

Living in the Now



And the Not Yet!

Pre-Worship Meditation: A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

12/21/2025

**Fourth Sunday of Advent
St. John United Church of Christ**

Prelude

Ringling of the Bell

Welcome and Brief Announcements

*** Hymn: #154, O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

Call to Worship (Psalm 122)

One: Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,
whose hope is in the Lord their God;

**Many: Who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;
who keeps promises forever;**

One: Who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger.
The Lord sets the captive free.

**Many: The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord lifts up those who are bowed
down; the Lord loves the righteous.**

One: The Lord cares for the stranger; the Lord sustains the orphan and widow,
but frustrates the way of the wicked.

**Many: The Lord shall reign forever, your God, O Zion, throughout all
generations. Hallelujah!**

** Prayer of Invocation (Praying Together)*

**Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that,
transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Time with Youth

We Light the Advent Wreath

God's Word

First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and shouting.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God.

³ Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear!"

Here is your God. He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense. He will come and save you."

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;

⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert;

⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp; the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸ A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹ No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰ And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Joyful Musical Interlude

Gospel Reading: Matthew 11:2-11

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴ Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.'

¹¹ "Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

Pastoral Reflection: Living in the Now and the Not Yet!

Hymn: #159, The King of Glory Comes

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Lord's Prayer

OFFERING / Offertory,

Leader: We stand, singing the Doxology, as our Offerings are presented.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Praise Him, all creatures here below

Praise Him above the Heavenly host

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

OFFERING PRAYER

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

Closing Hymn: #218, Go Tell It on the Mountain

****Benediction***

Leader: May God who comes among us, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always.

All: Our worship has ended. Now let our service begin. Thanks be to Jehovah. Amen!

Today's Worship Leaders

Presiding Minister	Pastor David Kohls
Musician	Ebenezer
Reader	Ebenezer – Mark
Usher	Ebenezer – Mike
	St. John – Gary Bieck
	St. John –
	St. John – Donna

Announcements

A Loving Welcome: A loving welcome to all who are here today. If you are a guest or visitor, please feel free to sign our guest book located in the back of the church and help yourself to our information. And please remember that no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

Evening Bible Study: *No evening Bible Study this Sunday.*

Bible Study: *No Bible Study this Wednesday.*

Annual Reports are due, please have them turned in as soon as possible.

Articles Due: Newsletter articles are due Tuesday, December 23.

Christmas Season Scheduling: As we move into the busy liturgical season of Christmas, meetings with Pastor will be by appointment only. Regular schedule resumes January 5.

Blue Christmas: St. John UCC in New Holstein will host their Blue Christmas Service on Monday, December 22 at 6:30 p.m.

Christmas Services: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service – 4:00 p.m. at Ebenezer
7:00 p.m. at St. John
Christmas Day Service – 9:00 a.m. at Ebenezer

At St. John:

Thank You to Derek Beyer for lighting the Advent Wreath!

Poinsettias: If you would like to donate a poinsettia plant in memory of a loved one or in honor of someone you'd like acknowledged, please fill out a slip located on the table in the Narthex and place it in the Office Administrator's Inbox located on the wall by the bulletin board. Please bring the plant(s) during regular business or service hours. You may also order your poinsettias from Lilybee's in New Holstein and they will deliver the plants for you to the church.

At Ebenezer:

Thank You to Jake and Jordan Propson for lighting the Advent Wreath!

December Mission Project: From now until January 5, 2026, the Mission Committee will be accepting hygiene donations for the December Mission Project. You can drop off your donations during this time frame and place them under the Christmas Mission tree in the Narthex. The Mission Committee members will deliver them to the Salvation Army after January 5. Monetary donations can be dropped off in the church office Mondays and Wednesdays, 9 am to 3 pm or given to a committee member--Ruth, Jeanne, Janet, or Karen. Thank you for supporting our Mission Project for 2025!

Devotionals: January – February Upper Rooms are available on the book rack in the narthex.

Prayers of Joys and Concerns*

Alex ~ Cassie ~ Colleen ~ Da' Monique ~ David ~ Diana ~ Elizabeth ~ Gail ~ Jim ~ Joan ~ Julie ~ Pat ~ Rachel ~ Raelynn ~ Rod ~ Sandi ~ Sandra ~ Sherry ~ Stevie ~ Tony

**Contact the office to add or remove from this prayer list*

Ebenezer Council Members

President: Nick Kuhn (920) 378-0204

Vice President: Glen Pingel (920) 419-0433

Secretary: Andy Hofmeister (920) 464-0257

Treasurer: Brian Adamietz (920) 645-8699

Kristi Schnell (920) 418-5167

Judy Mattes (920) 853-7109

Amy Kuhn (920) 418-0929

Prayers of Joys and Concerns*

David ~ Elizabeth ~ Jan ~ Maci ~ Penny ~ Ruth ~ Susan

**Contact the office to add or remove from this prayer list*

St. John Council Members

President: Jim Sommers (920) 894-2350
(2-year term starting 2025)

Vice-President: Garry Preder (920) 838-0714
(2-year term starting 2025)

Secretary: Lynn Kind (920) 378-2173
(2nd 2-year term starting 2025)

Trustee: Penny Geiger (920) 266-6324
(2nd 2-year term starting 2024)

Treasurer & Congregational President:
Derek Beyer (920) 979-2017
(2nd 2-year term starting 2024)

**If anyone would like something put on the St. John website, please contact Phil Vergowe at
pjvergowe@outlook.com*

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