

Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the baptizer's voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi's prophecy could as easily herald the coming Christ as forerunner of the Lord of hosts. Finally all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of Jesus and assist all people in capturing a vision of the "salvation of God."

# Second Sunday of Advent

# Sunday, December 8, 2024

St. John's Lutheran Church 1000 Helena Ave. Helena, Montana 59601 Please be aware that as we stream this service to a live audience you may appear on camera when you are worshiping with us. We welcome those who attend online and are part of our worshiping community! Please respond with the words in **bold print** and stand, as you are able, at the places marked with an \*

#### Prelude:

#### **Welcome and Announcements:**

#### (Silence is observed to center our hearts for worship.)

Psalm; Luke 1: 68-79: ..... Mackenzie Jones, Cantor

In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us. (Lk. 1:78)

<sup>68</sup> Blessed are you, Lord, the <sup>|</sup> God of Israel, you have come to your people and <sup>|</sup> set them free. <sup>69</sup> You have raised up for us a <sup>|</sup> mighty Savior, born of the house of your | servant David. <sup>70</sup> Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us <sup>|</sup> from our enemies, <sup>71</sup> from the hands of <sup>|</sup> all who hate us,  $^{72}$  to show mercy | to our forebears, and to remember your holy covenant. <sup>73</sup> This was the oath you swore to our <sup>|</sup> father Abraham:  $^{74}$  to set us free from the hands of our | enemies, free to worship you without fear, <sup>75</sup> holy and righteous before you, all the days of our life. <sup>76</sup> And you, child, shall be called the prophet of <sup>1</sup> the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to pre- pare the way, <sup>77</sup> to give God's people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins. <sup>78</sup> In the tender compassion <sup>1</sup> of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us, <sup>79</sup> to shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shad- | ow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

#### \*Confession and Forgiveness:

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon.

#### Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

#### (Silence is kept for reflection.)

God of mercy,

we confess that we have sinned. We trust earthly powers and human authority alone. We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.

God of might,

#### we confess that we have sinned. We have turned away from our neighbors. We have trusted false promises.

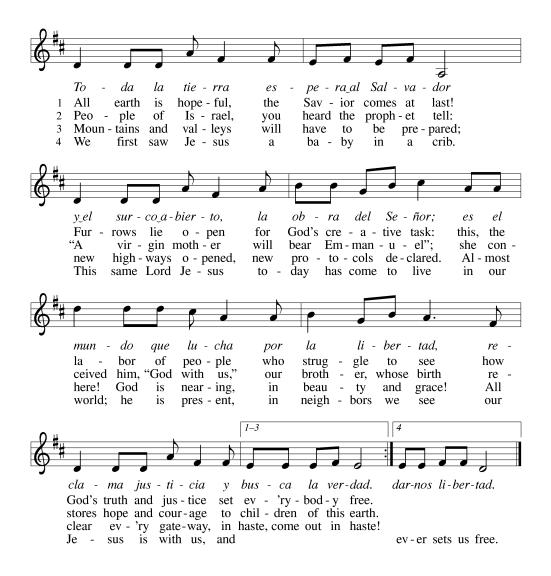
God in our midst,

#### we confess that we have sinned. We plead: come to us. Bring your mercy to birth in us.

A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of God through Christ Jesus, whose day draws near.

#### Amen.

\*Opening Hymn: ......ELW #266



#### \*Apostolic Greeting:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

#### And also with you.

#### \*Prayer of the Day:

Let us Pray. Stir up our hearts, Lord God,

to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

#### First Reading: Malachi 3:1-4

God announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means "my messenger") will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God's people, as silver and gold are refined.

<sup>1</sup>See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. <sup>2</sup> But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; <sup>3</sup> he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. <sup>4</sup> Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

The Word of the Lord.

#### Thanks be to God.

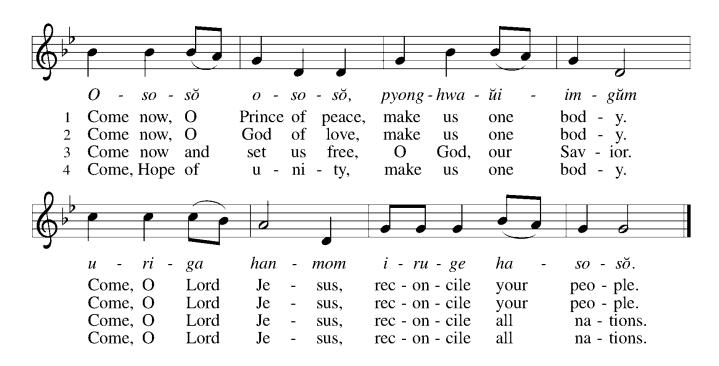
#### Second Reading: Philippians 1:3-11

The apostle Paul was the pastor of many new churches. He writes in this letter about his joy to be in partnership with the Christians of Philippi. Listen to how tender-hearted Paul, sometimes a stern preacher, is with his friends as he encourages them to grow in love and knowledge.

<sup>3</sup> I thank my God every time I remember you, <sup>4</sup> constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, <sup>5</sup> because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup> I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup> It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. <sup>8</sup> For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. <sup>9</sup> And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight <sup>10</sup> to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, <sup>11</sup> having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

The Word of the Lord.

#### Thanks be to God.



#### \*Gospel: Luke 3:1-6

John the Baptist is a herald of Jesus, whose way is prepared by "repentance for the forgiveness of sins." As we hear the careful record of human leaders, we sense the spectrum of political and religious authority that will be challenged by this coming Lord.

#### Response after the announcement: Glory to you, O Lord.

<sup>1</sup> In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, <sup>2</sup> during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup> He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, <sup>4</sup> as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight.

<sup>5</sup> Every valley shall be filled,

and every mountain and hill shall be made low,

and the crooked shall be made straight,

and the rough ways made smooth;

<sup>6</sup> and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

Response after the conclusion: Praise to you, O Christ.

Children's Message and Lighting of Advent Candle:	. Pastor Keith Weatherford
Second Sunday in Advent Prayer	Paula Blessinger
Praise to you, O God, who gives us courage to start again.	
You fasten righteousness around your waist	
and baptize with the Holy Spirit's fire.	
Bless us as we mirror your mighty fire in these simple flames,	
and teach us to mirror your justice in the paths we prepare.	
We ask that peace abound,	
until none hurt or destroy over all the earth.	

Amen.

2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,

embracing all things far and nigh:

in strength and beauty come and stay;

teach us your will and guide our way.

#### Refrain

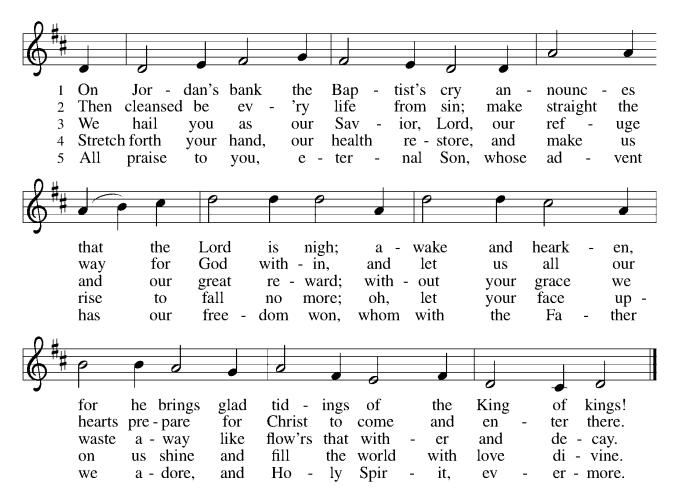
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

Worship arts materials for all ages are available in the back of the church for you to use and enjoy during worship. Children ages K-5th grade are invited to join us for Sunday School in our Faith Explorers Room downstairs. We will bring them up for communion and you can pick them up after the service downstairs.

Sermon ...... Pastor Keith Weatherford

(Silence for reflection follows the sermon.)

#### 



Text: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749; tr. composite

Music: PUER NOBIS, European tune, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

#### \*Prayers of Intercession:

As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.

\*Prayer Response: (Each portion of the prayers ends with these words.)

Lord, in your mercy,

#### receive our prayer.

#### \*Sharing of the Peace:

(...Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." (John 20:19))

The peace of Christ be with you always.

#### And also with you.

(The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace and may say "Peace be with you" or similar words.)

#### **Offering:**

(An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need and the communion table is set.)

Offertory Anthem by F. Allitsen Frederick Frey, Baritone Gretchen Mundinger, Piano		
<u>Offertory Response</u> : "Create In Me" ELW # 185		
Create in me a clean heart, O God,		
and renew a right spirit within me.		
Cast me not away from your presence,		
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.		
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,		
and uphold me with your free Spirit.		
Create in me a clean heart, O God,		
and renew a right spirit within me.		

#### \*Offering Prayer:

Let us pray. Creator God,

you made the whole world, even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us. We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine. Strengthen us with this food that we may live in expectation for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

#### Amen.

#### \*Great Thanksgiving:

The Lord be with you.

#### And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

#### We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

#### It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn: \*Sanctus: (Holy, Holy, Holy—sung to the tune of Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent)

Holy, holy, holy, holy God of power and God of might. Heaven and earth declare your glory hail hosanna Lord of light. Blessed be the coming Savior. Hail hosanna Lord most high.

#### \*Words of Institution:

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: Blessed are you for the birth of creation. Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light. Blessed are you for your promise to your people. Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams. Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

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.

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.

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

#### Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

#### **Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

#### Amen.

#### \*Lords Prayer:

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.

#### \*Invitation to Communion:

God feeds us with tender mercy. Come to the table.

(We celebrate open communion and all who are baptized are welcome to receive the forgiving and gracious presence of Christ in communion. Those who prefer not to commune are invited to come forward to receive a blessing. Gluten-free wafers and white grape juice are available.)

Lamb of God:		ELW #487
	verse 1	

What feast of love is offered here, what banquet come from heaven? What food of everlasting life, what gracious gift is given? This, this is Christ the king, the bread come down from heaven. Oh, taste and see and sing! How sweet the manna given!

Communion:	"Sonata in F Minor"	by Telemann
Lilly Olson, Trombone		

#### **Prayer After Communion:**

Let us Pray.

Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name.

#### Amen.

Farewell and Godspeed: To Dodie Walsh; the Conclusion of Call in the Ministry of Music

#### \*Blessing:

God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light, God, our hope for the journey, + bless and keep you now and forever,

#### Amen.



#### \*<u>Dismissal</u>:

Go forth and Grow in Grace, Walk by Faith, and Serve in Love

#### Thanks be to God.

#### Postlude:

Ministering in Worship	
Preaching and Presiding	Pastor Keith Weatherford
Choir Director	Connie Conley
Worship Musician	Gretchen Mundinger
Bell Choir Directors	Abby Nyhof, Renee Slocum, Christina Tielking
Technology	Brian Tetrault
Ushers	
Acolytes	Allison Tetrault, William Sloan Harris, Kate Lee, Maria Lee
Lector	Jeannie Kieckbusch
Communion Servers	Paul Gronbeck, Teresa Kinley, Linda Wollitz, Annette Jacobson
Altar Guild	Danyel Bauer, Makayla Bauer, Linda Wollitz, Karen Doig
Prayer Station	Lorrie Vennes

#### **Prayers**

#### In our prayers:

Linda McDonald, Susan Olson, Mike McDonald, Paula Blessinger, Diane Evans, Jeff Wahl, Tammy Tetrault, Susan Boettcher, Ken Downing, Rosita Moe, Bruce Gottwig, Bob Sorensen, Deb Berg, Meg Biggs and family, Richard Bomar, Jeff Shirley, Jeremy Stockstad, Tatiana Ceaicovschi, Randy Holmes, Kamila Ruth Baker, Vicki Alpiner, Brent Bushnell, Tom Andersen, Sally Indreland, Jana Clark, Dan Jacobson

#### For those in residential living centers, extended care or homebound:

Mary Marty, Rev. Wayne Olsen, Rosita Moe, Esther Fuehrer, Julie Wolff, Adeline Rasmussen, Susan DeBree, Jimmie McGee

For those who are deployed and getting ready to deploy:

Evan Ceaicovschi, Raffy Suchikul, Maggie Smiedala

### For those who have died and now rest in God's merciful care: All the Saints in Heaven

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# ANNOUNCEMENTS AND IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

Sunday, December 8:	9:30 am– Worship/Holy Communion 10:30 am– Fellowship 10:45 am– New Testament Bible Study
Monday, December 9:	10 am– Staff Meeting 6:00 pm-Celebration Ringers practice
Tuesday, December 10:	12 noon– Caring Friends 12 noon– New Testament Bible Study 5:15 pm-Hospitality 6:00 pm– 4H Club Meeting
Wednesday, December 11:	9 am-Quilting 5:15 pm-Bells of St. John's practice 6:30 pm-Midweek Connection and Community Life
Thursday, December 12:	12 noon– Book Club 2:00 pm– Touchmark Service 7:00 pm-Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal
Saturday. December 14:	1:30 pm– Christmas Pageant Rehearsal
Sunday, December 15:	9:30 am-Worship/Holy Communion and Christmas Pagaent 10:30 am– Fellowship 10:45 am– New Testament Bible Study
Monday, December 16:	10 am– Staff Meeting 6:00 pm-Celebration Ringers practice
Tuesday, December 17:	Noon– WELCA Noon-New Testament Bible Study 6:00pm– 4H Club Meeting
Wednesday December 18:	9:00am-Quilting 5:15 pm-Bells of St. John's Practice 6:30pm– Midweek Connection
Thursday December 19:	7 pm-Sanctuary Choir Practice
Saturday December 21:	6:30 pm Blue Christmas Service
Sunday December 22:	9:30 am– Worship/Holy Communion 10:30 am– Fellowship 10:45 am– New Testament Bible Study
Tuesday December 24:	6:30 pm-Christmas Eve Service

#### Mass of Brass:

It's time for a Mass of Brass! The South Hills Brass Quintet and the Continental Divide Tuba Society proudly present their annual joint Christmas concert, A Mass of Brass for Christmas. The concert will feature a variety of music from traditional carols and classical works to modern Christmas favorites. This free concert will take place on Sunday, December 15th, at 3:00 pm at the Covenant United Methodist Church. We hope to see you there!

#### Poinsettias for Christmas:

We will once again have poinsettias for sale to honor a loved one(s). The flowers will decorate the sanctuary for our Christmas Eve service. Orders are due Sunday, December 15th. Order forms are available in the sanctuary or you can contact the church office. Plants are \$10.

#### Servers Needed:

It is a busy month at SJLC and each week we need help with ushering, reading, acolyting, and serving communion. Please sign up in the narthex or contact the church office if you are available to help.

#### Social Ministry for December:

Social Ministry is hosting a Giving Tree to support Florence Crittenton, ELCA Good Gifts, and HMS Bob's Pantry Winter Break Snacks. Please take a gift tag off the tree for Florence Crittenton and return your gift card by Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, so that the families can purchase their own family gifts. Thank you for supporting families near and far; any cash donations will go towards snacks and future projects for Bob's Pantry.

Give something unexpected this Christmas! In Christ, we receive the gift of God's love. Let us share God's love with others. **ELCA GOOD GIFTS** are a fun, meaningful way to honor friends and family with Christmas gifts that go on to make a difference in the world. Choose from more than 50 gift-giving options (goats, anyone?), each with the ability to make real, lasting change in the life of someone in need. Give in honor of someone special and you can print, mail or email a card to let them know. **goodgifts.elca.org** 

#### HMS Bob's Pantry Christmas Snack Bags:

Every year right before Christmas break, the HMS PTSO and school counselors put together 50 snack bags with granola bars, applesauce, soups, macaroni & cheese cups, etc. for kids who need extra food over the long break. Between school budget cuts and lack of incoming funds for the HMS PTSO, St. John's will be providing the snack bags this year. Thrivent has already helped with the purchase of 50 large gift bags, some food, and games plus we have two action grants to help supplement the purchase of food. We are asking for additional kid friendly, easy to cook food items. Please bring your food donations to church and place them under the Giving Tree. We will have a packing party on Sunday, December 15th following the Christmas Pageant and Worship service at 10:30 am in the Fellowship Hall and will deliver the bags to the school the following week.

#### Nominations are due for Bold Women's Day:

Voting will be in January 2025. Any woman can nominate another woman at St. John's who is acting boldly on her faith in Jesus. Some are bold in their prayers, others in service, teaching, advocacy or hospitality and caring. Please write a short paragraph that describes the ways the nominee is boldly living her faith. Nominations need to be in by December 15 to Mary Ruedisili at nruedisili@yahoo.com or Mait Board at mightb210@gmail.com.

#### Book Club:

The Book Club will meet on Thursday, December 12 at 12:00 noon in the Guild Room. The book for December is "Small Things Like These" by Claire Keegan. The story follows Bill Furlong, a coal seller in a small town of Dublin in 1985. While delivering coal to the local convent, he begins to suspect the girls who attend their school are, in fact, unpaid laborer's in their laundry. What will Bill do with this knowledge?

#### Christmas Pageant—Sunday, December 15th at 9:30 am

Youth of all ages at SJLC will present the annual Christmas pageant on Sunday, December 17th during our 9:30 am worship. The dress rehearsal will be Saturday, December 14th at 1:30 pm. A "cast party" for everyone will follow worship down in the Fellowship Hall. We are asking families to bring a treat to share with the congregation. To also help celebrate the day, we will pack up the 50 HMS Bob's Pantry Christmas Snack Bags and redecorate the Christmas sanctuary tree for Christmas Eve worship.

#### Blue Christmas Evening Prayer Service—Saturday, December 21st 6:30pm

While Advent is a season of hope and Christmas is a season of joy, not everyone feels hopeful or like celebrating. For anyone experiencing loneliness, sadness and loss, the Christmas season can be difficult. But you are not alone, even those who are not struggling with losses may feel overwhelmed by the preparation and expectations of the Christmas season. Knowing we have all experienced loss. We come together seeking God's healing and space to name our woundedness. please join us in a simple Evening Prayer Service of song, readings and a reflection of God's hope for us and presence with us in feeling what we feel. All are welcome.

#### Christmas Eve Worship Tuesday, December 24th 6:30pm

Festive Music, Holy Communion, and Candlelight

#### St Peter's Cathedral Taize Service, December 8th, and December 15th at 4 pm

This is a 30 minute ecumenical service with moments of silent prayer, simple songs and brief Scripture reading. A time of quiet and reflection during the Christmas season.

#### Flute Concert at Covenant United Methodist Church- December 15th, at 7 pm

A free family friendly hour of holiday music at 2330 E Broadway

#### Festival of Lessons and Carols, December 18th, at 7pm

St. Peter's Cathedral presents this Advent service that is patterned after the King's College celebration at Cambridge, England, the most widely observed Advent service in the world. Free and open to all, and a reception follows.

## Bulletin deadline Wednesday at Noon and January 2025 Herald Deadline, Thursday December 26, 2024

**New Option for online giving.** Please use the code here for a mobile device online giving. Questions on how this works? Please contact the church office.

