this morning, welcome to the family! We would love to share information with you about St. John's - fill out a pew card and place it in the offering plate or sign the guest book in the narthex so we can reach out!

PRAYER LIST

Please continue to keep the following people connected to our congregation in your prayers: David Mounts, Renee Fels, Rebecca Jellen, Richard Ditzler, Alyson Harvey, Marie Wolfe, Mary Eberle, Brandon Blanchard, Paige Seasock, Will Morgan, Barry Long, Jim Martin, Mike Wolf, Michael Svanson, Marilyn Little-Logan, Ed Bowlin, Josephine D'Amico, Bob Ernst, Serena Sellers, Sal Aleide, Brian Bealer, Tom Cooney, Michael Casey, Aubrey Clevenstine and Kevin Price.

Names are kept on the prayer list for three weeks unless specifically requested by the family or for those struggling through long-term illness or treatment. If you would like to add a name to the prayer list, please contact the church office at 215-234-4888 or stj.stown@verizon.net.

+ GATHERING +

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

WELCOME AND GREETING

The congregation is invited to observe the prelude time as one of reverent silence.

PRELUDE Creator of the Stars of Night - Dennis Eliot

Please rise in body or spirit

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS
Mothering God, enfold us in your loving arms as we prepare
to confess our sin and receive your forgiveness.
We know that we need your comfort now. Amen.

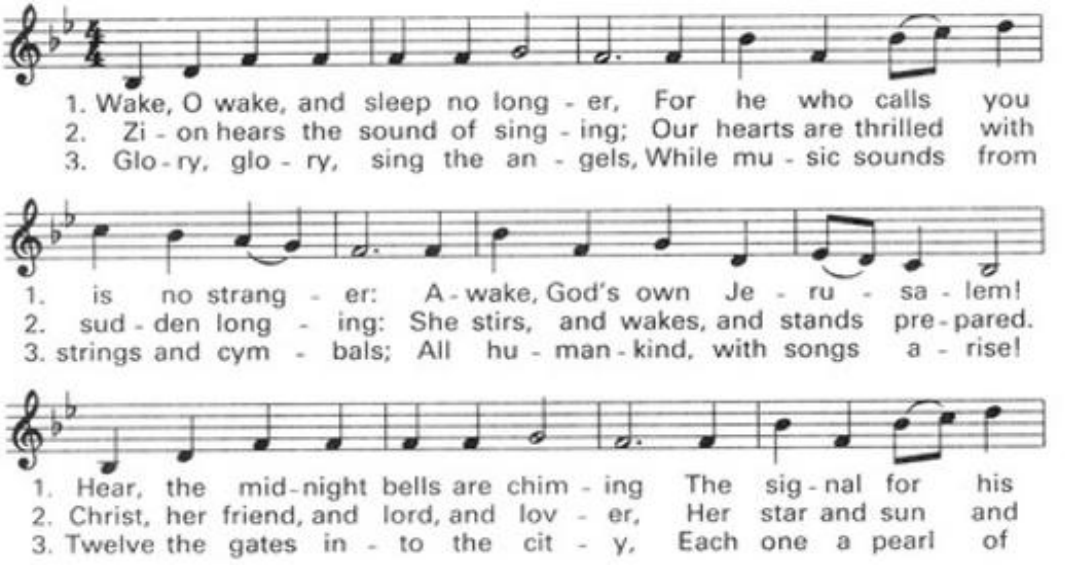
Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Gracious God,
we confess that we are often complacent when we are called to actively seek your face. Our souls are sleeping when you have called us to pray. Awaken us, Holy Spirit! Amen.

Hear this good news: Christ is with us. Your sins are forgiven through the amazing grace of our God who never sleeps, continually pouring out unconditional love for us all. Almighty and Present God, brighten our hearts during this Advent season.
In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

OPENING HYMN Wake, O Wake, and Sleep No Longer



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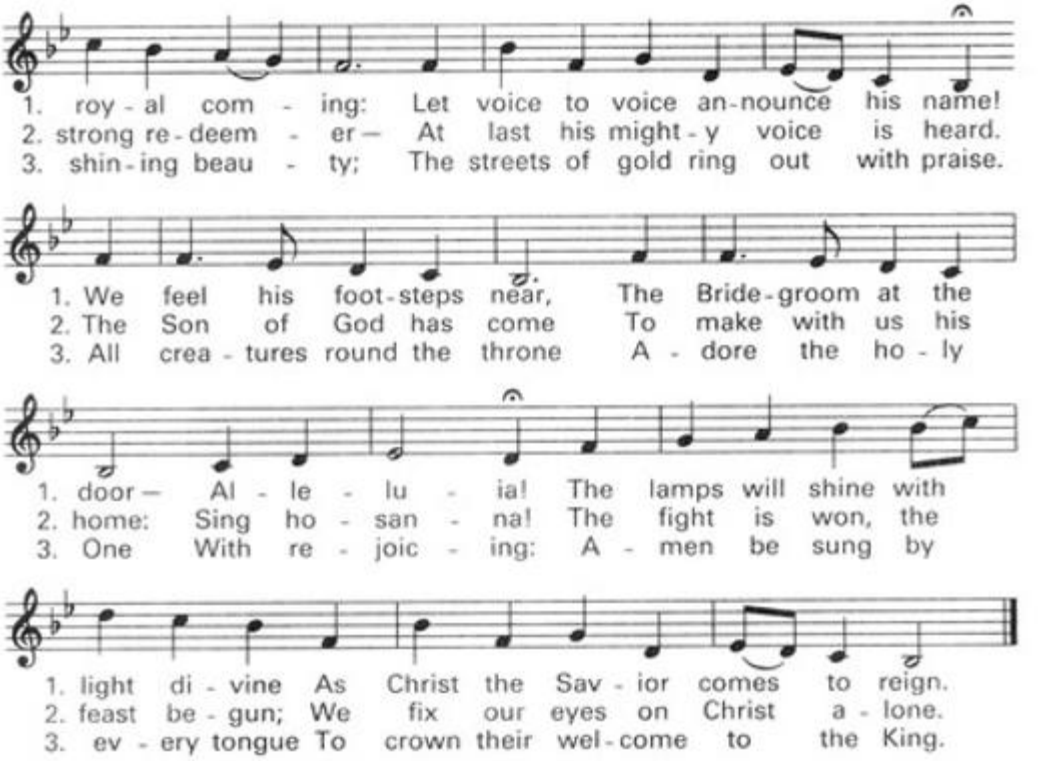


GREETING
The grace of the Savior who does not make us wait,
the love of God that meets us in this very moment,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
actively dwelling among us be with you all.
And also with you

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE
By the light of this first candle we are roused from our slumber, crying out,
"Come now, blessed Jesus!"

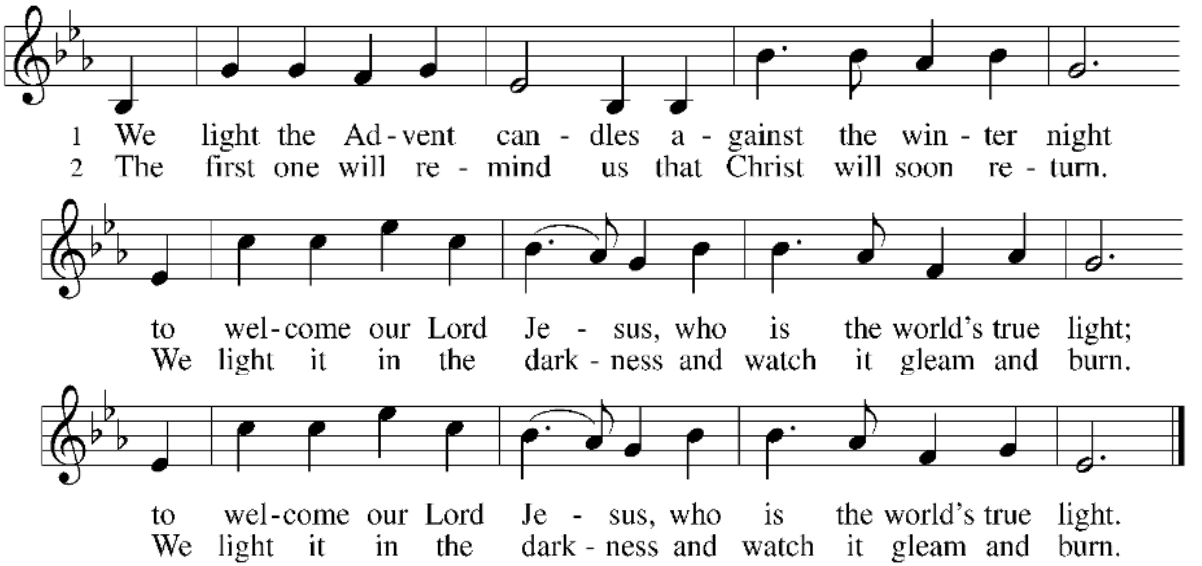
We are hopeful for a world awake and full of your love.
Shake us up, Lord Christ!

Let us not be found sleeping when our neighbors are in need.
Holy Spirit, enliven our being that we may share the gospel of your liberating love poured out upon all of your children.
May no one feel hopeless on our watch.

In the spirit of hope, we light this first candle today.

The first Advent candle is lit.

ADVENT SONG



PRAYER OF THE DAY
Benevolent God, your grace astounds us! You have torn open the heavens and come down in the person of Jesus. You have made your name known to us. No eye has seen and no ear has heard of one who is greater than you! Inspire in us a sense of urgency to watch and pray, even as we claim your presence among us, here and now. **In Jesus' name we pray. Amen**

Please be seated

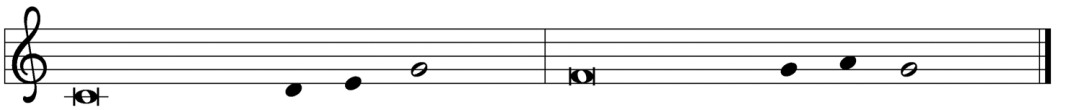
+WORD +

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST LESSON**:** Isaiah 64:1-9

At the conclusion of the reading:
The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

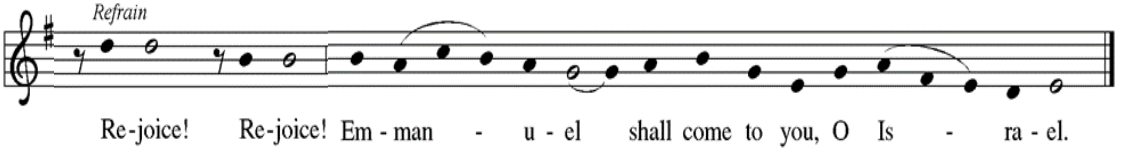


[1] Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph | like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned up- | on the cherubim.
[2] **In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, | and Manasseh,**
stir up your strength and | come to help us.
[3] Restore | us, O God;
let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.
[4] **O LORD | God of hosts,**
how long will your anger fume when your | people pray?
[5] You have fed them with the | bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of | tears to drink.
[6] **You have made us the derision | of our neighbors,**
and our enemies laugh | us to scorn.
[7] Restore us, O | God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.
[17] **Let your hand be upon the one at | your right hand,**
the one you have made so strong | for yourself.
[18] And so will we never turn a- | way from you;
give us life, that we may call up- | on your name.
[19] **Restore us, O LORD | God of hosts;**
let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Please rise in body or spirit

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: Mark 13:24-37

At the beginning of the reading:
The Holy Gospel according to Mark.
Glory to you, O Lord.

At the conclusion of the reading:
This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON Pastor Becky Schanely

Please rise in body or spirit

HYMN OF THE DAY ACS 902 Come, Now, O God see page 15

STATEMENT OF FAITH
We believe in one God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who does not abandon the world to darkness, but steps into human history with tender mercy and unbreakable promise.

We confess Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. In Advent, we wait with eager expectation for the One who came humbly in a Bethlehem stable, who comes to us now in Word and Sacrament, and who will come again in glory to make all things new.

We trust by grace that we are saved through faith. Not by our own strength or perfection, but through God's free gift, we are lifted out of fear and sin to live as people of hope.

We commit ourselves to watch and wait with courage. As God breaks into our broken world with justice, healing, and peace, we open our hearts to welcome our neighbors—standing with the outcast, the lonely, and the vulnerable, and bearing God's light into every shadow. Amen

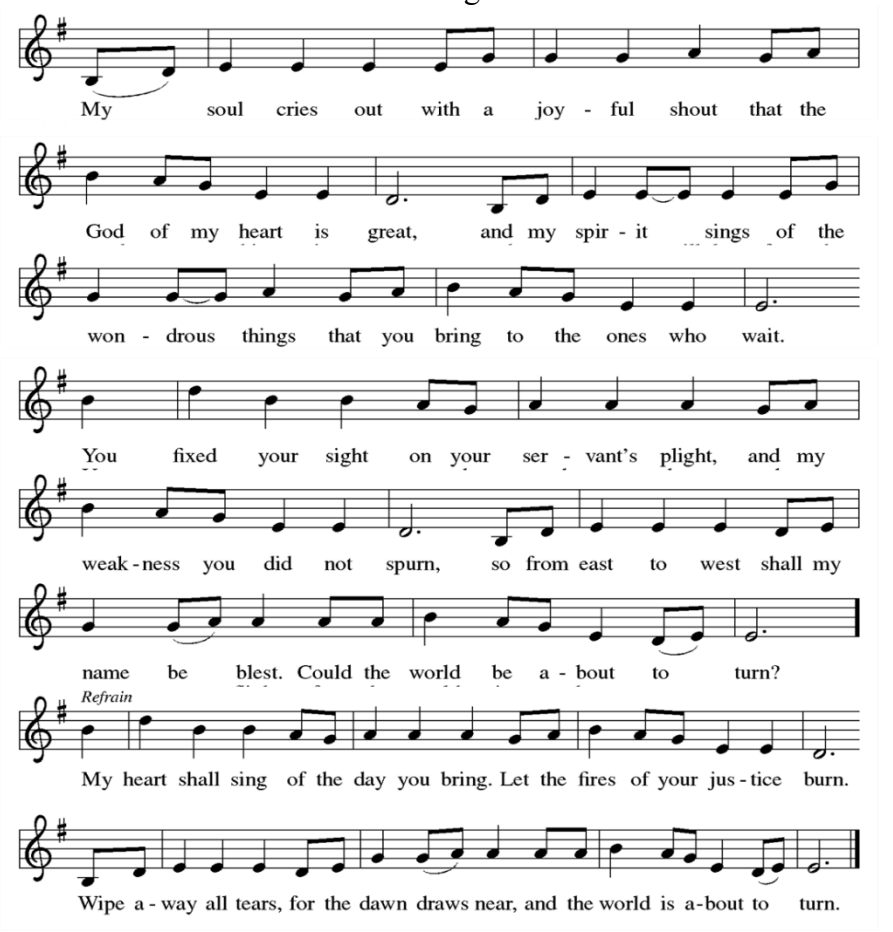
Please be seated

OFFERING

MUSICAL OFFERING At the coming of Christmas - Nicolas Lebègue

Please rise in body or spirit

OFFERTORY ELW 723 Canticle of the Turning



OFFERTORY PRAYER
Generous God, in this season of Advent, we bring our gifts with joyful expectation.
Receive these gifts and use us to bring Your light into the world.
Bless these offerings, that they may spread Your hope, peace, joy, and love.
May Your Kingdom come among us, now and always. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Each prayer petition will end with the phrase:
God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

The prayers conclude:
We entrust these and the prayers of our hearts to you, most holy God, in the name of the One for whom we wait, and who is already among us, Christ Jesus our Savior. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER
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.

+ SENDING +

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING
May the God who promises,
the Christ who comes,
and the Spirit who dwells within
keep our minds alert and our hearts awake.
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

SENDING HYMN ELW 260 The King Shall Come

DISMISSAL
Go in peace. Keep alert - Christ is on the way - and already here!
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE Trumpet Tune for Advent - Daniel Read

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OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S LOVE		
Worship Attendance 11/022/2026 – 8:00 AM 24, and 10:15am 45, Zoom – 4 Thanksgiving Service – 4:00 PM - 134		
	Total received between 11/01/2026 – 11/15/2026 $16,059	Amount Needed per 2 weeks in 2026 $11,656
Weekly average is based on the 2026 budget. The above numbers include electronic giving. Mint duty is being done every other week.		

Mark Your Calendar

Sunday, November 29	Green Lane Tree Lighting 5:00 PM today in Isaac Smith Park
Monday, November 30	Executive Meeting 7:30 PM
Tuesday, December 1	2027 Budget proposal Q&A 7:00 PM -Zoom
Wednesday, December 2	Confirmation – Mentor night 7-8 PM
Saturday, December 5	Fellowship Hall – private event 2-5 PM
Sunday, December 6	Sunday School 9:00 AM Worship 10:15 AM Poinsettia orders are due Christmas Caroling – after 10:15 worship service

Welcome to worship this Sunday morning. We are happy to be worshiping with you today. If you are visiting with us today, please fill out a visitor card located in the pew rack and drop it into the offering plate.

The Annual Congregational Meeting:
Will take place during the 10:15 AM service on Sunday, December 13. All confirmed members of the congregation have voice and vote – we hope you will join us as we tend to the business that stands before our congregation.
Copies of the proposed 2027 budget are available in the Narthex and Parlor, please reach out to treasurer, Mike Herm (m.herm@comcast.net) for questions OR attend 1 of the 2 2027 Budget proposal Q&A sessions being held prior to the congregational meeting.
Today before and after the 10:15 AM worship service Mike Herm will be available and again Tuesday, December 1 at 7:00pm, via *ZOOM*.
Check your weekly email for the button to launch the zoom meeting or on the St John's website in the events page.

Advent Candle Lighting - During the four Sundays of Advent (Nov 29 - Dec 20), individuals or families are needed to read a short litany in worship at 10:15 am and then light that week's Advent candle. If you are willing to sign up for one of the Sundays in Advent, please see the sign-up sheet outside Pastor Becky's office.

Annual Christmas Bazaar – The committee is asking for volunteers to support this year's event. The duties are broken down as follows:
Thursday evening, December 10th at least six individuals are needed for table/chair set up. Then on Saturday, approximately 2:30 volunteers are needed to break down the bazaar to get our church back in order for Sunday School & Worship services.
Starting at 2 pm a volunteer could remove outdoor signs etc.
Many hands make for light work. If you come to shop, consider before or after shopping you volunteer for an hour or two. Contact is Diane Appold, 215-234-4001

Advent Gathering – Beginning at 5:30 PM a soup supper will be served followed by a brief Advent devotion and a white elephant gift exchange. All are welcome to share in an evening of faith and fellowship.

The Open Link – The first Saturday of the month food donations are being collected from 9-11am in the back of the church. If you are unable to drop off donations at the scheduled time, you may drop them off during office hours or Sundays. A table is designated in the gym for donations.

Advent Tree Gifts - St. John's will partner with two organizations to provide Christmas gifts to our local community. The Advent tree is up with tags for residents from Pennsburg Manor. These gifts need to be returned to St. John's – *wrapped and with the tag attached* – by Sunday, December 13. On-line gift registry is available for gifts of those who receive services from KenCrest.

Christmas Caroling - Help bring joy and some Christmas spirit to some of our homebound members - all ages are welcome and encouraged as those we visit love seeing everyone! We'll gather after worship on December 6th, enjoy a quick pizza lunch and then head out - and don't forget your Christmas gear - ugly Christmas sweaters, elf ears, jingle bells - the more 'decked out' you are, the more joy you bring! Sign up outside Pastor Becky's office or scan the QR code to sign up online.



Christmas Eve Services Family service – 3:00 PM, Traditional service – 7:00 PM and Festival Candlelight service – 10:00 PM. Communion will be served at each of the 3 services.

Our 3 PM Family Christmas Eve service will include the opportunity for our young people to join in leading worship. Any young person in 2nd grade and older who is comfortable reading in front of the congregation is welcome to sign up for a part. When you sign up, you can indicate a short part or a long part. Sign-ups will end on Sunday, Dec 13 and your part will be emailed home the week of Monday, Dec 14.



Heavenly Helpers team is now in the planning stages for their spring trip. We plan to travel to Asheville NC again this year the week of April 18-24, 2027. Contact Elaine Keller if you have any questions or would like to be added to the team for the week.

Blue Christmas Worship You are invited to join us on December 20 for a quiet, gentle space dedicated to prayer, reflection, comfort, and hope. Worship will be followed by supper with soup, bread and dessert. All are welcome!

Breakfast and a Book – Winter Book Club We will gather on Saturday, January 23 at 9:30 AM at Friedens UCC Fellowship Hall to enjoy breakfast and discussion of the book *The Calamity Club by Kathryn Stockett.* All are welcome!

Snow date is January 30 - same time and location! It's a long book (656 pages!) so you may want to start it before the holidays!

Cookie walk – There is still time to sign-up to back 8 dozen cookies or volunteer to man the table at this year's event. Please contact Kathy Drosey, kjdbeach@comcast.net OR Sarah Toback, sarahtoback@gmail.com with any questions.

2026 Cookie Walk Sign-Up

Please fill out this slip and return to the church office or complete the form online

https://forms.gle/wfNp7jVjseoyTFUx6

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____



Check all that apply:

- I am able to help set up the evening of December 11.
- I am able to help on December 12 (sign-up with times coming later)
- I am able to bake cookies (8 dozen of the same cookie) for the Cookie Walk, to be dropped off no later than December 11 at 5pm.



- I will make _____ dozen of _____ (style of cookie).
- My cookies contain common allergens of _____.

Poinsettia orders Time to place your order for Poinsettia plants. Again, this year the selections are a 6" red or white poinsettia plant. Orders are due December 6 in order to place the order with the florist. Please submit one form for each plant purchased, along with your payment. Additional order forms are located in the Narthex and the Parlor. Thank you.



2026 Christmas Poinsettia Order Form



Orders are due in the church office by Sunday, December 6.

Name:_____ Phone Number:_____

Plant Information -

6" Red Poinsettia #____ 6" White Poinsettia # ____

_____ Total # plants ($10 each)

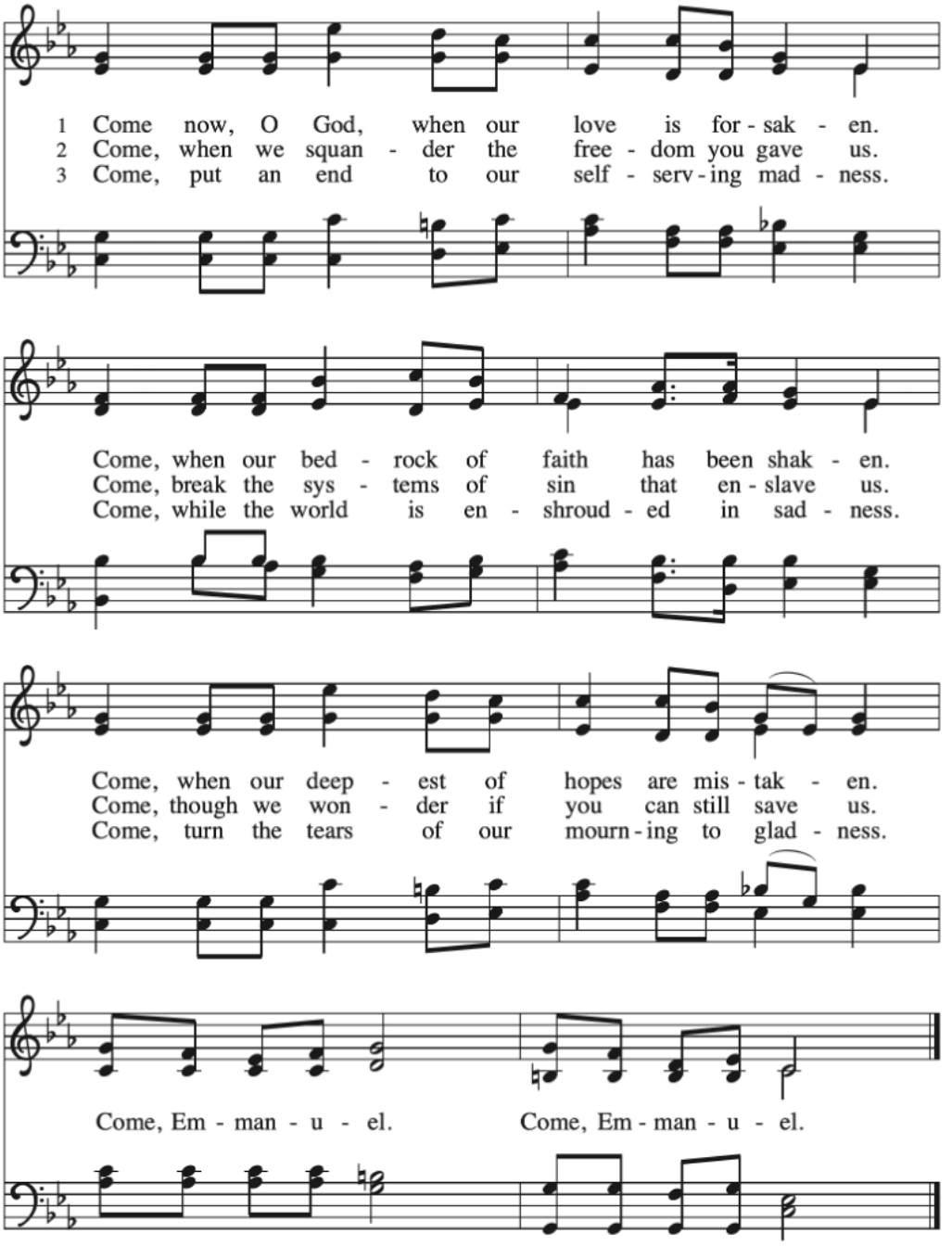
Please return this form in an envelope marked **Poinsettia Flower Order** on the outside to the church office or offering plate. Please provide exact cash or checks made payable to "St. John's Lutheran Church".

Please indicate how you would like the flower donation listed in the Christmas Eve bulletins (use back, if needed): Submit one order form per plant. Thank you.

In honor / memory of *(circle one)* _____

by _____

Come, Now, O God



Ignited by Spirit
Growing in Love

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO ARE SERVING THIS SUNDAY

10:15 AM – Tiffany Hanish, Reader
Don & Andi Swavely, Ushers
Joyce Foesig & Shannon Renninger, A/V team

COUNCIL MEMBERS

David Ramil, Council President
Shannon Renninger, Council Vice-President
Robyn Schramm, Council Secretary
Mike Herm, Council Treasurer
Tony Aleide, Finance
Brandon Bolton, Property
Joyce Foesig, Staff
Sheila Hercek, Outreach
Travis Hobson, Marketing and Communications
John Hovanec, Faith Formation
Nate Schramm, Youth Representative
Mike Wolf, Worship and Music

STAFF

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Denise Fox, Office Admin (stj.stown@verizon.net)
Ben Modica, Director of Music (ben@patriciakeith.com)
Michele Peart, Bookkeeper
Jamie Nonkovic, Coordinator of Children's Faith Formation
Bob Ernst, Facilities Manager
Michael Herm, Treasurer

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