



# John the Baptist's “L” Message

**Welcome, guests!** We hope that in your time here you find yourself challenged about unhealthy thinking, channeled into truth, and changed by Jesus Christ your Savior! It's what we pray God does for all of us, and we want the same benefits for you!

### What's next?

If you're just getting back to church or looking for a new church, let this be your road map on the journey.

→ **Come back next week.**

Continue to strengthen your connection to God's Word and his people.

→ **Sign up for The Four Key Concepts.**

This short course gives you the very basics for a good relationship with God and an introduction to his precious Word, the Bible.

→ **Sign up for Bible Inquirer's Class.**

This comparative religions course digs into the Bible's basic teachings while letting you see how other religions and denominations, including ours, handle those teachings. You get to see the Bible's own word on these topics and let God's Spirit show you what the Bible says. This is a pre-requisite for membership here because we base membership not on feelings and style but on unity in God's precious truths.

- **Personal Hearing Devices** are available in the pass-through window near the elevator.
- **Please silence or turn off your cell**, for an undisturbed worship hour!
- **Restrooms are downstairs**, through doors on the west wall.
- **For Parents:** If your child is restless during the service, please use the lobby or lower level to quiet him/her down before rejoining worship. Children's worship bags, next to the elevator door, are available for use during the service.
- **Offerings:** Our offerings allow us to participate in God's kingdom work. If you are a guest, you are not expected to participate in the offering. We're just glad you can be here and listen to God's Word with us!
- There are **resources for you and your family** to discover on the display tables in the narthex (lobby). Take home some helpful tools and news – free!
- **Sunday School** is a HUGE blessing for all ages at St. John's! Today the children will remain here in the sanctuary after the service to practice for their Christmas Eve presentation. Adults and teens can head downstairs where the fun begins in a topic focused on growing your lifestyle and character.

### **Our Mission Statement**

*Learn, love, live for Christ!*

- **Holy Communion**

- *Guests:* Our Lord Jesus has given us this holy supper in which we receive his true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins and the strengthening of our faith. In this supper we celebrate the gift of his redemption, we bear witness to the fellowship we share as confessors of the truth, and we proclaim his death until he returns.

Because of the differences in backgrounds and denominations, we ask guests who are not yet members of a WELS or ELS church **to wait** before communing. This will give you time to work with Pastor on joining our fellowship and communing in a way that truly fits God's will and promises.

- *The List:* Those communing today, please find your name on the Communion lists by the main entry and indicate that you have communed today. This record helps us keep healthy, accurate statistics and an understanding of our communing members. If your name is not on the list, please write it in. Alternatively, you may use the red Friendship Registers to record your presence at the Lord's table.

- *Procedure:* At the direction of the ushers, move up the side aisle nearest you, and form a line standing before the front pews. Pastor will distribute the bread. The elder will offer individual cups to all who wish one. Pastor will then bring the chalice to those without an individual cup. Take the chalice from his hands, drink from it, and then hand it back to him. He will then pronounce the blessing to all, before you return to your seat down the center aisle.

- *Gluten-free?* If you prefer gluten-free wafers, just point to the container in Pastor's hand as he distributes the bread.

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## **Repentance that Feels Good**

*Many people have heard that you should repent of your sins. Some feel they did that already and can put that subject behind them. God indicates, however, that repentance is more than a once-in-a-lifetime event. And far from a totally humiliating matter, it can actually be something that feels good – without being abnormal psychologically. There are extremes in repentance, and we get to find what is not extreme but rather the best kind of repentance. Don't be afraid! John the Baptist had something good going when he preached about it. Let's get a handle on it today.*

### **PASTOR'S WELCOME**

### **OPENING HYMN – Prepare the Royal Highway**

## CONFESSION OF SINS

Minister: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Congregation: Amen.**

M: Dear friends, let us approach God with a true heart and confess our sins, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

**C: Lord of life, I confess that I am by nature sinful. For faithless worrying and selfish pride, for sins of habit and sins of choice, for the evil I have done and the good I have failed to do, you should cast me away from your presence forever. O Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me, for Jesus' sake.**

M: Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come again! In his great mercy, God made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in our sins. Hear the word of Christ through his called servant: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen!**

## PRAYER AND PRAISE

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

CW 28, verses 1 and 4

**C: ♪ Let the earth now praise the Lord, who has truly kept his word  
And at last to us did send Christ, the sinner's help and friend.**

**Welcome, O my Savior, now! Joyful Lord, to you I bow.  
Come into my heart, I pray; oh, prepare yourself a way.**

M: Let us pray.

*The minister says the prayer.*

**C: Amen.**

## THE WORD

**FIRST LESSON:** Nehemiah 8:9-18 – *Bored with the Bible?!*

<sup>9</sup>Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were

instructing the people said to them all, “This day is sacred to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep.” For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

<sup>10</sup>Nehemiah said, “Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

<sup>11</sup>The Levites calmed all the people, saying, “Be still, for this is a sacred day. Do not grieve.”

<sup>12</sup>Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them.

<sup>13</sup>On the second day of the month, the heads of all the families, along with the priests and the Levites, gathered around Ezra the scribe to give attention to the words of the Law. <sup>14</sup>They found written in the Law, which the LORD had commanded through Moses, that the Israelites were to live in booths during the feast of the seventh month <sup>15</sup>and that they should proclaim this word and spread it throughout their towns and in Jerusalem: “Go out into the hill country and bring back branches from olive and wild olive trees, and from myrtles, palms and shade trees, to make booths” – as it is written.

<sup>16</sup>So the people went out and brought back branches and built themselves booths on their own roofs, in their courtyards, in the courts of the house of God and in the square by the Water Gate and the one by the Gate of Ephraim. <sup>17</sup>The whole company that had returned from exile built booths and lived in them. From the days of Joshua son of Nun until that day, the Israelites had not celebrated it like this. And their joy was very great.

<sup>18</sup>Day after day, from the first day to the last, Ezra read from the Book of the Law of God. They celebrated the feast for seven days, and on the eighth day, in accordance with the regulation, there was an assembly.

## **SECOND LESSON:** Romans 6:1-4 – *You went with Jesus all the way down.*

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup>By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? <sup>3</sup>Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup>We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

## **CHILDREN'S LESSON: Some Ways to Say “I'm Sorry”**

*All children are invited to the front rows near the pulpit for a special message geared to them. Young ones who might not listen quietly can easily be accompanied by an older person!*

MESSAGE

***John Also Preached the “L” Message***

Luke 3:7-18

<sup>7</sup>John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? <sup>8</sup>Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. <sup>9</sup>The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

<sup>10</sup>“What should we do then?” the crowd asked.

<sup>11</sup>John answered, “The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same.”

<sup>12</sup>Tax collectors also came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?”

<sup>13</sup>“Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” he told them.

<sup>14</sup>Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?”

He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely – be content with your pay.”

<sup>15</sup>The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. <sup>16</sup>John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. <sup>17</sup>His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” <sup>18</sup>And with many other words John exhorted the people and preached the good news to them.

*Taking the message home:* \_\_\_\_\_

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## OFFERING

*At this time please use the red Friendship Registers to mark your presence today, as well as indicate if you communed and/or you have any requests or information updates to make.*

*As the offering is brought forward, the congregation rises to sing hymn 4, verse 5, Lift Up Your Heads, You Mighty Gates.*

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

### THE SACRAMENT

*Our Lord Jesus has given us a holy supper in which we receive his true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins and the strengthening of our faith. In this supper we celebrate the gift of his redemption, we bear witness to the fellowship we share as confessors of the truth, and we proclaim his death until he returns.*

*Because of the differences in backgrounds and denominations, we ask guests who are not yet members of a WELS or ELS church to wait before communing. This will give you time to work with Pastor on joining our fellowship and communing in a way that truly fits God's will and promises.*

M: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.

**C: We lift them up to the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C: It is good and right so to do.**

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who comes with his Father to make his home in human hearts, working repentance and faith by his Spirit until he comes again. Therefore with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

**C: ♪ O holy, holy, holy  
Lord God of power and might,  
Your glory, earth and heaven  
In countless ways recite.  
Hosanna! Come and save us,  
Lord God of hosts on high,  
And in your grace and mercy  
Receive our fervent cry.**

**Hosanna in the highest!  
How truly blest is he  
Who in God's name is coming  
To set his people free!  
He comes to bring salvation  
And with his blood outpoured,  
Deliver us from bondage -  
Hosanna, mighty Lord!**

M: Blessed are you, O Lord of heaven and earth. We praise and thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, and we remember the great acts of love through which he has ransomed us from sin, death, and the devil's power.

By his incarnation, he became one with us.

By his perfect life, he fulfilled your holy will.

By his innocent death, he overcame hell.

By his rising from the grave, he opened heaven.

Invited by your grace and instructed by your Word, we approach your table with repentant and joyful hearts. Strengthen us through Christ's body and blood, and preserve us in the true faith until we feast with him and all his ransomed people in glory everlasting.

**C: Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

**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.**

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C: Amen.**

## **LAMB OF GOD**

## DISTRIBUTION

*During the distribution the congregation may sing hymn 5, As Angels Joyed with One Accord.*

## THANKSGIVING

1. ♪ O Lord, now let your servant  
Depart in peace, assured:  
For I have seen your promised  
Incarnate, saving Word -  
A Light that will enlighten  
All gloom where Gentiles dwell;  
The brilliant, crowning glory  
Of those in Israel!
2. All glory to the Father,  
All glory to the Son,  
All glory to the Spirit,  
Forever three in one;  
For as in the beginning,  
Is now, shall ever be,  
God's triune name resounding  
Through all eternity.

M: We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet that you have given us to eat and to drink in this sacrament. Through this gift and all your Gospel messages today you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen!**

M: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

**C: Amen!**

**CLOSING HYMN** – *Praise to You and Adoration*

CW 470

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

*After the announcements, children are invited to remain in the sanctuary for their Christmas Eve rehearsal.*

## *Serving in God's House Today*

**Officiant** ..... Pastor Chris Cordes  
**Organist** ..... Rachel Cordes  
**Lector** ..... Greg Bartz  
**Elder on Duty** ..... Jerry Dittbenner  
**Counters** ..... J. Dallmann/D. & P. Dittbenner



**Special Prayers List:** Chary Heideman; Arlene & Arnie Hinderman; Al Maasz; Konner Mathiowetz; Peyton Moldan; George Piotter; Lorelei Tauer; William Trebesch

**Acknowledgements:** All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version, NIV. Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. Www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc. Hymns and worship sourced from *Christian Worship: Hymnal*, —*New Service Settings*, and —*Supplement*, 1993, 2002, 2008 respectively, by Northwestern Publishing House. All rights reserved. Used by permission and OneLicense.net License #A-7 15805 and/or CCLI License #11281329. Used by permission under Creative Commons license for non-commercial, no derivatives, attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0>)



## **Bulletin Board**

**Bible Class:** Here is the Sunday Bible class schedule through December:

- **Today:** A Closer Look at the Christmas Story, Part One.
- December 23: A Closer Look at the Christmas Story, Part Two.
- December 30: Fun Fellowship Hour

**Next Sunday's Worship Theme:** *Pre-Christmas Awe.*

**Craft and Bake Sale:** WinGS (Women in God's Service) are hosting a craft and bake sale today. Come and score some great finds! Proceeds from the sale go toward various projects in the church.

**Christmas Caroling!** The choir is hosting a carol outing after Bible class today. It will

begin with lunch at about 11:30, followed by caroling at the Countryside/Sleepy Eye Care Center and just a couple other stops. All are most welcome to join them!

**MVL Christmas Concert:** You're invited to MVL this Thursday (December 20) for their Christmas concert! The Freshmen Choir, A Capella Choir, Chargaliers, and Symphonic Band have been eagerly preparing pieces that celebrate our Savior's birth. Pre-concert music will be provided by the band beginning at 6:45pm, and the concert begins at 7:00pm. For those unable to attend, they hope to livestream the concert on their Facebook page ([facebook.com/mvlhs](https://facebook.com/mvlhs)).

**The Southwest Area Lutheran Chorale** invites you to participate in their 2019 season. The first rehearsal is scheduled for Sunday, January 13th at St. John in Redwood Falls from 2-5pm. Concerts will be held on Sunday, April 7th, in Fairfax (St. John) at 2pm and St. James (St. Paul's) at 7pm. A complete schedule will be distributed at the first rehearsal. You can also learn more by contacting Jim Renz: 507-327-7222 (director), Linette Scharlemann: 507-227-2161 (director), or Pastor Scott Muske: 507-426-7007 (pastoral advisor). New members are always welcome!

**2019 Offering Envelopes:** The offering envelopes are now available on the back table. They are organized alphabetically so that you can easily find yours and take them home today.

## COMING EVENTS

### Sun Dec 16

- 10:00am Craft and Bake Sale
- 10:15am Children's Christmas rehearsal
- 10:15am Spiritual growth for adults and teens
- 11:30am Christmas caroling

### Mon Dec 17

- *Newsletter Deadline*
- 7:00pm Worship w/Communion
- 7:05pm St. John's on TV - Channel 8, Springfield
- 7:45pm Spiritual growth for adults and teens

### Tue Dec 18

- 8:10am Catechism class
- 6:00pm St. John's on TV - Channel 8, Sleepy Eye

### Wed Dec 19

- 1:30pm St. John's on TV - Channel 8, Sleepy Eye
- 7:00pm Choir practice

### Thu Dec 20

- 8:10am Catechism class
- 10:00am St. John's on TV - Channel 8, Springfield
- 4:00pm Worship service at Sleepy Eye Care Center

### Fri Dec 21

- 9:00pm Christmas Eve Rehearsal
- 1:00pm Early dismissal

### Sun Dec 23

- 9:00am Worship – Theme: *Pre-Christmas Awe*
- 10:15am Children's Christmas rehearsal and pizza lunch
- 10:15am Spiritual growth for adults and teens

### Mon Dec 24

- No school - Christmas break
- 6:00pm Children's Christmas Presentation – Theme: *A Christmas Prayer*
- 7:05pm St. John's on TV - Channel 8, Springfield

## St. John's Lutheran Church and School

(Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod)

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