

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

120 N. Main St., Lewistown, PA 17044-1719

Main Office: 717-248-8780 Mon., Tues., Thurs. 8:00AM-4:00 PM Fri. 8-Noon

stjohnslewisstown@gmail.com

Interim Pastor: Rev. Allen Hulslander 570-220-4402 (cell)

Office Hours: Tues. 9am-Noon and Thurs. 9am-Noon *please call ahead.

Director of Music/Organist: Mrs. Patricia O. Loudenslager

<http://www.stjohnslewisstown.com>

www.facebook.com/St.John'sLutheranChurch,LewistownPA

Sunday, December 7th, 2025, *Second Sunday of Advent 9:00AM /Setting 3*



INTRODUCTION

At the heart of our Advent preparation stands John the Baptist, who calls us to repent and make a new beginning. As the darkness increases we turn toward the approaching light of Christ. For Christians he is the root of Jesse, the righteous judge who welcomes all, especially the poor and meek of the earth. We wait with hope for that day when the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and there will be no more hurt or destruction. From the Lord's table we are sent in the spirit of John the Baptist to proclaim that in Christ the kingdom of God has come near.

WELCOME to worship at St. John's, whether virtually or in person. We are delighted to share this time together. St. John's focus is to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, strengthen believers and care for those in Need.

HOLY COMMUNION is served by a 2-line procession down the center aisle. We will celebrate with bread, wine, or grape juice. Gluten-free wafers are also available.

GIVE TO ST. JOHN'S Offering plates are located at each entrance. If you prefer to give electronically, visit our website, and click on the **E-Giving Tab**. Use your existing login information. For new users, search for St John's Lutheran Church Lewistown. Information on **E-Giving** is available on the SJLC resource table. Thank you for your continued support.

IF YOU ARE A VISITOR, we would like to get to know you. Please fill out a visitor's card from the pew rack and place it on the offering plate at the entrances. May Christ's spirit be with each and every one of us in our congregational life and faith journey.

LARGE PRINT SERVICE BOOKLETS are available, please see a door greeter.

SERVING TODAY

Pastor – Rev. Allen Hulslander

Acolytes – Dorian Phillips, Mina Phillips

Altar Guild Volunteers – Sue Shawver, Terri Limes, Pam Fultz, Janet Deamer, Tracey Boyer

Cantor – Josie Baughman

Communion Assistants – Justice Mills, Mary Barr, Gisele Miller

Crucifer – Justice Mills

Lay Reader – Hillary Worley

Ushers – Norma Fisher – head, Dennis Crossgrove, Hillary Worley

Media & Production – Grant and Carrie Stufft, Nancy Ressler, and Mary Barr

PRELUDE 9:00 AM "Hark, the Glad Sound!" Thomas Haweis, 1973 Lorenz Pub. Co.

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING The Candle of Peace.

*Please stand as you are able. Congregational responses are in **Bold**.*

Red Hymnal (ELW) will be used for parts of the service.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, whose home is heaven and earth,
whose salvation is sure.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God
and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Long-expected God,
**we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can
provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the
ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake.
Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors.
Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us,
that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.**

God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness.
You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior.
Amen.

Processional Hymn

ELW #264 "Prepare the Royal Highway"

GREETING

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

And also with you.

Annunciation & Magnificat

On back cover of hymnal

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Please be seated.

Special Music

"Advent" Jubilate" Larry Shackley and John Parker, 2005 Hope Pub. Co.

Chancel Choir

CHILDRENS MESSAGE *All children are invited forward.*

WORD

First Reading: Isaiah 11:1-10

Isaiah describes the coming of a future, ideal ruler who will renew David's royal line (the stump of Jesse). Gifted by the spirit of God, this ruler will reign with perfect justice. Enmity and danger will be restored to harmony and peaceful coexistence.

¹ A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

² The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

³ His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see
or decide by what his ears hear,

⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor
and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

- ⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb;
the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
the calf and the lion will feed together,
and a little child shall lead them.
- ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
- ⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
- ⁹ They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.
- ¹⁰ On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations
shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

Reader ends with: **"The Word of the Lord."**

Congregation responds: **"Thanks be to God."**

Psalm: Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

May the righteous flourish; let there be an abundance of peace. (Ps. 72:7)

- ¹ Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the king's son;
- ² **that he may rule your people righteously
and the poor with justice;**
- ³ that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.
- ⁴ **Let him defend the needy among the people,
rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.**
- ⁵ May he live as long as the sun and moon endure,
from one generation to another.
- ⁶ **Let him come down like rain upon the mown field,
like showers that water the earth.**
- ⁷ In his time may the righteous flourish;
and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.
- ¹⁸ **Blessed are you, LORD God, the God of Israel;
you alone do wondrous deeds!**
- ¹⁹ And blessed be your glorious name forever,
and may all the earth be filled with your glory. Amen. Amen.

Second Reading: Romans 15:4-13

God's promise to include Gentiles within the circle of God's blessed people has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Christians live out their unity by welcoming and encouraging each other just as Christ has welcomed them into God's family.

⁴ Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷ Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ⁸ For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the ancestors ⁹ and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

"Therefore I will confess you among the gentiles
and sing praises to your name";

¹⁰ and again he says,

"Rejoice, O gentiles, with his people";

¹¹ and again,

"Praise the Lord, all you gentiles,
and let all the peoples praise him";

¹² and again Isaiah says,

"The root of Jesse shall come,
the one who rises to rule the gentiles;
in him the gentiles shall hope."

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Reader ends with: **"The Word of the Lord."**

Congregation responds: **"Thanks be to God."**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *Please stand as you are able.*

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the

words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 3rd, Chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

Just before Jesus begins his public ministry, John the Baptist appears, calling people to mend their ways and speaking of a powerful one who is to come.

¹ In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ² “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” ³ This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight.’ ”

⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, ⁹ and do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

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

Please be seated.

SERMON

Pastor Allen

Apostles' Creed

Please stand as you are able.

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead
on the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come 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.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The petitions end with: "*God of Grace*"

And the Congregational response is:

"hear our prayer"

Keep In Prayer: Deb Montgomery,
Steve & Vicki Yohn, Jack Stull, Larry
Niemon, Peter Marsh, Gail Ingram,
Linda Goss, Nellie Wilson, Joanne
Troutman, Darlene Varner, Toby
Sweigart, Freda Hook, Lou
Sonnenberg, and the Call
Committee.

*To have someone added to the
Prayer Guide-with their permission-

SHARING of GOD'S PEACE

Share the Peace in a safe manner.

Simply say the words. "*Peace be with You.*"

"And also with you."

MEAL *Please continue to stand.*

Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful
Offering Song



Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -
nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

OFFERING PRAYER

Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert.
Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the
world signs of your kingdom come.
Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING (spoken)

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus
Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom
you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in
righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the
hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

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

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink,
saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people
for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us,
full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death
and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.
Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal.
May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people.
Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.
Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate,
Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer (SUNG) Inside back cover of Hymnal.

**Our Father, which 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 debts, as we forgive our
debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

INVITATION

Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

Lamb of God

ELW pg. #208 Setting 3



COMMUNION

All who are baptized are invited to come forward. Children, if not already communing, may be brought forward for a blessing from the Pastor. Please hold both hands out to receive the bread, then choose a cup from the Acolyte. Please dispose of your communion cup in the nearby waste basket.

Communion Music

“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming” Geistliche Kirchengesang” 1599; Arr. By Mark Hayes, 2007
Lorenz Pub. Co.

“Of the Father’s Love Begotten” Plainsong, 13th c., 2014 Hope Pub. Co.

“Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne” Timothy R. Matthews Arr. By Mark Hayes, 2007 Lorenz

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

Sending

BLESSING

May God who comes among us, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

ELW #249 “On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”

Silent Meditation

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE “Comfort, Comfort Now My People” (#256 in our hymnal)

*From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright © 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License. New Revised Standard Version Bible, Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Revised Common Lectionary, Copyright © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts, admin Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission. **NOTICE: Audio/Video recording** When you enter a St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran worship service/event, you will be entering an area where photography, video and audio recording may occur. Please see notes at entrances for further details. Live-Streaming will continue as needed- if you are behind camera, you will not be on camera.*

DEDICATIONS

TODAY’S ALTAR FLOWERS are presented by Brenda Reeder in honor of her children and grandchildren.

THIS WEEK’S BULLETIN is presented by Cindy and Steve Burk in loving memory of their son Jason Clair Burk during this blessed holiday season.

THIS WEEK’S ETERNAL CANDLE BURNS in loving memory of Ella Mae and John Blessing given by daughter Jennifer Blessing.

THE COMMUNION WINE this morning is given by Sue Phillips in honor of her granddaughters Ellie, Kinsley, and Sadie.

ST. JOHN'S NEWS

POINSETTIAS!! It's time to order Poinsettias! Poinsettia color choices are white, red, pink, and jingle bell. The **cost is \$10.00** per flower. Order forms are on the table in the Fellowship Hall. Please put completed forms and payment in the lock box. **Orders are due today December 7, 2025.**

LEWISTOWN COMMUNITY CHOIR concert "Let Christmas Ring" will be held at SJL Church today **December 7th at 3:00 pm.**

THE SALVATION ARMY Red Kettle will be placed in the Fellowship Hall starting this **Sunday through January 1st.** Please consider supporting the Salvation Army as they help area residents this Holiday Season. The Barnabas Brothers plan to fill the Kettle with a \$100.00 donation to help Our Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

CHILDRENS CHRISTMAS program practice is on **Saturday, December 13th** at 10:00am in the sanctuary. A pizza party will follow from 11:00am-Noon.

FELLOWSHIP HOUR following the Children's Christmas Program on **Sunday, December 14th.** Please bring a covered dish/finger food to share.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH will operate all activities at Shining Light Through The Darkness on **Sunday, December 14th, from 5pm to 9pm** at Kish Park. These activities include operating Snack Shack, Train Room, Golf Cart Driver and Greeters on the Bridge. Barnabas Brothers will provide treat bags to all Children entering Shining Light Through The Darkness with the St. John's Lutheran Church address and service schedule printed on markers. Baked goods are being accepted from the Congregation for distribution at the Snack Shack. A **sign-up** sheet will be posted on the church office window for the various positions with two available **shifts from 5 to 7pm and 7 to 9pm.** Shining Light Through The Darkness serving Our Community since 2007, praising Our Lord and Savior. God's Work Our Hands. If you have any questions, please contact any Barnabas Brother.

STAFF CHRISTMAS GIFTS As we enter the Christmas season, we have the opportunity to show our love and appreciation for our dedicated pastor and staff. If you would like to make a donation towards the gifts, envelopes have been placed at each entrance. The last day to donate will be **today December 14th.**

BLOOD DRIVE The Red Cross and SJL Church will be having a blood drive on **Tuesday, December 16th.** The blood mobile will be at the church **from Noon-5:00pm.** **"One donation can save up to 3 lives!"**

SPONSOR DATES There are available dates to sponsor altar flowers, bulletins, and eternal candles in **2026.** A sign-up sheet is on the office window.

NO CHOIR PRACTICES on Wednesday December 24th Christmas Eve Service and Wednesday December 31st. Choir starts back up on **January 7th, 2026.**

ELCA WORLD HUNGER Campaign is seeking donations. Your gifts help the response to hunger and poverty in more than 60 countries around the world, including the United States. If interested in donating to the campaign, you can simply mark it on your offering envelope. Don't have an offering envelope? Simply put your donation in a blank envelope labeled World Hunger Campaign.

2026 OFFERING ENVELOPES are on the table in the Fellowship Hall. If you go through the via electronic giving or bank/retirement fund check and wish to have envelopes for the Special Offerings please contact Sue Shawver.

GODLY PLAY is an amazing experience for all ages where scriptures and parables "come alive" where children learn and experience their own spirituality through wonder and play. Godly Play will meet after services in the Godly Playroom in the Sunday School wing. The dates are as follows: **Sunday, January 11th, February 8th, March 8th, April 12th, and May 10th**. All are welcome!

FOURTH QUARTER SPECIAL OFFERING will go towards Mother Hubbard's Cupboard.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING will go towards Camper Scholarships at Camp Mount Luther.

ORGAN FUND There is now an option through Vanco (on-line giving) for donations to go towards the organ fund.

COMMUNION ROBES If your communion robe is in need of cleaning (i.e. wine) please place it in the laundry basket in the robe room.

LUMINA CENTER The new **2026** Restaurant Discount Cards are now available. The cost is \$10.00, and discounts apply to 16 local restaurants in the community. Please see Steve Burk, Mary Barr or the SJLC Office to purchase.

SJLC OFFICE lunch hour Tuesday and Thursday is between 11:30am -12:30pm.

LOST & FOUND there is a lost and found box in the lobby on the shelf above the coat rack. Please check for any items that you may be missing.

WEATHER ALERT If the Mifflin County School District is delayed, closed, or closing due to snow and ice, the SJLC Office and all activities in the church facility will be postponed or cancelled.

COMMITTEES/ORGANIZATIONS

SJLC COUNCIL is not meeting in December. The next council meeting will be on **Tuesday, January 6th, 2026** at 6:30pm.

MOTHER HUBBARD'S CUPBOARD item requests for **December** are **Holiday Meal** items such as: canned ham, stuffing, instant mashed potatoes, gravy, vegetables, pie filling, pie

crust mix, cake mix, and icing.

REMINDER to submit your yearly report for the SJLC annual report and thank those who have submitted theirs. It's greatly appreciated!

Worship SCHEDULE

December 14 [Third Sunday of Advent] 9:00am Worship, 10:15am Sunday School
December 21 [Fourth Sunday of Advent] 9:00am Worship, 10:15am Sunday School
December 24 [Nativity of Our Lord I] 7:45pm Prelude, 8:00pm Service
December 28 [First Sunday of Christmas] 9:00am Worship, 10:15am Sunday School
January 4 [Second Sunday of Christmas] 9:00am Worship, 10:15am Sunday School
January 11 [Baptism of Our Lord] 9:00am Worship, 10:15am Sunday School/Godly Play

Meetings (Please see above for details)

Wed. Handbell 6:00pm and Chancel Choir at 7:00pm.
Sun. Praise and Worship Choir at 8:00am
Sun. 01/11, 02/8, 03/8, 04/12, 05/10 Godly Play Sunday School
Tue. 01/06/26 SJLC Council meeting at 6:30pm.

Reminders for December

Acolytes – Dorian Phillips, Mina Phillips

Altar Guild Volunteers – Sue Shawver, Terri Limes, Pam Fultz, Janet Deamer, Tracey Boyer

Communion Assistants – Justice Mills – crucifer, Mary Barr, Gisele Miller

Ushers – Norma Fisher – head, Dennis Crossgrove, Hillary Worley

Money Counters – Barry Stuck, Sue Phillips

Lay Lectors

December 14 – Youth

December 21 – Cantata

December 28 – Tom Beaver

Christmas Eve

Acolytes – Dorian Phillips, Mina Phillips

Altar Guilds – Sue Shawver, Terri Limes, Pam Fultz, Janet Deamer

Communion Assistants – Scott Price – crucifer, Dave Phillips – book bearer, Sue Shawver

Ushers – Norma Fisher – head, Dennis Crossgrove, Hillary Worley

Lay Lector – Ed Deamer

Next Sunday Readings: *Isaiah 35:1-10, Psalm 146:5-10, James 5:7-10, Matthew 11:2-11*