



The
light
shines
in the
darkness

AND THE DARKNESS
DID NOT OVERTAKE IT.

JOHN 1:5, NRSV

*Welcome to St. John Lutheran Church
Second Saturday of Christmas* January 4, 2025*

**PRELUDE
ANNOUNCEMENTS**

OPENING SONG

With All Faith

Press into the heart of the Father, Hold fast to the grace received,
Breathe in ... the life of the Spirit and with all faith believe,
And with all faith believe.

Press into the heart of the Father, Hold fast to the grace received,
Breathe in ... the life of the Spirit and with all faith believe,
And with all faith believe.

Believe on this ... The Word of Life ... The Lord the Christ, has come to save us.
Receive by faith ... His blood supplied ... And the power of sin be cursed,
And the Father, be glorified.

Press into the heart of the Father, Hold fast to the grace received,
Breathe in ... the life of the Spirit and with all faith believe,
And with all faith believe.

Believe on this ... The Word of Life ... The Lord the Christ, has come to save us.
Receive by faith ... His blood supplied ... And the power of sin be cursed,
And the Father, be glorified.

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

P: God of light...

C: our lives reflect the season, seeming like a long, dark hallway with no end in sight. We struggle from one step to another, stumbling in the darkness, trying not to fall. God of light, swing wide the doors! Open the windows! Let in the new light of your love. Light the paths we walk so we can understand where we have been and be confident of the direction we are headed. Illuminate our lives with the light of your Word, so we can live in forgiveness and be free to live life to the fullest in service to others.

P: Our God is a great God! God has provided for our every need. The darkness of our sin has been changed by the light of the love of Jesus. God's gift of faith is the beginning of a new direction as every darkened corner of our life is filled with light and every unspeakable sin is forgiven. We are free to walk by faith in the light of God's never ending love. **C: Amen**

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 31:7-14

For thus says the Lord: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, "Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel." See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here. With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a flock." For the Lord has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again. Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty, says the Lord.

SECOND READING

Ephesians 1:3-14

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set

forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

GOSPEL

John 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

SERMON

Pastor Shawn O'Brien

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**All: We believe in God, the Creator of all life, the source of all love,
and the giver of every good and perfect gift.**

We believe Jesus Christ is God's own Son.

Born of Mary, he lived a life of kindness and concern.

**He died a cruel death on an executioner's cross
and was raised to new life on the third day.**

**We believe Jesus' death and resurrection has given us new life
and we will live with him now and in the age to come.**

We believe in the Holy Spirit--God with us.

**We have been called by the Spirit, enlightened by the Spirit,
and gifted for service by the Spirit.**

**God is at work today and the Holy Spirit is the means by which God
continues to demonstrate love and concern for all humanity.**

**We believe we can know and experience God in prayer,
forgiveness, the Sacraments, and the community of faith. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: God of Grace, **C: receive our prayer.**

OFFERING PRAYER

P: God of heaven and earth,

**C: from the beginning, you have called forth life, in which you take
delight. The trees, the fields, and the seas sing for joy. Bless now
these gifts, received from your bounty, that we may join the chorus of
creation to tell of your salvation from day to day. Amen.**

OFFERING SONG

The Lord is My Light

The Lord is my light and my salvation, I will never be afraid.

The Lord protects me from all danger, I will never be afraid.

When evil attacks and tries to kill me, I will never be afraid.

Even if whole armies surround me, I will never be afraid.

In times of trouble he gives me shelter, I will never be afraid.

God will keep me from all danger, I will never be afraid.

He prepares the path before me, I will never be afraid.

I will live to see God's glory, I will never be afraid.

I will never be afraid.

HOLY COMMUNION

P: We declare Jesus is the Messiah; the one who has come and is coming into the world.

All: Jesus is the embodiment of God's love.

P: We come to the table celebrating the gift of his forgiveness and trusting our chain of guilt can be broken.

All: Jesus, the love of God made flesh, comes to bring us new life.

P: 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.

P: 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.

All: Jesus is the true gift of love from God.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**All: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever.**

Amen

THE DISTRIBUTION

Welcome!

St. John practices "open communion". All who are baptized and instructed are welcome to share the Lord's Supper with us today. Starting with the right side of the church, followed by the left when they are finished, the Pastor will distribute the bread and the communion assistant will serve the wine. We will also have pre-sealed elements available for those who would prefer the more hygienic option (or those who wish to receive grape juice instead of wine). Indicate to the Pastor that you would like pre-sealed elements and skip the wine server. Those who wish to receive a blessing should indicate their wishes to the Pastor by crossing their arms over their chest.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P: Merciful God,

C: we thank you for Jesus, who is our heavenly food.

Strengthened by this goodness, send us forth to announce your peace, comfort the afflicted, and share the good news of great joy. Amen.

BLESSING

P: The God of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, lavish you with grace, illumine your path, and increase your joy, today and always.

C: Amen.

SENDING SONG

The River

Down the mountain the river flows and it brings refreshing wherever it goes
Through the valleys and over the fields the river is rushing and the river is here

REFRAIN

**The river of God sets our feet a-dancing
The river of God fills our hearts with cheer
The river of God fills our mouths with laughter
And we rejoice for the river is here**

The river of God is teeming with life and all who touch it can be revived
And those who linger on this river's shore
will come back thirsting for more of the Lord

REFRAIN

Up to the mountain we love to go to find the presence of the Lord
Along the banks of the river we run we dance
with laughter giving praise to the Son.

REFRAIN

Down the mountain the river flows and it brings refreshing wherever it goes
Through the valleys and over the fields the river is rushing and the river is here.

REFRAIN

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE



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**We welcome you to St. John Lutheran Church.
We are...“creating and nurturing life changing relationships
based on the love of God in Jesus Christ,
so that we may grow in faith, serve God,
and serve our neighbor.”**

LisaAnne Gregg, Office Administrator
Church Office Hours: M-T-W 9am—3 pm
Thurs. hours may vary * Office closed Friday
Email: office@stjohnwilliston.org

Contemporary Worship: Saturday 5:00 pm
Confirmation Class: Sunday 8:30 am
Sunday School for all ages...
1st Sunday of the month at 8:30 am
Traditional Worship: Sunday 9:45 am

