



**Come and Worship, Come and Worship.
Worship Christ the Newborn King!**

Dear Friends, as we move into Christmas amidst the rising new Covid19 cases and hospitalizations, St. John's will now be requiring Pre-registration for our in-person worship services—an email with the link has been mailed, and the link will also be on our website. If you are unable to register through these sites, please call the church office. Also, we will broadcast all of our services on our St. John's Facebook page.

Christmas Eve (December 24th)

**5:30 pm ~ Family Service with Communion and
Candlelight in the Courtyard**

This brief service will be geared toward families and those who want to worship outside. In the event of inclement weather, service will be moved to fellowship hall. Pre-registration required.

**7:30 and 10:30 pm ~ Candlelight Service with
Communion in the Sanctuary**

These traditional Christmas Eve services will be about 45 minutes and will require pre-registration. Each service will be limited to 50 worshippers. Pre-registration is required.

**MASKS, SOCIAL DISTANCING, AND HAND SANITIZING
IS EXPECTED AT ALL SERVICES.**

*Note: This year in an effort toward safety, LED,
battery-operated candles will be used.*

Sunday's after Christmas

Sunday, December 27

**Pre-recorded Worship of Lessons and Carols
posted at 10:00 am**

Sunday, January 3

Online Only Worship, Live at 10:00 am

St. John's Lutheran Church, ELCA

Walhalla, South Carolina

11 am Worship Service

The Fourth Sunday of Advent ~ December 20, 2020



Welcome to Worship at St. John's!

We are glad that you are with us today as we worship our Lord Jesus Christ. Life continues to "look different" than normal as we are taking precautions to keep everyone safe. Below are details about how we will share in our worship together.

1. Our worship will be an abbreviated form of Service of Word with Holy Communion.
2. Masks must be worn at all times while in the church.
3. Seating will be on every other pew — and we ask that you sit with your family members or with those you rode to church. Seating in the pews will be limited to 60 persons.
4. Hands should be sanitized upon entrance to the building.
5. Please follow the direction of ushers and staff as you enter through the Church Street door.
6. Communion will be celebrated in the pews using prefilled Communion/Fellowship cups.
7. Offering can be given in the baskets provided at the front of the church before and after worship. The offering plates will not be passed during worship.
8. The fellowship hall will be closed.
9. As worship concludes, we ask that you move directly outside and avoid lingering to visit.
10. If you have any questions, please speak to an usher, staff member, or Pastor Rachel.

+++ Please be courteous and respectful. Please turn off all electronic devices during worship .+++

December 20, 2020 ~ Fourth Sunday of Advent

God keeps the promise made to David, to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."

WE GATHER

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING HYMN *Medley—"Jesus, Name Above All Names / Emmanuel"*
(Hum along or Sing in your Heart)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever. **C Amen.**

Together let us honestly and humbly confess that we have not lived as God desires.

You may remain seated or kneel for the Confession

P Loving and forgiving God, **we confess that we are held captive by sin. In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger; we have not loved our neighbor; we have not been Christ to one another. Restore us, O God. Wake us up and turn us from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.**

People of God, hear this glad news: by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free—free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love, † comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit. **C Amen.**

THE GREETING

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **C And also with you.**

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Serving Today

Pastor: The Rev. Dr. Rachel Connelly
Assisting Minister: Jan Long
Door Greeter: Duane Carlson
Sacristy Ushers: Joan Lewis, Tina Barrett
Technology: Mike Goynes and Ray Burroughs
Altar Guild: Martha Murtiashaw
Bell Choir: Barbara Wilson, Brenda Safrit, Deb Blackmore, Jeri Klaren



St. John's Staff

The Reverend Dr. Rachel Connelly, Pastor
Tom Ward, Congregational President
Andrea Carlson, Administrative Assistant
Joan Lewis, Spiritual Gifts Coordinator
Ray Burroughs, Biggerstaff Resident Director
Judi Matalik, SJ Preschool Director
Patty Shepard, Youth Director
Tiffany Chapman, Children's Ministry Coordinator

Appointed by Congregation Council

Chuck Rawlins, Treasurer
Mark McLean, Financial Secretary

St. John's Lutheran Church

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Facebook — St. John's Lutheran, Walhalla

**Pastor Rachel's contact information: stjohnspastorrachel@gmail.com
cell phone (910) 515-0897**

THE MEAL

Upon entering worship today you were given a communion/fellowship cup. As the pastor shares in the Words of Institution and consecrates the elements, you will be invited to peel back the seal on the cup and partake of the bread and wine.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE PARTAKING OF COMMUNION

THE PASTORAL BLESSING

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE POST COMMUNION PRAYER

A Let us pray: Gracious and abundant God, you have done great things for us, and we rejoice. In this bread and cup you give us life forever. In your boundless mercy, strengthen us and open our hearts to the world's needs, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **C Amen**

SENDING

THE BLESSING

P The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting, the long-expected Savior fill you with love, the unexpected Spirit guide your journey, + now and forever. **C Amen.**

SENDING SONG

“Savior of the Nations Come” ELW 263
Text: attr. Ambrose of Milan, 340-397; Martin Luther, 1483-1546; tr. hymnal version
Text © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.
(Hum along or Sing in your heart)

DISMISSAL

A Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.



THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

“Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah” (Verse 1-4) ELW 240
Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954; Music: Yiddish folk tune
(Hum along or Sing in your heart)

ADVENT 4 PRAYER

We praise you, O God, for this wheel of time that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, open our eyes to see your presence in the lowly ones of this earth. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may sing of your advent among us in the Word made flesh. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **C Amen.**

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Jan Long

THE FIRST READING: Luke 1:39-55

³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me" ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

⁴⁶And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. ⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. ⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

THE NEW TESTAMENT READING ROMANS 16:25-27

²⁵Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

A The Word of the Lord. **C** **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand as you are able for the reading of the Gospel.

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Spoken)*

“Alleluia, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia”

THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE 1:26-38

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” ³⁴Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” ³⁵The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

P The Gospel of the Lord. **C** **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

The Reverend Dr. Rachel Connelly

HYMN OF RESPONSE

*“That Boy Child of Mary”
(Hum along or Sing in your heart)*

Refrain

That boy-child of Mary was born in a stable,
a manger his cradle in Bethlehem.

2 His name is Jesus, God ever with us,
God given for us in Bethlehem. *Refrain*

3 How can he save us, how can he help us,
born here among us in Bethlehem? *Refrain*

4 Gift of the Father, to human mother,
makes him our brother in Bethlehem. *Refrain*

Text: Tom Colvin, 1925-2000

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THE APOSTLES’ CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate and was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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.

THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

*After each petition of prayer—Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.***

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

*“What Child is This”
Text: William C. Dix, 1837-1898
(Hum along or Sing in your heart)*

ELW 296

THE OFFERTORY PRAYER

A Generous God, you have created all that is, and you provide for us in every season. Bless all that we offer, that through these gifts the world will receive your blessing. In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray. **C** **Amen.**