



Lessons & Carols

Sunday, December 7, 2025

10:30 a.m.



Address: 1501 University Ave. Lubbock, TX 79401

Phone: 806-762-0123 **Web:** stjohnslubbock.org

Email: openminds@stjohnslubbock.org

The Worship of God - 10:30 A.M. Service

ENTRANCE

Gathering

Rev. Josh Stueve

*Opening Prayer

Rev. Josh Stueve

Scripture tells us that God came to these Christmas characters in ways - loud and clear, impossible to miss. Scripture also tells us they listened. They rearranged their lives to follow God's invitation.

God, we long to hear your voice—loud and clear, impossible to miss. We long for invitations to something more, something deeper. And we long to find the courage to follow.

Clean out our ears, O God. Brush the dust off our hearts.

Trace us back to our roots—back to these—who heard and followed.

With gratitude we listen.

Amen.

*Congregational Hymn—*Once in Royal David's City*

IRBY

Emma Davis, soprano, solo, verse 1

*Once in royal David's city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for his bed:*

*He came down to earth from heaven
Who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable,
And his cradle was a stall;*

*Not in that poor lowly stable,
With the oxen standing by,
We shall see him;
But in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high;
When like stars his children crowned
All in white shall wait around.*

Advent Candle Lighting

Tim Algate, Clint and Jeannie Barrick

Today, we light a candle for peace.

May we be people of peace, caring for our neighbors, tending to our own well-being, and choosing kindness in all we say and do.

Isaiah 9: 6 places peace at the center of our story. It tells us,

"A child is born to us, a son is given to us, and authority will be on his shoulders.

He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."

The prayer of St. Francis invites us to be peace-makers.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

God of peace, gather us in your tender care, wrapping your arms around us with a quiet strength.

Fill us with the true peace that only you can provide. Amen.

Take a quiet moment as we light two purple candles.

LESSONS AND CAROLS

First Lesson: Genesis 3: 8-13, p. 3
Brokenness Falling Upon the Garden

Allison Matherly

The Garden of the World, Lim Swee Hong

Tim Algate and John Dacon

*The garden of the world, the paradise we share,
the greening of all life is dying in our care,
the covenants we made are rendered null and void,
the garden that is God's, dishonored and destroyed.*

*New prophets tell the signs of fire, flood and storm,
now all creation groans as nature changes form,
and yet we will not change, though ice floes melt away,
though creatures lose their homes in desolation's day.*

*The poor and the displaced must struggle more than all
when hope and harvests fail, when drought has taken toll,
when air is poisoned breath, when water does not flow,
earth's children bear the cost, earth's planting cannot grow.*

*The callous face of greed, the trading of the powers
will fuel and will feed a lifestyle such as ours.
We pray for one more chance to tend to earth's repair!
The greening of all life is dying in our care.*

Second Lesson: Isaiah 64: 1-9, p. 694
We long for God to come to us in our brokenness

Alan Winner

Lift Up Your Heads, O Ye Gates, William Mathias

St. John's Chancel Choir

*Lift up your heads, O ye gates!
Even lift them up ye everlasting doors.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates
And be ye lift up, and be lift up ye everlasting doors.
And the King of Glory shall come in,
Who is the King of glory?
The Lord, strong and mighty!
The Lord of Hosts.
He is the King of Glory!*

Third Lesson: Isaiah 11: 1-4a, 6-9, p. 640-641
The Reign of the Prince of Peace and Justice

VelvetLee Elder

He Comes to Us, Jane Marshall

St. John's Chancel Choir

*He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lakeside.
He came to those men who knew him not. He speaks to us the same word:
"Follow thou me!" and sets us to the tasks which he has to fulfill for our time.
He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple,
He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings
which they shall pass through in his fellowship, and as an ineffable mystery,
they shall learn in their own experience who He is.*

Fourth Lesson: Luke 1: 26-38, p. 56-57, N.T.
The Annunciation

Alyzia Maria-Reyes Vallejo

Eit Barn Er Fodt I Bethlehem, arr. Ørjan Matre

St. John's Choral Scholars

*A child is born in Bethlehem, Bethlehem,
so rejoice Jerusalem!
Here he lies in a manger, but rules with eternal dominion.
There the ox and ass stood and saw that he was God.
Three Kings came from Austerland and gave him gold and myrrh.
Come then, on this natal day. Rejoice before the Lord and pray.
Hallelujah!*

Fifth Lesson: Matthew 1: 18-23, p. 1, N.T.
An angel speaks to Joseph in a dream

Jay Pettit

Personenet Hodie, arr. Dean Rishel

St. John's Chancel Choir

*Ideo, gloria!
Personent hodie voces puerulae,
laudantes iucunde qui nobis est natus,
summo Deo datus.*

*Therefore, glory!
On this day earth shall ring
with the song children sing
to the Lord, Christ our King,
born on earth to save us;
him the Father gave us*

Sixth Lesson: Luke 2: 1-7, p. 58, N.T.
The Birth of Jesus

Leslie Cranford

How Great Our Joy, Craig Courtney

St. John's Chancel Choir

*While by the sheep we watched at night,
Glad tidings brought an angel bright.
How great our joy.*

*There shall be born so did he say,
In Bethlehem a Child today.
There shall a Child lie in a stall,
This Child who shall redeem us all.*

*This gift of God we'll cherish it well,
That ever joy our hearts shall fill.
Praise we the Lord in heav'n on high!*

Seventh Lesson: Luke 2: 8-20, p. 58, N.T.
The Shepherds and the Angels

Robby Vestal

Candlelight Carol, John Rutter

St. John's Chancel Choir

*How do you capture the wind on the water?
How do you count all the stars in the sky?
How can you measure the love of a mother
Or how can you write down a baby's first cry?*

*Candlelight, angel light, firelight and star-glow
Shine on his cradle till breaking of dawn.
Silent night, holy night, all is calm and all is bright.
Angels are singing; the Christ child is born.*

*Candlelight, angel light, firelight and star-glow
Shine on his cradle till breaking of dawn.
Silent night, holy night, all is calm and all is bright.
Angels are singing; the Christ child is born.*

*Find him at Bethlehem laid in a manger;
Christ our Redeemer asleep in the hay.
Godhead incarnate and hope of salvation,
A child with his mother that first Christmas Day.*

*Shepherds and wise men will kneel and adore him,
Seraphim round him their vigil will keep.
Nations proclaim him their Lord and their Saviour,
But Mary will hold him and sing him to sleep.*

*Candlelight, angel light, firelight and star-glow
Shine on his cradle till breaking of dawn.
Silent night, holy night, all is calm and all is bright.
Angels are singing; the Christ child is born.*

How Far Is It to Bethlehem, Nicholas White

St. John's Chancel Choir, Lauren Zeigenhorn, soloist

*How far is it to Bethlehem?
Not very far.
Shall we find the stable-room
lit by a star?
Can we see the little child,
is he within?
If we lift the wooden latch
may we go in?*

*May we stroke the creatures there,
ox, ass, or sheep?
May we peep like them and see
Jesus asleep?
If we touch his tiny hand
will he awake?
Will he know we've come so far
just for his sake?*

*Great kings have precious gifts,
and we have naught,
little smiles and little tears
are all we brought.
For all weary children
Mary must weep.
Here, on his bed of straw sleep,
children, sleep.
God in his mother's arms,
babes in the byre,
sleep as they sleep
who find their heart's desire.*

*Ninth Lesson: John 1: 1-14, p. 91, N.T.
John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation

Rev. Josh Stueve

The Word Was God, Rosephanye Powell

St. John's Choral Scholars

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.
All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

THANKSGIVING AND COMMUNION

Please approach the altar using the center aisle.
You may make a financial offering in the basket as you come forward.

You may kneel or stand at the communion rail. Please speak your name to the servers so that you may receive the bread and cup by name. We receive by intinction. (As you receive the bread, hold it until the cup is offered. Dip the bread into the cup and then eat.)

When you are ready, you may return to your seat using the side aisles. If you are unable to come to the altar, please tell an usher so that we may serve you in your seat. Our communion bread is vegan, free of dairy, egg, and gluten. All people gathered to worship God are invited to receive the bread and the cup.

Communion Stewards: Rev. Dave Treat and James & Haley Peabody

Invitation to the Table
Sharing the Bread and Cup
Invitation to an Offering
The Great Thanksgiving

Rev. Josh Stueve

God, the Beloved, is with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to God.**
Let us give thanks to the Holy One, our God. **It is good and beautiful to give God our thanks and praise.**

Loving One, our hearts swell with gratitude.
You give us life, provide for us, and call us as your own.
In the words of prophets and the cries of your people you call for justice.
In Jesus you have shown us your justice and your mercy.
You have come among us to give us courage to change our lives, to set us free from all that oppresses, and

to empower us to do justice.

Wonder of wonders: the Coming One whom we await is already among us!

Alleluia! With joy we set the table; in hope we prepare our lives; with all Creation we sing your praise!

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

[The Blessing and Covenant...]

Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me."

As often as we break this bread and share this cup we remember his death and resurrection until he comes again.

Remembering these, your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a living and holy sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on these gifts of bread and cup,
that they may be for us the body and blood of Christ.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us,
that we may be for the world the Body of Christ.

Empower us to do justice, to live mercifully,
and to be ready for your coming, in peace and joy.

Amen

Music for Communion

*Hymn No. 245

The First Noel

The United Methodist Hymnal

THE FIRST NOEL

*Hymn No. 626

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

The United Methodist Hymnal

PICARDY

*Hymn No. 629

You Satisfy the Hungry Heart

The United Methodist Hymnal

GIFT OF FINEST WHEAT

*Doxology No. 94 and Presentation of Gifts

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below:

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God, the source of all our gifts!

Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!

Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

SENDING FORTH

Invitation

Rev. Josh Stueve

*Congregational Hymn-O Come All Ye Faithful

ADESTES FIDELES

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,

O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.

Come and behold him, born the King of angels;

Refrain:

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,

O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

God of God, Light of Light,

Lo! He abhors not the Virgin's womb;

Very God, Begotten, not created;

[Refrain]

*Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God, In the highest;*

[Refrain]

*Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesu, to thee be all glory given.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:*

[Refrain]

Benediction

Rev. Josh Stueve

Please be seated for the Postlude

Postlude
Comfort Ye, My People

Clint Barrick
Claude Goudimel (1514-1572)

Advent Events At St. John's

There are several upcoming events and ways to experience the beauty of the Advent season at St. John's!

Sunday, 12/7 - Journey to Bethlehem Advent Fair from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, 12/14 at 8:15 & 10:30 a.m.—Last Day to Purchase Poinsettias, Last Day to Drop-Off Winter Essentials for Open Door and Common Table, St. John's Provides an Evening Meal to Common Table

Wednesday, 12/17 at 6:00 p.m.—Blue Christmas Service

Saturday, 12/20 at 9:00 a.m.—Service Project at the South Plains Food Bank - Register at bit.ly/4ad1OAH

Wednesday, 12/24 at 5:30 & 10:45 p.m.—Christmas Eve Services

PFLAG Monthly Meeting

The Lubbock chapter of PFLAG will hold their monthly meeting on Tuesday, December 9 at 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room at St. John's.

Blue Christmas Worship Service

As we anticipate the coming of Christ during the season of Advent, we are mindful that for many the holidays are not always merry and bright. Join us in this reflective service as we remember Jesus' promise "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." Wednesday, December 17 at 6:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Services

Step into the warmth of the season and immerse yourself in the joyous atmosphere of St. John's on Christmas Eve! Join us in person as we celebrate with two candlelight worship services featuring famous scripture passages and joyful hymns. Service times are 5:30 & 10:45 p.m.



What Do the Candles in the Advent Wreath Mean?

Ask The UMC

The Advent wreath began as a German and Scandinavian home devotional practice used to mark the four weeks of Advent. Families would light a candle for each past week and the current week at their dinner or evening time of prayer. The configuration of candles, whether in a line or a circle, did not matter. Neither did the color of the candles (all colors are used in homes in Europe). What mattered was the marking of time and the increase of light each week in the face of increasing darkness as the winter solstice approached.

As this practice began to catch on by the mid-twentieth century, several church supply houses who sold Advent wreaths and candles for public worship also developed resources, banners, and bulletin covers assigning a theme to each week, and thus each candle, based on scriptures from the one-year lectionaries used at that time. Those themes were Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace.

Please Remember in Prayer:

St. John's Pastors, Staff, Small Council, and Ministries
St. John's Members who are homebound or in assisted care
Angus Scott-Fleming
(brother of Ian Scott-Fleming)
The Family of Red (Alan) Hersom
(brother of Norma Rutherford)
Dale Bradley
(brother of Craig Bradley)

WAYS TO GIVE



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