

---

## “Savior of the Nations, Come”

---

The Lutheran Church has been known through the centuries as “The Singing Church”. With that reputation in mind, I thought it would be beneficial for us to gain a greater appreciation for a well-known Advent hymn “Savior of the Nations, Come” (LSB 332) when we sing it during our Divine Services this month.

This Advent hymn was originally written in Latin and dates back to St. Ambrose in the fourth century, A.D. Martin Luther gave us a German version and several different translators gave us our present English translation.

This hymn sings about the exquisite birth of Jesus and about this Savior of the nations coming into our world. “Marvel now, O heav’n and earth, That the Lord chose such a birth” (LSB 332, verse 1). The hymn is correct. There are some exquisite features here that move us to talk about “His exquisite birth.”

We rightly speak about “the miracle of birth”: tiny hands and fingernails; lips and eyes of lovely form; miniature arms and legs gently flexing themselves—who can resist these inspiring features? We affirm God’s sacred gift of life in the womb and life delivered from the womb. Life matters. Life counts. Life is so exquisite.

During Christmas we extend this honor beyond the human. We include animals (as does the Christmas story) as part of God’s creation to be received with thanksgiving. Why do pictures of “all creatures great and small often pop up on the covers of many of our Christmas cards? What is the source of the legends about “friendly beasts” we often hear during Christmas? Are these attempts to say that in some way all life (and all of God’s creation) is sacred, and we are to honor it?

Birth and life are exquisite. When we talk about the Child born of Mary, the Bible reminds us that despite the humble, earthy scene, there is a unique feature essential to “His exquisite birth”: Jesus was born of a virgin mother. “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you” is the way the angel Gabriel explained it to Mary in Luke 1:35.

Here we come upon the supremely exquisite quality of the baby Jesus. It is the Holy Spirit of God Who empowered the conception of this child. What is so exquisite about this feature is the story of Jesus’ birth. According to the angel, the conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit is a sign of His divinity. The virgin birth is the indisputable fact that demonstrates Jesus is the Son of God.

Jesus is the eternal Son of God. He always has been and always will be. In the Nicene Creed we affirm that He was “begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father.” This means that the virgin conception of Jesus did not “make” Him the Son of God. Then what happened at His miraculous conception? John summarizes the Gospel story of Christmas by saying “the Word became flesh”. The eternal Word of God, Who is forever the Son of God, came to us in human flesh as the Baby of Bethlehem. The Word became incarnate; this is, Latin for “in flesh.”

This virgin conception—this exquisite birth—serves as a marvelous signal for all time that God was acting in a unique way in the coming of Jesus! Look at this virgin-conceived child! He is the only One the world will ever see. Behold the virgin-born Son of God! For in His coming, and in all of His life on earth that follows, God was moving into action in a miraculous way to bring His rescuing and saving power to us creatures of human flesh. God became one of us (but without sin) in order to rescue each one of us. Jesus’ exquisite birth pushes us to appreciate His exquisite ministry and then to behold His most exquisite death and resurrection. This Jesus comes as our Savior, and in His coming God is decisively acting to save us from our sins.

As we approach the blessed Advent season, you and I must understand the profound significance of the exquisite signal God displayed for all humankind. As we review the biblical teaching about the virgin conception, it proclaims that the Son of God has come as the Father’s final Word of love to you and me. In the virgin birth, cross, and resurrection of Jesus, God’s love for you and me is expressed fully and completely. God’s plan of salvation is fulfilled. And humankind, including ourselves, can contribute nothing to God’s exquisite gift.

That is Good News! It is exquisite news! Christ the exquisite-born is “Savior of the nations.” In Hymn 322 we pray that this Savior of the nations comes to each one of us. But we are also challenged in this Advent season to see to it that the message of His love and deliverance comes to people everywhere—to the nations.

Marveling in our Coming Savior’s Exquisite Birth, Pastor Riley

**HOLIDAY WORSHIP  
SCHEDULE**

**CANDLELIGHT  
CHRISTMAS  
EVE**  
at 7:00 p.m.



CANDLELIGHT  
SERVICE



**CHRISTMAS DAY  
Communion  
Service**  
at 10:00 a.m.

For unto us a child is born,  
to us a son is given ...  
Isaiah 9:6

**NEW YEAR'S  
EVE  
Communion  
Service**  
at 7:00 p.m.



**ADVENT  
CANDLELIGHT  
SUPPER**



Advent Event

On Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, you and your family and friends are invited to begin the Advent Season with St. John's Annual Candlelight Supper and devotion beginning at 5:00 p.m. This year's theme is *The Meaning of an Advent Wreath*. The WINGS will prepare a stuffed chicken breast meal. Chicken nuggets will be available for children.

You can also call 568-1417 to make reservations.

Poinsettia plants will be available for purchase. The plants will adorn the altar and will be available to take home after the Christmas Day Service. To reserve a plant, fill out the form located on the round table in the foyer or contact Jane McClure (562-0492).

Prices are for one size only (6 inch pot) for \$8.00 each. The poinsettias come in red, white, and iced punch colors.

Orders will be taken from now until December 17th. Checks made be made to St. John's Flower Fund. Payment is due with order.



ORDER  
YOUR  
POINSETTIAS

**2018 ADVENT  
MID-WEEK THEME:  
"It's About Time"**



Time is such an important part of our lives. Throughout this 2018 Advent season, our midweek services will explore the role that the element of time played in the coming of our Savior Jesus at Christmas.

Wednesday, December 5:

"Wait Until Your Father Gets Home" (Isaiah 64:1-9)

Wednesday, December 12:

"It's Time to Wake Up" (Romans 13:8-14)

Wednesday, December 19:

"Something is About to Happen" (Mark 13:33-37)

The Divine Service will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary.

A Mid-Week service will be held in the lounge at 11:00 a.m. followed by a simple luncheon on Wednesdays for individuals who do not desire to drive at night.

The following have signed up for flowers for the month of December & January:



Flower  
Chart

- December 2 - Sienkiewicz (1)
- December 9 - Riley (1)
- December 16 - Open
- December 23 - Ferst
- December 30 - Sienkiewicz (1)
- January 6- Sienkiewicz (1)
- January 13- Sienkiewicz (1)
- January 20 - Open
- January 27 - Sienkiewicz (1)

We can do up to three bouquets per Sunday. If anyone would like to have flowers for a particular Sunday, please sign up in the flower book located in the church foyer. The flower book pages for the new year are now in the book. The cost for each bouquet is \$21.00. Please make checks payable to St. John's Flower Fund.

**DECORATING the CHURCH**

for Christmas will begin on December 1<sup>st</sup> at 9:00 a.m. with the fellowship hall, lounge and sanctuary being cleaned and decorated. Gary Wolfe will be in charge of outdoor lighting on that day also. Anyone who would like to help are welcome. Many hands make for light work.

**"CHRISTMAS BY  
CANDLELIGHT"  
VESPERS CONCERT**

**Presented By The 'Soli Deo  
Gloria' Concert Series**  
At St. John's  
Sunday, December 9th  
6:00PM

On Sunday, December 9th at 6:00pm, the saints of St. John's will gather to celebrate the Feast of Christmas by candlelight with a Vespers Concert held in the Lutheran tradition of the acclaimed composer Johann Sebastian Bach. From the Gospel of Luke, we will hear of the birth of the King of kings in the lowly manger in Bethlehem as the heavenly hosts proclaim the good news to shepherds in the nearby fields.

The 'Soli Deo Gloria' Concert Series choir, the Kantorei, will present selections by both Michael Praetorius (1571 - 1621) and Hans Leo Hassler (1564 - 1612). In the choral selection, "And Mary Said To The Angel" by Hassler, he depicts Mary's humbleness as she hears the news from the angel Gabriel that she will give birth by the power of the Holy Spirit to the Son of God. Praetorius' "Psallite," we hear how the composer encourages us Christians to sing Psalms and hymns to the Holy Child of Bethlehem as the angels sang of his birth. Finally, in the choral selection "To Us Is Born Emmanuel," we hear written in a refrain style by Praetorius the good news of great joy that God was now dwelling amongst man to be our Redeemer and Savior.

The Vespers will also feature the historic chorales of Christmas-tide from the time of Bach for all to sing accompanied with St. John's Austin pipe organ. After the Vespers celebration, all are invited downstairs to the church fellowship hall to partake in a festive reception. Please share with others and be sure to bring a friend!



**Advent is here and soon**

**Christmas:** There are many Sundays coming up that are available for sponsorship. Please help in the continuing outreach mission project of our Radio Broadcast of Sunday morning Worship . Broadcasts can be heard each Sunday at 7:30 a.m. on WHYN (560 AM). The cost for the program is now \$125 per week. If you are interested in sponsoring a broadcast (or a part of a broadcast) in memory of or in honor of anyone please call the church or sign up on the sheet outside the office door. Donations of any amount are welcome.

Additionally, we have posted previous weeks' broadcasts on our website along with the associated bulletin. Just log onto [www.stjohnswestfield.org](http://www.stjohnswestfield.org); links to the broadcasts and the weekly bulletins are on the main page. If anyone would like a CD copy of any radio broadcast, please contact Bill.

Please see/call Bill Schneeloch (413-568-4906 or 860-604-5264) or e-mail at [radio@stjohnswestfield.org](mailto:radio@stjohnswestfield.org) with any questions.

**A MESSAGE from our TREASURER:**

As Christmas approaches, James Love will once again be accepting your contributions toward the annual Christmas Fund. If you would like to contribute, you can place it in an envelope marked Christmas Fund and place in offering plate or give to James. As you know, this offering is shared with our staff workers as a THANK YOU for their dedicated service this past year.

For your 2018 contributions to appear on your 2018 financial statement, they must be at the church no later than December 31. Help us meet the church's budget needs with your generosity.



**REJOICE & SING!  
COMMUNITY  
CHRISTMAS CAROLING  
Saturday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>  
at 1:00 p.m.**

Join us as we visit local nursing communities and our shut-ins in their homes to bring them the good news of the birth of the Savior through music! We will meet in the back parking lot of St. John's and car pool from home to home. We will leave the church lot at 1:00 p.m.. If you are interested, please talk with Director of Music Jeff Windoloski or simply meet us in the parking lot on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.



**JOIN US FOR AN  
AFTERNOON AT THE  
MOVIES on December 16:**

Everyone is invited to join us on Sunday, December 16 at 2:00 p.m. in fellowship, fun and snacks for the movie classic: *Meet Me in St. Louis*. Invite your family and friends for a fun Sunday afternoon.

**CHRISTMAS GREETINGS**

Should you wish to send a Christmas greeting to your fellow church members, you may attach your card to the special banner in the church foyer. This could save you time and money, both of which could then be used in some way to serve God.

**GREAT GIFT IDEAS**

The Youth Group have the following fundraisers which make wonderful gifts or stocking stuffers for the Christmas Season.

**2019 SCRIPTURE CALENDARS \$8.00 each**

**2019 SCRIPTURE POCKET CALENDARS \$5.00 each**

**RESTORATION UPDATE:**

Work to restore our foyer area from the water damage continues. If you're like me (and most of us today) I WANT IT NOW!! – But we need to be patient. Good work takes time to be done the right and proper way. Rushing and taking short-cuts will only cost in the long run.

The contractor (ACE Fire and Water Restoration) and sub-contractors we have doing the restoration work are great folks; very accommodating and respectful of our church building.

We're a bit more than half way towards completion. Remediation and framework is done. Electrical, drywall, painting, and flooring are still to be completed.

Please direct any questions or concerns to Bill Schneeloch. Once this project is done, we will have a wonderful foyer area that we can enjoy for fellowship.



**New England Branch**  
Now is the time to offer help. The storms have passed and now we know what is needed most to aid these folks. Financial donations will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$3,000.00 until December 31, 2018.

Please send your gifts to: Orphan Grain Train c/o LCMS 400 Wilbraham Rd. Springfield, MA 01109. Checks should be made payable to OGT-New England Branch.

We will be having a special "fund raising" meeting on December 15 at Holy Trinity in Terryville at 10 a.m. Our meetings are open and welcome to all. Please contact Bill Schneeloch if you would like to carpool. He will leaving St John's parking lot at 8:30 a.m. If you have any ideas about how to raise funds or have done this previously, your attendance is MOST WELCOME. Please keep OGT in your prayers.

## **Make Known the Savior**

What greater mystery is there than these words of the Apostle John: *“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth”* (John 1:14)? This Word Who is with God and Who is God and Who has been with God since the beginning (John 1:1-2), this Word became one of us. Born in a stable more than two thousand years ago, Jesus lived among us. We joyfully sing every Christmas, “Joy to the Word, the Lord is Come.” In His 33 years on earth, He ate and drank and slept like one of us, and He showed us His glory.

*“And from His fullness, we have all received, grace upon grace”* (John 1:16), for this is what He

came to bring. First and foremost of those blessings is the forgiveness of sins and life eternal with Him. He is *“the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world!”* (John 1:29).

As we turn the pages of the Gospel of John, we come to know more about our Savior. He is: living water, the healer, the teacher, the miracle worker, the good shepherd, the raiser of the dead, the Vine, the Christ, the Son of God, the I AM.

And we are the sheep of His flock, His witnesses, the branches who cling to Him, the Vine, so that we might be sustained and empowered to serve this mighty Savior Who deigned to become one of us.

What does He ask of us, His sheep? To believe in Him, to

remain in Him, to love others as He has loved us, to expect persecution for the sake of the Gospel, to trust Him so completely that He can accomplish through us even greater things (John 14:12).

*“You did not choose Me,”* Jesus said, *“but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide”* (John 15:16). How blessed we are to be chosen to have our identity in Christ, to be chosen for the tasks He gives us to do! Let us joyfully take up the work He gives us as we make known to all the Savior, the Word made flesh.

May peace and joy abound in our lives as we celebrate Jesus’ coming into the world as our rescuer from sin and death!