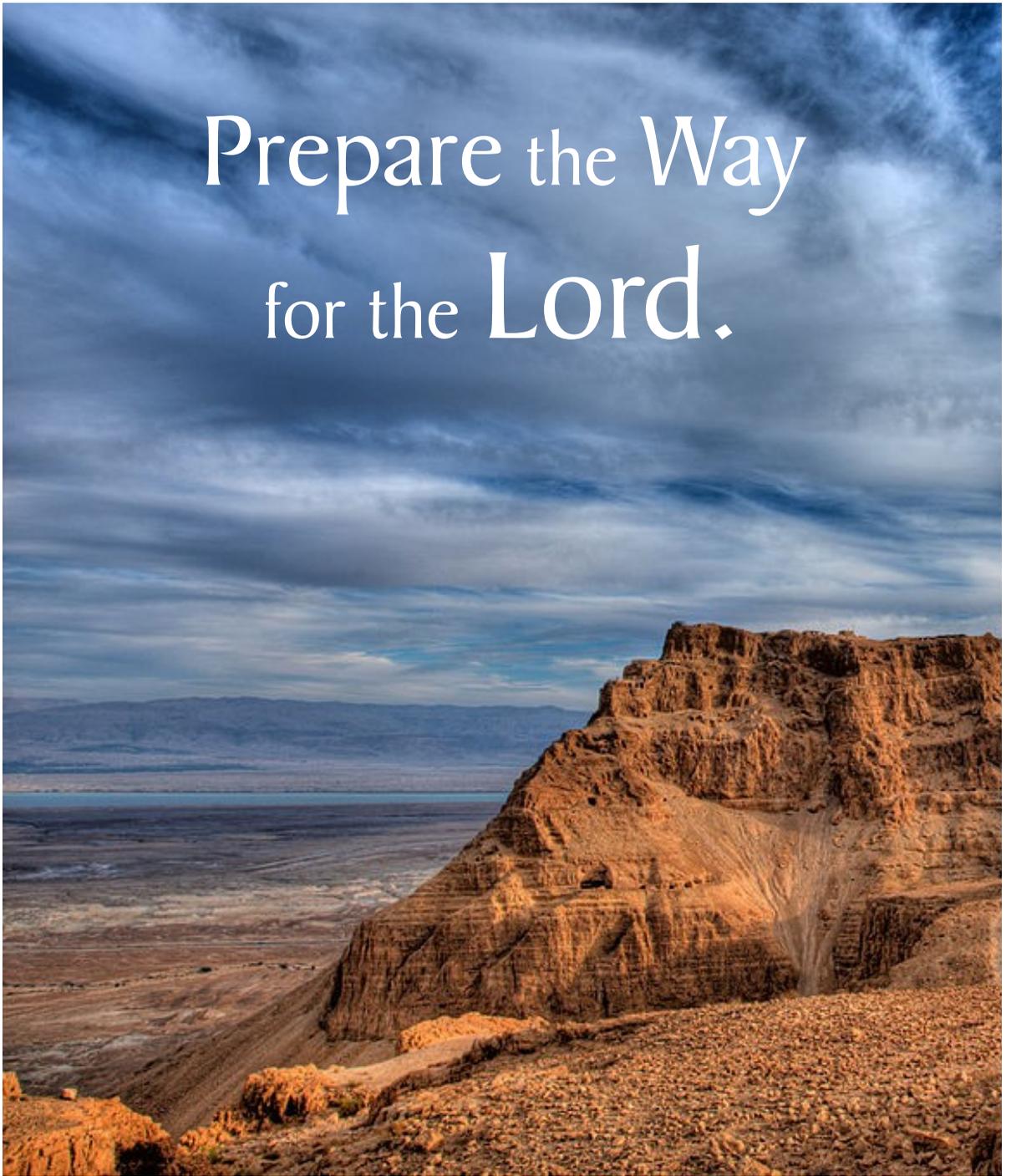


Prepare the Way
for the Lord.



Welcome, guests! None of what you see and hear from our worship will make much sense unless you understand this one basic thought: We all have a “sin issue” that needs fixing, and that happens simply through remorse in Jesus’ name and the joy of free forgiveness from him. Once that thought is also yours, everything else here – and for that matter, in the Bible – starts to make sense. This is the journey of faith. So join us on the journey through sincere repentance and lively faith in Jesus!

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! Just after the announcements, children are encouraged to head for the lobby to meet up with their Sunday School teachers. They’ll lead them to snacks and the start of Sunday School! 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!

Ready in Heart for Jesus

Today we look at the ministry and message of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus Messiah. His work was explosive on the Jewish scene just before Jesus' arrival. The same explosive message still needs to be heard and heeded today too. Right?

CHILDREN'S SONG – *Come, Come, Emmanuel*

by Lynn Shaw Bailey,
Becki Slagle Mayo

Come, come, Messiah, come; come, Emmanuel.
Come, come, O Promised One; come, Emmanuel.

Prophets of old have told of your coming;
Long we have waited, long we have prayed.
Kingdoms and kings will bow down before you.
Come, Emmanuel, today.

We are your children, you are our Savior.
Lovingly guide us, guide us, we pray.
Help us to follow, help us to listen.
Come, Emmanuel, today.

PASTOR'S WELCOME

OPENING HYMN – *Arise, O Christians People*

CW 14

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: Malachi 3:1-4 – *A prophecy about John the Baptist*

“See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty.

²But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. ³He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, ⁴and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years.

PSALM 24 – *Haunting questions*

page 73 in the front of the hymnal

SECOND LESSON: I Corinthians 4:1-5 – *The work and attitude of God’s messengers*

So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. ²Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. ³I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. ⁴My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. ⁵Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

CHILDREN’S LESSON – What Do You Think About John’s Clothes and Food?

*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 – *On Jordan’s Banks the Baptist’s Cry*

CW 16

MESSAGE *John the Baptist Drops the R-Bomb*

Luke 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar – when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene – ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert. ³He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁴As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:

“A voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. ⁵Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. ⁶And all mankind will see God’s salvation.’ ”

Prophecies about the “forerunner”:

John's arrival!

John's ministry

his message: _____

Why don't people like to hear it?

Why does everyone need it?

- born _____
- major landscaping

- μετανοιω – all about _____

John's special tool: _____

described as “ _____!”

You and baptism

Conclusion: Do you agree...?

So then ...

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, verses 1 and 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.

HYMN – *There's a Voice in the Wilderness Crying*

CW 13

CLOSING PRAYER AND BLESSING

M: Almighty God, we thank you for teaching us the things you want us to believe and do. Help us by your Holy Spirit to keep your Word in pure hearts that we may be strengthened in faith, guided in holiness, and comforted in life and in death, 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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

After the announcements, children are invited to head into the lobby and meet up with the Sunday School teachers. They will lead the children to the snack area and the beginning of Sunday School!

Serving in God's House Today

Officiant Pastor Chris Cordes
Organist Laurie Silfies
Lector Jesse Cordes
Elder on Duty David Silfies
Counters J. & J. Dittbenner/R. Lochner



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: Here is the Sunday Bible class schedule through December:

- **Today:** Part Two of real life examples of *Parenting with Love & Logic*.
- December 16: 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 we'll watch John the Baptist also drop the L-Bomb. In one aspect, it's one of the most over-looked and under-experienced details of Christianity. But it's also the most enjoyable. What could it be?

Together Newsletter: You can pick up the latest edition of our synod's bi-monthly newsletter from the back table.

Gifts for Sleepy Eye Care Center: If you are getting a gift for a resident at SECC, please return it to church by tomorrow if you haven't yet done so. Thank you!

Gifts for Our Shut-ins: We have another opportunity for gift-giving: we can remember shut-ins from our own membership. You can find plastic "idea" bags on the back table, one for each shut-in. You can bring the gift to church by December 23, and it will be delivered. If you would like to deliver it yourself, please let Pastor know.

Congregational Night at MVL: This Tuesday (December 11) is Congregational Night at Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School. Tickets are **free**, and there are still plenty available in our church/school office. Come and support the girls' basketball teams as they play against GFW! The C squad game starts at 4:45pm, the JV at 5:45pm, and the varsity game at 7:15pm.

Sleepy Eye Christmas Village: Spend some time with family and friends at Sleepy Eye's Christmas Village this Saturday from 1pm - 8pm. Walk the Avenue of Trees, shop local vendors, and enjoy delicious snacks and sweets. The Avenue of Trees is located at 121 2nd Ave NE, and the snacks and sweets can be found at 135 and 140 West Main Street.

Craft and Bake Sale: WinGS (Women in God's Service) will have a craft and bake sale after church next Sunday. Come and score some great finds! Proceeds from the sale go toward various projects in the church.

MVL Christmas Concert: You're invited to MVL on 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. Preconcert 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://www.facebook.com/mvlhs)).

COMING EVENTS

Sun Dec 9

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

Mon Dec 10

- 11:30am Pastoral Circuit meeting
- 7:00pm Worship
- 7:05pm St. John's on TV - Channel 8, Springfield
- 7:45pm Spiritual growth for adults and teens

Tue Dec 11

- 8:10am Catechism class
- 4:45pm Congregational Night at MVL
- 6:00pm St. John's on TV - Channel 8, Sleepy Eye

Wed Dec 12

- 1:30pm St. John's on TV - Channel 8, Sleepy Eye
- 2:35pm Children's Christmas rehearsal
- 7:00pm Choir practice

Thu Dec 13

- 8:10am Catechism class
- 10:00am St. John's on TV - Channel 8, Springfield
- 4:00pm Worship service at Sleepy Eye Care Center
- 7:30pm Church Council meeting

Sat Dec 15

- 5:00pm Youth Group caroling

Sun Dec 16

- 9:00am Worship w/Communion – Theme: *Repentance That Feels Good*
- 10:00am Craft and Bake Sale
- 10:15am Children's Christmas rehearsal
- 10:15am Spiritual growth for adults and teens

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

St. John's Lutheran Church and School

(Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod)

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