

On Eagle's Wings



St. John's Monthly Newsletter – December 2024

Pastor's Paragraphs

The results of the recent elections have given rise to more anxiety among a broader range of people than I expected. I've had conversations with a number of our members who share their fears and concerns.

I'm not a political analyst. I can't predict what will happen any better than you can. (Actually, I don't think political analysts do all that great a job of it either!) What I do know is that the wheels of government usually spin slowly. It takes a long time for the effects of a change to be felt. It might take years or decades. Also, things are often too complex to predict clearly. If you look beyond our nation you realize that there are shifts happening in democracies across the world. Our nation is not alone. The world order that has existed since the end of the Cold War (and World War 2) is changing. Changes like this are always perfectly clear in hindsight. But they cannot be predicted when we are in the midst of them.

Let's keep all of it in the perspective of faith. In December we celebrate the birth of Jesus. When we read the story it seems as if what was going on had the attention of the world. It did not. Bethlehem was a tiny suburb of Jerusalem, which was near the eastern end of the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire was a global power, but it was not the only one. Not too far to the east of Jerusalem and Bethlehem lay the vast Parthian Empire. At the time of Jesus' birth Parthia was about equal to Rome in size and power. Neither of these empires took any notice of Jesus' birth.

Yet the birth story of Jesus is highly political. Luke's gospel introduces it by listing several government leaders. Jesus' parents have to travel to Bethlehem because of a government mandate for a census. The story includes God's politics. The host of angels that appears to the shepherds was not a choir singing hymns. It was the heavenly army. They were coming to place their king in power. One of the angels describes Jesus as, "Lord" and "Messiah" and makes reference to King David. All of these are political pronouncements. Even the proclamation of peace from God is the sort of statement an incoming government would make. Yes, let there be no doubt. The Christmas story is highly political!

Our ultimate: Sovereign, Ruler, Lord, King (or whatever title you wish to use), is Jesus. Regardless of

what happens in the government our loyalty to God does not change. Also not changing is God's commitment to us. Regardless of what happens in our nation, and regardless of which ways the political winds of the world are blowing, God remains constant. When we celebrate Christmas we celebrate the political reality of our lives. That has nothing to do with America. It has everything to do with the solid and unchanging reign of God. Ultimately no country can give its citizens salvation. God does.

Blessings,
Pastor Jon



10:30 Worship, December 22

The Sunday school children will be leading the 10:30 worship service on Sunday, December 22. They'll be leading an interactive "stir-up" service that will stir up a collection of ingredients with symbolic meanings into a tasty treat we can all enjoy!



Christmas Eve Worship 7:00 Candlelight Holy Communion

If you wish to join by Zoom:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83715983895?pwd=nXEZrIhz48IyquRCW7JqC8sXZgK1j1.1>
Meeting ID: 837 1598 3895
Passcode: 193579

December Worship Assistants

	December 1	December 8	December 15	December 22	December 29
Greeters & Ushers	Rob Stroup	Tom and Carol Urbanic	Bruce & Connie Stevenson	Mary and Greg Zuege	John and Linda Thompson
Acolyte	Thomas Bullwinkle	Alyssa Young	Charlotte Stroup	Elijah Young	Thomas Bullwinkle
Altar Care (10:30)	Mary Zuege		Mary Zuege		
Communion Assistants	Sue Kaufmann		Gary Boisseau		
Counters	Bruce & Connie Stevenson	Linda Flood and Sue Kaufmann	John and Linda Thompson	Bill and Katy Stimmel	May and Greg Zuege
Coffee Hour				Cupcakes	



Worship In-person and Zoom

10:30 is in-person worship in the sanctuary and also by Zoom. The Zoom link for 10:30 is emailed weekly. If you cannot connect to the 10:30 service with a computer you can still hear and participate in the service with any phone.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85898911838?pwd=Ho0hGtKqSjAnRpugabpkQTuY73SbyK.1>

Meeting ID: 858 9891 1838

Passcode: 020293

By phone:

1 929 436 2866 US (New York)

New Church Year – Luke’s Gospel

The 2025 Church Year begins December 1. All next year we’ll be reading from the gospel of Luke. We’ll read the whole thing during worship, although we won’t read it all in order. Luke is a very skilled storyteller. He gives details about many of the characters and tells us their back story. He includes many parables from Jesus. Ultimately he makes Jesus as easy to understand as is possible. Here’s what we’ll read in December.

December 1 – Luke 1:26-38

December 8 - Luke 1:39-56

December 15 – Luke 1:57-80

December 22 – Children’s Program

December 24 – Luke 2:1-20 (Christmas Eve)

December 29 – Luke 2:21-40

Sanctuary Seating for Advent and Christmas

For the seasons of Advent and Christmas the seating in the sanctuary will be arranged in a U shape. The advent wreath will be placed in the center of the room where it will count down the Sundays to Christmas.



8:30 Breakfast Church during Advent

Our 8:30 worship service is having “breakfast church” during Advent. Tables will be set up in the fellowship hall. Worship will begin with a hymn and a prayer. Then worshippers will serve themselves whatever delicious breakfast foods have been prepared for that morning. As they eat the scriptures will be read and the service continues from there.

Communion Cards

Please remember to fill out a communion record card if you have not done so this year. Cards are available on the usher's stand. All churches in the synod are being advised to be able to verify their voting roles. Voting members are those who in the last year: are confirmed, received communion, and given an offering recorded by the financial secretary.

Weather Cancellations

If we need to cancel a worship service or event due to weather we will post it on the church's Facebook page and send it to the email list. Please contact Pastor Jon if you have any cancellation questions.



Parish Thanksgiving Dinner

The annual Parish Thanksgiving Dinner will be held On Sunday, November 24th after the 10:30 worship service. Please look for sign up sheets on the bulletin board in the gathering area to see what food items you can bring. Many of the dishes on the table this year will be from food grown in our own garden. Also be sure to bring a empty stomach ready to be filled!



Gingerbread House Competition

Our 13th annual gingerbread house competition is scheduled for Sunday December 15th at noon. The walls (graham crackers) and glue (frosting) will be provided. Each family is asked to bring candy for decorating. Let's see how creative we can be! The following Sunday the houses will be on display. The congregation can vote for their favorite.

Never built a gingerbread house? That's okay, half of the houses usually collapse before judging! Sign up in the Gathering Area.

Special Music in Advent

We are looking for individual to provide special music for Advent – singing, playing an instrument (solo or groups). Please let someone in the band know. There is a sign up sheet on the pipe case of the organ in the back of the sanctuary.

Hat and Mitten Tree

The mitten tree will be in the gathering area until December 22nd. The tree is to collect new hats, scarves and gloves/mittens. They will be given to School #19 off South Plymouth to children in need in the area.

Family Promise Gifts

Family Promise is arranging for a number of families in the program to receive gifts for Christmas. A list of this needed/wanted is in the Gathering Area. If you are able to help please take a look and see what you can provide. Gifts are to be wrapped and at church by December 15. Please see Mary Zuege for more information. Thank you to everyone who is helping with this.

Celtic Yuletide Concert Christmas Ceilidh Band

This band is back for its 20th season. There won't be a concert at St. John's this year, but you can experience them here:

Greece Baptist Church
1230 Long Pond Road, Rochester
Friday, December 6, 7:30pm

First Presbyterian Church
Caledonia, NY
Friday, December 13, 7:30pm



- David Storch as he lives in a memory care facility.
- Becca (Boisseau) DeCann as she is again having heart rhythm issues.
- Jacob Sussan, friend of the Boisseaus, who is 24 years old and is receiving treatments for Stage 3 colon cancer.
- Amy Farr, friend of the Boisseaus, who lives in North Carolina and is awaiting a lung transplant.
- Marilyn Bair who is currently home but needs a lot of care.



- Thank you to Karen Spawton for playing piano for the election eve worship service.
- Thank you to those who helped mow the church lawn in October.
- Thank you to Jim Spawton and Gary Boisseau for cooking the chicken for the 125th anniversary barbeque. Thank you to Greg and Mary Zuege for helping to set up for the barbeque.
- Thank you to everyone who baked bread for the election day bread sale. A special thank you to Karen Spawton, Adele Garvey, and Mary Zuege for being at the church to bake fresh bread during the day.
- Thank you to Jim Spawton and Mary Zuege for helping at the Red Cross Disaster Services training and presentation.
- Thank you to everyone who served as a worship assistant in 2024!

From the Community Outreach Committee:

- Thank you to everyone who brought give cards for the families in need in the Victor School District.
- Thanks to everyone that brought stuffing for the Thanksgiving baskets given out by the Victor/Farmington Food Cupboard. We have 50 boxes!



Lutheran World Relief Personal Care Kit Anniversary Challenge

For our 125th anniversary we're challenging ourselves to make 125 personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief. These kits are distributed to those temporarily displaced by natural disasters, refugees, or whenever people must flee for safety.

If you can provide all the items for a few kits that would be great. But all donations are appreciated, so feel free to give just parts. Here is what each kit needs:

- one lightweight bath size towel
- one pair nail clippers
- one adult sized toothbrush in its original packaging

-one sturdy comb (remove packaging)

-two bath sized bars of soap

You're welcome to bring the items to church any time before December 22. On December 22 we'll bring all the items onto the altar and bless them before we make the kits. More details will be in the December newsletter.

November Council Highlights

Church council held its regular monthly meeting on November 11. Major items on the agenda were:

- Updates on education, fellowship, and worship ministries.
- Update on the stewardship drive and church finances.



November Bible Trivia Answers

1. Who provides the five loaves and two fish Jesus uses to feed the 5000? Answer: an unnamed boy (John 6:9)
2. How many baskets of leftovers were there from the feeding of the 5000? Answer: 12 (John 6:13)
3. What does Jesus tell the rich man he needs to do for eternal life? Answer: Sell his possessions and follow Jesus (Matthew 19:21)
4. What does Jesus say can fit through the eye of a needle easier than a rich person getting to heaven? Answer: a camel (Matthew 19:24)

December Bible Trivia Questions

Hint: All the answers may be found in the Bible readings chosen for Sunday worship.

1. Who does Luke dedicate his gospel to?
2. What two elderly people meet Joseph and Mary when they take Jesus to the temple after his birth?
3. What angel came to Mary to tell her of Jesus' conception?
4. Who was born first, John the Baptist or Jesus?

December 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 <u>Advent 1</u> 8:30 Breakfast Church 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Holy Communion 11:30 Worship and Music Committee	2 3-7 Violin Lessons 7:00 Boy Scouts	3 1:00 Women's Bible Study 3-7 Violin Lessons	4 8:30 Men's Breakfast 3-7 Violin Lessons 7:30 Alcoholics Anonymous	5 10:00 Bible study at Lyons Church 10:00-2:30 Monarch Homeschool	6 3-8 Cello Lessons	7
8 <u>Advent 2</u> 8:30 Breakfast Church Holy Communion 9:30 Sunday School & Advent Workshop 10:30 Service of the Word	9 3-7 Violin Lessons 6:00 Church Council 7:00 Boy Scouts	10 1:00 Women's Bible Study 3-7 Violin Lessons	11 8:30 Men's Breakfast 3-7 Violin Lessons 7:30 Alcoholics Anonymous	12 10:00 Bible study at Lyons Church 10:00-2:30 Monarch Homeschool	13 3-8 Cello Lessons	14 4:00 Brody Ireland Eagle Scout Ceremony
15 <u>Advent 3</u> 8:30 Breakfast Church 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Holy Communion 12:00 Gingerbread House Competition	16 3-7 Violin Lessons 7:00 Boy Scouts	17 1:00 Women's Bible Study 3-7 Violin Lessons	18 8:30 Men's Breakfast 3-7 Violin Lessons 7:30 Alcoholics Anonymous	19 10:00 Bible study at the Lyons Church 10:00-2:30 Monarch Homeschool 5:00 Christmas Food Basket food delivery to church.	20 3-8 Cello Lessons	21 Food Cupboard Christmas Food Basked Distribution
22 <u>Advent 4</u> 8:30 Breakfast Church Holy Communion 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Children's Christmas Program	23	24 <u>Christmas Eve</u> 4:00 Candlelight Communion (Lyons Church) 7:00 Candlelight Communion (Victor Church)	25 <u>Christmas Day</u>	26 <u>St. Stephen, Martyr</u>	27 <u>St. John, Evangelist</u>	28 <u>The Holy Innocents, Martyrs</u>
29 <u>1st Sunday of Christmas</u> 8:30 Breakfast Church 10:30 Service of the Word	30	31 <u>New Year's Eve</u>				



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Grace for Everyone
-Always-

*We are a community of faith
committed to living and sharing the love of God.*

St. John's Lutheran Church

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Address Service Requested

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