



Pre-Christmas
Awe

Welcome to God's house! Here we meet with God. We have intimate conversations with him. We tell him our greatest and darkest secrets. He declares how much he loves us through his Son's living, dying and rising for us. We tell him our desires and our fears. He advises us in the ways of his wisdom, and then we walk out together with him into life.

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!

Pre-Christmas Awe

Are you ready for Christmas? Our pre-Christmas scrambles can be like a gusty snow storm, blowing here and there and keeping us off balance. That's exactly what the devil wanted to do as Christmas came near and he could tell how God was going to rescue everyone from sin. While we study his scrambling efforts to scuttle the first Christmas, we also see God's steady hand, giving us ever more reason to trust him and to praise him – even before Christmas!

PASTOR'S WELCOME

OPENING HYMN – *Hark the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes*

CW 12

Minister: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you!

Congregation: And also with you!

CONFESSION OF SINS

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: Merciful Father in heaven, I was altogether sinful at birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

C: Amen.

PRAYER AND PRAISE

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

OH, TASTE AND SEE

M: Let us pray.

The minister says the Prayer of the Day.

C: Amen.

THE WORD

FIRST LESSON: Micah 5:2-5a – *Prophesied details of the coming Messiah*

²“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”

³Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor gives birth and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites.

⁴He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. ⁵And he will be their peace.

PSALM 85 – *God proclaims peace!*

found on page 97 in the front of the hymnal

SECOND LESSON: Luke 1:39-45 – *Expectant Mary visits Elizabeth.*

³⁹At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

⁴²In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!”

CHILDREN’S LESSON What Is “The Magnificat”?

*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!*

HYMN – *Savior of the Nations, Come*

CW 2

MESSAGE *The Dragon’s Christmas Menace*

Revelation 12:1-6

A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. ²She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. ³Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. ⁴His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born. ⁵She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. ⁶The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.

Taking the message home: _____

APOSTLES' CREED

C: I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe 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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there 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.

THANKSGIVING

OFFERING

This is a good time to sign the Friendship Registers. Please share as much as you would like, ask a question, indicate change in contact information, etc.

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

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

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.

DUET – *Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel*

arranged by Lloyd Larsen

*Oh, come, oh, come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*

*O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*

CLOSING PRAYER AND BLESSING

M: O Lord God, our heavenly Father, pour out the Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep us strong in your grace and truth, protect and comfort us in all temptation, and bestow on us your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

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 – *Rise, Arise*

CW 30

ANNOUNCEMENTS

After the announcements, children are invited to remain in the sanctuary for their Christmas Eve rehearsal, followed by a pizza lunch.

Serving in God's House Today

Officiant Pastor Chris Cordes
Organist Laurie Silfies
Soloists Jenny Haugen, Pastor Cordes
Lector Bruce Beussman
Elder on Duty David Silfies
Counters D. Guhlke, N. Houldson, C. Leopold

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



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Bulletin Board

Bible Class: A Closer Look at the Christmas Story, Part Two.

Holiday Worship Schedule: We have two different Christmas services, one on Christmas Eve and one on Christmas morning, so you can have twice the joy!

- Christmas Eve (December 24) at **6:00pm** – Children’s Christmas Presentation: *A Christmas Prayer*
- Christmas Day (December 25) at **10:00am** – Worship Theme: *We Get to See God’s Glory!*

Next Sunday’s Worship Theme: *Jesus Crushes It.*

Next Sunday’s after-church hour will be dedicated simply to fellowshiping. We’ll have extra refreshments downstairs, time to just talk, laugh, and smile together in God’s goodness.

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.

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!

MVL Office Holiday Hours: The Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School office will be closed December 24 - 25 and December 31 - January 1. The MVL faculty, staff, Board, and students wish you all a blessed Christmas and happy New Year!

MVL Chargers in Kwik Trip Tournament: The MVL Chargers will be participating in the Kwik Trip Holiday Basketball Tournament. The tournament will be held at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato December 27 - 29. Visit blc.edu for more information.

MVL Anniversary Shirts: MVL has anniversary t-shirts available for purchase, \$10 for adults (S-3XL) and \$7 for youth (S-XL). There are limited quantities in certain colors and sizes, so order yours soon! Contact Kristin Matzke at kmatzke@mvlhs.org or 507.354.6851.

For more spiritual growth during the week...

- Sundays, 6:30am *Time of Grace* - Channel 9 (KMSP)
- Mondays, 7:05pm St. John's on TV - Channel 8, Springfield
- Tuesdays, 6:00pm St. John's on TV - Channel 8, Sleepy Eye
- Wednesdays, 1:30pm St. John's on TV - Channel 8, Sleepy Eye



God's grace has opened doors to an unprecedented mission opportunity in communist Vietnam.

Grace

HMONG OUTREACH
IN VIETNAM

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Sometimes God opens doors to mission opportunities that we may not have imagined possible.

One of those doors has been opened to our synod. We have been given the opportunity to take the gospel to the Hmong people living in the country of Vietnam. We've not only been asked by a large Christian group in that country to teach and train their pastors in Lutheran doctrine and practice, but we have also been permitted, and even invited, by the government of Vietnam to establish a theological training facility in Hanoi.

Learn more by watching the December 2018 WELS Connection in your congregation or online. Read about this unprecedented opportunity through a special brochure that was mailed to your congregation. For even more details on how God has opened this door to mission work, visit wels.net/vietnamhmongoutreach.

Join me in the prayer that God will not only enable us to see this opportunity, but to seize it with joy and commitment and to support this effort with our prayers and offerings.

President Mark Schroeder

Offerings to "Grace—Hmong outreach in Vietnam" can be made during worship (checks to the congregation) or online at wels.net/vietnamhmongoutreach.

COMING EVENTS

Sun Dec 23

- 10:15am Children's Christmas rehearsal and pizza lunch
- 10:15am Spiritual growth for adults and teens

Mon Dec 24

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

Tue Dec 25

- **10:00am Christmas Day Celebration - Theme: *We Get to See God's Glory!***
- 6:00pm St. John's on TV - Channel 8, Sleepy Eye

Wed Dec 26

- 9:00am Newsletter Assembly
- 1:30pm St. John's on TV - Channel 8, Sleepy Eye
- 7:00pm No choir rehearsal

Thu Dec 27

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

Sun Dec 30

- 6:30am Time of Grace - Channel 9 (KMSP)
- 9:00am Worship – Theme: *Jesus Crushes It*
- 10:15am Fellowship Hour

Mon Dec 31

- No school - Christmas break
- **7:00pm New Year's Eve Worship w/Communion - Theme: *Stable and Secure in the New Year***
- 7:05pm St. John's on TV - Channel 8, Springfield

St. John's Lutheran Church and School

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