



The Eagle

December 2023

A Publication of St. John's Lutheran Church in Albany, NY



*Joy
to the
world!*

Advent & Christmas at St. John's
More on page 6

From the Pastor

Merry Christmas, Church

Now the heavens start to whisper,
as the veil is growing thin.
Earth from slumber wakes to listen
to the stirring, faint within:
seed of promise, deeply planted,
child to spring from Jesse's stem!
Like the soil beneath the frostline,
hearts grow soft to welcome him.



[Click to
listen](#)

—Mary Louise Bringle
All Creation Sings, hymn no. 901

Advent is upon us – and soon so shall be Christmas (not just *one* day, but a full *season*, mind you!). As nights grow longer, so too do our to-do lists: there are trees to trim, gifts to buy, cookies to bake, parties to attend, lights to hang.

It's festive, to be sure, but it can also feel ... *overwhelming*. Not to mention that this is not necessarily a season of universal “holly, jolly” feelings. The holidays can stir up many emotions in us. Maybe we look around the pews and remember days of fuller sanctuaries. Or we look up at the mantle and remember Christmases past with a stocking that no longer hangs there.

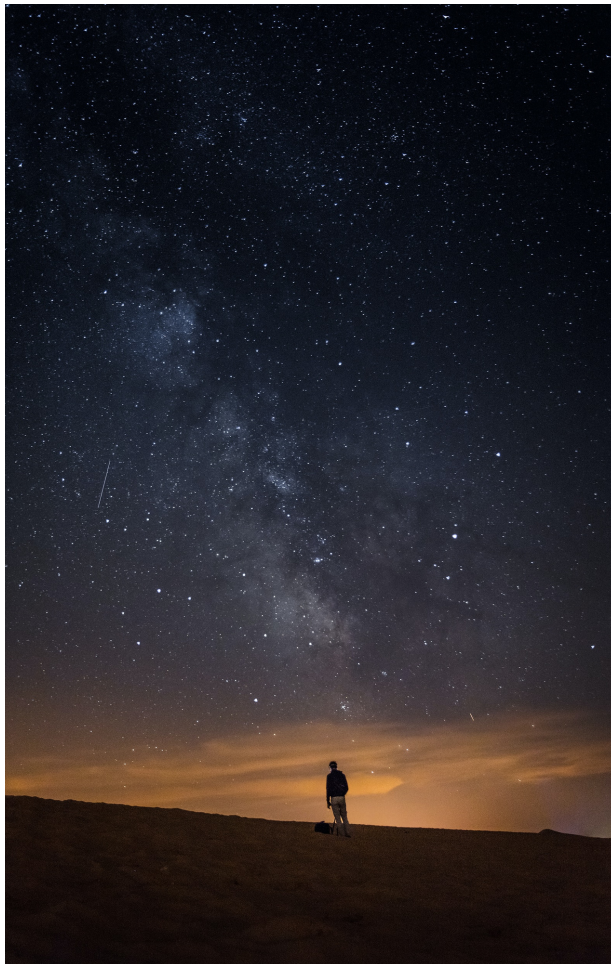
Whatever these days stir up in you, take time to wait, watch, hope, and pray in this Advent and Christmas season – and take part in the many opportunities to fill your soul with your St. John's community.

Join us for compline on Wednesdays from the comfort of your home (p. 4). Have lunch and decorate our church Christmas tree during Advent Fest on December 9 (p. 5). Hear our Sunday School kids tell the familiar story of Christmas during worship (p. 5).

And don't forget about that “silent night, holy night”: Christmas Eve. Carols, candles, choir, communion – all starting at 7:00 p.m., both in-person and online.

There is lots to savor *together* this season, and I can't wait to experience my first St. John's Christmas with you all.

In Advent hope,
Josh ☩



credit: Khamkéo Vilaysing on [Unsplash](#)



Remember that donations for 2023 must be **received** by **December 31** in order to be posted to your donor record/giving statement for this year.

If you give online at stjohnsalbany.org/give, credit card, debit card, and ACH bank transfer donations all get a “received date” as soon as you click the “Give \$ Now” button. If that happens **before the clock strikes midnight in your local timezone on December 31**, then the donation will be counted for 2023. Online donations cannot be backdated. **Online giving is always the easiest and most secure option.** Need help setting it up? Talk to Pr. Josh.

If you prefer to give by mail, the US Treasury Department’s rule (Treasury Regulation 1.170A-1(b)) states that a donation is considered delivered when it’s postmarked by the USPS. All checks received by mail will be posted **based on the postmarked date, not the date on the check.**

As always, we are so incredibly grateful for your generosity that allows us to do the ministry we do. **Thank you!**



In Our Prayers

For whom or what shall we pray?

Prayer requests are published in *The Eagle* so that the whole community can hold one another in prayer and support.

Submit a prayer request [online](#) or [contact Pastor Josh Evans](#).

thank you

Our special thanks to...

- members and friends of St. John’s who have pledged their support to our mission and ministry in 2024.
- everyone who donated to our first ever #GivingTuesday fundraiser. In online donations alone, **we raised nearly \$400 in a single day** to buy gift cards for our neighbors in need this holiday season at the Outreach Center at Sacred Heart Church in North Albany. **You are amazing!**

Download the St. John’s mobile app!

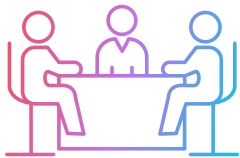
Reading this on your phone?

[Click here](#) to download.



Or search for ‘Church Center’ (look for the icon to the left) on the Apple App Store or Google Play and find us by location when you first open the app.

Council Corner



St. John's congregation council met on Tuesday, November 21 for its regular monthly meeting and:

- approved the purchase of a new seasonal banner for Christmas Eve worship to be posted on the fence near the parking lot entrance.
- designated "Giving Tuesday" (November 28) as a special fundraiser for the Christmas Adopt-a-Child gift card appeal.
- discussed seeking out a local bookkeeping service in order to alleviate the responsibilities of the current treasurer.
- approved the purchase of a new locked mailbox for 303 Sand Creek Road to replace the existing mailbox.

Next meeting: MONDAY, December 11 , 6:00 p.m. (via Zoom)

Albany Lutherans Together

Blue Christmas
December 22 • 6 PM
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
510 Albany Shaker Rd, Loudonville

The ELCA congregations of Albany – First, Good Shepherd, Holy Spirit, and St. John's – invite you to a contemplative liturgy of compline (night prayer) for Advent, a season of hopeful waiting and watching before the celebration of Christmas.

**Join us on Wednesdays,
December 6, 13, and 20
at 8:00 p.m. on Zoom:**

firstlutheranalbany.org/zoom

To join by phone, call 301-715-8592 or 929-436-2866.
The meeting code is 518-463-1326, and the passcode is 1.

Printed bulletins to take home are available for pick-up at church, [online](#), or by mail (upon request – please call Maggie or Pr. Josh).

Compline for Advent
Wednesdays at 8:00 p.m.
Albany Lutherans Together

Sunday School

ALL AGES WELCOME!

Kids of all ages are invited to join us for Sunday School immediately following the liturgy. Contact Paige Pierle, Sunday School teacher, at sundayschool@stjohnsalbany.org with any questions.

Upcoming Dates

December 3

Christmas Program Rehearsal

December 10

Christmas Program Rehearsal
& Cookie Decorating for Shelter Meal



Advent Fest

December 9 + 12:00–3:00 p.m.

‘Advent Fest’ is coming! Mark your calendars for Saturday, December 9, from 12:00 – 3:00 p.m. as we gather for lunch, decorating our Christmas tree, simple holiday crafts, and carols in the spirit of the season.

Please [sign up at this link](#) (or text/call/email Pr. Josh) by Wednesday, December 6, so we can plan for lunch and other logistics.



Advent Devotionals Available

Enrich your personal or family spiritual practices this Advent season with *Magnify: Mary's Song and the Magnificent Women of Advent*. Printed copies are available for pick-up at church, or you can download a digital version [here](#).

Advent & Christmas at St. John's

Sunday 9:30 a.m. ☩ First Sunday of Advent
December 3 *Holy Eucharist*

Wednesday 8:00 p.m. ☩ Compline (Night Prayer)
December 6 *Commemoration of Nicholas, Bishop of Myra*

Sunday 9:30 a.m. ☩ Second Sunday of Advent
December 10 *Holy Eucharist*

Wednesday 8:00 p.m. ☩ Compline (Night Prayer)
December 13 *Commemoration of Lucy, martyr*

Sunday 9:30 a.m. ☩ Third Sunday of Advent
December 17 *Holy Eucharist with Children's Christmas Program*

Wednesday 8:00 p.m. ☩ Compline (Night Prayer)
December 20 *Commemoration of Katherina von Bora Luther, renewer of the church*

Sunday 9:30 a.m. ☩ Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 24 *Holy Eucharist*

Sunday 7:00 p.m. ☩ Nativity of Our Lord
December 24 *The Christ Mass (Christmas Eve)*

All Sunday liturgies are streamed on YouTube.

Wednesday compline is via Zoom.

For more info: stjohnsalbany.org



Beer & Carols

December 18 + 5:00–8:00 p.m.

Come sing old Christmas favorites, drink great local beer (soft drinks also available), and support seafarers visiting Albany! The Albany Maritime Ministry invites you to an evening of **Beer & Carols on Monday, December 18, at The Warbler Brewery (155 Delaware Avenue, Delmar, New York)**. Doors open at 5:00 p.m. with singing beginning 5:30 and going to ~7:30 (with breaks). Food can be ordered and brought in from one of the nearby restaurants. We'll also tell you more about the ministry and take donations to support our work in the coming year.



Caring for One Another

This holiday season, please remember those in our St. John's community who are homebound: William Coons, Mary Liebenhagen, Gloria Fraley, Bill Shuster, Nadine Krantz, Evelyn Pitt, and Dorothy Knapp. If you'd like to send them a card, give them a phone call, or visit them, and need their contact info, call or email Maggie.

Specific help is needed to deliver poinsettias to our homebound, hospitalized, or bereaved members. The plants will be available to take with you following our Christmas Eve liturgy. If you can help, contact the church office.

Christmas at Sea

This Christmas, many of us will be surrounded by family and friends, at home and in church. At the same time, Christmas for most seafarers will be in the middle of the ocean with neither family nor friends, home nor church. As a part of Albany Maritime Ministry's "Christmas at Sea" program, we're seeking your help to gather a few items to be gift wrapped and given to port volunteers to distribute to seafarers this holiday season. Even though crews are confined to their ships, we can deliver some Christmas joy to them.



How can you help? Collect a few items, place them in a shoebox, and gift wrap it. Suggestions include: knit cap, gloves, socks, writing paper, envelopes, comb or brush, book, ear buds, toiletries (razor, shaving cream, shampoo, shower gel), and new and gently used DVDs. No candy or other food, please.

Both wrapped gift boxes and empty shoeboxes (for later packing) may be left in the church kitchen.

News & Announcements



Please note our special holiday schedule.

There will be **no liturgy on December 25 (Christmas Day) or Sunday, December 31** in order to give our staff and worship leaders a well-deserved holiday sabbath. Alternate worship opportunities will be advertised as they are known. Additionally, **the church office will be closed December 25 – January 1** for the holidays.



Emergency Homeless Overflow Shelter Dinners

This year, St. John's is providing hot meals for the Emergency Homeless Overflow Shelter, housed at First Lutheran Church, on December 12, February 6, April 2, and April 30 (tentative). A typical dinner consists of a main entrée (casseroles are a great choice), a starch, a vegetable or salad, and dessert. If you'd like to help prepare the meal, please contact Karen Bielinski at 518.463.6224 or kbielins@nycap.rr.com.



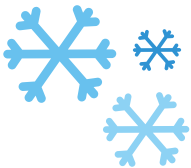
Christmas Adopt-a-Child

It's not too late to support our Christmas Adopt-a-Child collection for 2023! We are collecting gift cards for the Outreach Center at Sacred Heart Church in North Albany to distribute to families in need this holiday season. Purchase a \$25 gift card for Target or Walmart and drop it off at church, or [donate online](#) and we'll purchase a gift card for you. **All donations must be received by December 10.** Thank you for your generosity!



Christmas Memorials

The church office is now accepting Christmas memorials which are used to purchase poinsettias to adorn our sanctuary during Christmas. [Submit your memorials online](#), email Maggie, or call the church office by December 17.



Closings

The safety of our community members is our priority. In the event of inclement weather that requires the cancellation of a liturgy or other church event, we will follow the lead of our local school districts and share any closure information with local radio and TV stations, including WGNA, WNYT TV, WRGB TV, WXXA TV, WIEN TV, 810 WGY, FLY 92, and B95.5 WRVE. Information will also be posted on stjohnsalbany.org and [our Facebook page](#), as well on our phone recording.



2024 Calendars (Still) Wanted

We are collecting 2024 calendars for clients of [Rehabilitation Support Services](#), who use them to track appointments, medication, etc. A collection box is located on the cart near the kitchen.



Serving This Month – December 2023

Please [contact Parish Secretary Maggie Anderson](#) if you can fill one of the *Available* slots.

Thank you for serving!


Role	Dec. 3	Dec. 10	Dec. 17	Dec. 24 (9:30 a.m.)	Dec. 24 (7:00 p.m.)
Altar Guild <i>(set-up & clean-up)</i>	Paula Schwab	Linda Davis	Linda Davis	Diane & Kelly Conley	Paula Schwab
Changing Paraments & Laundering Linens	Paula Schwab				
Assisting Minister	Karen Bielinski	Lindsay Stannard	Paula Schwab	Karen Bielinski	Lindsay Stannard
Reader	Thaisa Beach	Avery Heaney	Sunday School Students	Melissa Savage	Avery Heaney & Karen Bielinski
Communion Assistant(s)	Karen Bielinski & Melissa Savage	Lindsay Stannard & <i>Available</i>	Paula Schwab & Joy Pierle	Karen Bielinski & Melissa Savage	Lindsay Stannard & <i>Available</i>
Ushers	Freddy Boyzer & Kelly Conley				
Opener / Closer	Maggie Anderson / Maggie Anderson	Maggie Anderson / Maggie Anderson	Maggie Anderson / Karen Bielinski	Maggie Anderson / Maggie Anderson	Paula & Jerry Schwab / Paula & Jerry Schwab
Coffee Hour Host(s)	Maggie Anderson	Maggie Anderson	Maggie Anderson & Linda Davis	Maggie Anderson	n/a

December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
26 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30AM Christ the King Sunday 10:30AM Coffee Hour 	27 Pastor's Day Off	28	29
3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30AM First Sunday of Advent 10:30AM Coffee Hour 10:30AM Sunday School 	4 Pastor's Day Off	5	6 8:00PM Compline for Advent
10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30AM Second Sunday of Advent 10:30AM Coffee Hour 10:30AM Sunday School 	11 6:00PM Congregation Council Meeting	12	13 8:00PM Compline for Advent
17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30AM Third Sunday of Advent 10:30AM Coffee Hour 	18 Eagle Deadline Pastor's Day Off 5:00PM Beer & Carols	19	20 8:00PM Compline for Advent
24 Christmas Eve <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30AM Fourth Sunday of Advent 10:30AM Coffee Hour 7:00PM Nativity of Our Lord + Christmas Eve 	25 Church Office Closed Christmas Day Pastor's Day Off 	26	27
31 Church Office Closed New Year's Eve	1 New Year's Day Pastor's Day Off 	2	3

Eagle Deadline
 Submissions for the January 2024 edition of *The Eagle* are due by **Monday, December 18**, and may be sent to Parish Secretary Maggie Anderson at parishsec@stjohnsalbany.org.

St. John's Month at a Glance

Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	1	2
7:00PM Choir Rehearsal	8	12:00PM Advent Fest
14	15	16
7:00PM Choir Rehearsal	Pastor's Day Off	
21	22	23
7:00PM Choir Rehearsal	6:00PM Blue Christmas	
28	29	30
4	5	6
7:00PM Choir Rehearsal		

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stjohnsalbany](https://facebook.com/stjohnsalbany)

or visit us online



stjohnsalbany.org

for the most up-to-date
calendar of events

Office Coverage

Monday & Friday
Maggie Anderson

Tuesday-Thursday
Pastor Josh Evans

*Please call ahead before
stopping by to ensure
someone is in the office.*



St. John's

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

PO Box 5085

Albany, New York 12205

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Our Mission

We worship God, serve faithfully, and reach out.



We are a Reconciling in Christ congregation.

Trusting in the extravagant grace of God that sets us free, we affirm the sacred worth and dignity of our siblings in Christ – of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, racial and ethnic identities, ages, abilities, and socio-economic statuses.

We confess the church's complicity in systems that harm God's people, including homophobia and transphobia, sexism, racism and white supremacy, and ableism.

Together, as a community of Jesus followers, rooted in grace, we commit ourselves to the work of racial equity and anti-racism and to confronting and dismantling all systems of injustice and oppression in all we do and say.

Church Staff

The Rev. Josh Evans

Pastor

pastorjosh@stjohnsalbany.org

Dan Foster

Director of Music

danfoster@stjohnsalbany.org

Maggie Anderson

Parish Secretary

parishsec@stjohnsalbany.org