



Standard Worship Times

- Saturdays 5:30 p.m. — Abbreviated service
Sundays 8:00 a.m. — Communion at the rail
Sundays 10:30 a.m. — Abbreviated service

Livestreaming of the 8:00 a.m. service continues to be available at stjohnsportage.com/live.

Standard Worship Times may change due to Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. Please see Weekly Events for changes.

Weekly Events

Sunday (24)

- 9:00 a.m. Advent 4 Service of Word and Sacrament
10:15 a.m. Coffee, Fellowship, and Christian Education Hour, Church CLC
10:30 a.m. Praise Band Practice, Church Sanctuary
5:30 p.m. Festival of Scripture and Carols
9:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Communion Candlelight

Monday (25)

- Merry Christmas!
All ministries Offices Closed
9:00 a.m. Christmas Day Service of Word and Sacrament

Tuesday (26)

- All ministries offices closed
6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study, Portage Airport
9:15 a.m. Tuesday Morning Bible Study, Church CLC

Wednesday (27)

- 9:00 a.m. Walkie Talkies, meet at St. John's
12:00 p.m. Weekly Announcements Deadline, Email: churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com
5:00 p.m. Handbells, Church Balcony

Thursday (28)

- 8:00 a.m. Esther Bible Study, Church CLC
9:00 a.m. Strong Bodies, Church Narthex

Friday (29)

Church office closed

Sunday (31)

- 9:00 a.m. Coffee, Fellowship, and Christian Education Hour, Church CLC
9:15 a.m. Praise Band Practice, Church Sanctuary
11:30 a.m. Late Sunday Morning Bible Study, Church APR

Monday (1/1/2024) Happy New Year!

All ministries offices closed

Tuesday (02)

- All ministries offices closed
6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study, Portage Airport
9:15 a.m. Tuesday Morning Bible Study, Church CLC

Calendar events are subject to change. For the most up-to-date calendar information, please visit our website, http://www.stjohnsportage.com/st-johns-calendar. To schedule your group activity, please contact the church office at 608-742-9000 or email churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com.

As God serves us today in Word and Sacrament, may we rejoice in His gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation.

- 1) Please complete either a Guest (blue) or Member (white) card found in the hymnal rack of the pews. You may place this card in the offering plate located in the Narthex.
2) To parents of small children, we love the sound of children in worship. Thank you for bringing your child to worship; they belong here! If your child is actively crying, we have a cry room with service audio near the restrooms.
3) Regarding the Lord's Supper today: If you are not a confirmed member of St. John's congregation or a congregation of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, please speak to the pastor before communing. Pastor is readily available in the narthex before worship for this conversation. For those with medical need, the center section of the individual cup trays is filled with cups of grape juice (darker color). For those who have a gluten intolerance, gluten-free wafers are available. Share your need as you come forward to the altar.
4) Children are invited to come forward to the altar while the Lord's Supper is distributed; encourage them to bow their heads and fold their hands. While there, they will receive a Baptismal blessing from the Pastor.
5) We ask that if you have a mobile device, please silence it during the worship service.
6) Our elders and ushers are here to help with any of your worship needs today.

Thanks for worshipping with us!

Sermon Reflections

Three things from today's sermon I want to remember:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_



Joy  
to the world,  
the LORD has come!

### Please Pray

*Please notify the church office when one of our church family members is in the hospital, so that a pastoral visit may be made or arranged.*

#### Thanksgiving

(birth, birthdays, baptisms, weddings, anniversaries, recovery):

Baptism of *Ethan Brian Smith*

#### Medical

Paul Belton (father of *Michael Belton*)

Ned Seymour (father of *Kathleen Bernander*)

Kevin Smith (friend of *Linda Vista*)

Dorothy Neitzel

#### Long-term Illness/Treatment:

*Stacie Wheeler, Tom Waddell, Ellowyn Kershaw,*

*Lani Kohrt* (daughter-in-law of *Don and Carol Kohrt*)

*Lisa Priske* (daughter of *Betty Mootz*)

#### Mourning:

The family of *Lorraine Steinhorst* (mother of *Gary Steinhorst*)

#### **How Do I Get Someone on the Prayer List?**

If you, or someone you know, would like to have a name added to the prayer list, please contact the church office. Prayer requests for Thanksgiving, Medical, and Mourning will remain on the list for two weeks. Prayer requests for Long-term Illness/Treatment will remain for one month unless the church office is notified with an update on the individual. Please be sure that you have the permission of the individual before contacting the church office to add them to the public prayer list.



## Christmas Schedule

### **Christmas Eve and Christmas Day**

#### **Saturday, December 23**

5:30 p.m. Advent 4 Service of Word and Sacrament

#### **Sunday, December 24**

9:00 a.m. Advent 4 Service of Word and Sacrament

5:30 p.m. Festival of Scripture and Carols

9:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Communion and Candlelight

#### **Monday, December 25**

9:00 a.m. Christmas Day Service of Word and Sacrament

## Christmas FAQ

### **QUESTION: What is The Eve of the Nativity of our Lord?**

**ANSWER:** Tonight we begin the season of Christmas. On this night, Christians all over the world are lighting candles, singing hymns and joining together to worship the one true God who made this night so special.

### **QUESTION: What makes this night different from all other nights?**

**ANSWER:** Tonight is the big night! All through the season of Advent, the Church has been preparing for the birth of Jesus. Tonight we celebrate and remember His arrival! This is the night that our God became a man, born of the Virgin Mary, to save all people from their sins. What a blessed and wonderful night!

Before or after the service, explore the decorations of the church. Be reverent in God's holy places. Notice all the lights and candles that fill the sanctuary. Remember that Jesus is the Light of the World. He overcame the darkness of sin and saved all those who believe.

### **QUESTION: What is The Nativity of our Lord?**

**ANSWER:** The Nativity of our Lord is the traditional way of saying Christmas Day. December 25 is one of the most important days in the Church Year. This is the day that we celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus!

### **QUESTION: Why do we do the things we do at Christmas?**

**ANSWER:** Many of the things that we do at Christmas have their beginnings with the Romans. Early Christians soon saw some of these things as outward reminders of Christmas and began to use them in their own celebrations. For example, when we give and receive presents, we can remember the greatest gift that has ever been given, our Lord Jesus! After all, today we celebrate Jesus' birthday, and He is the real reason for the season!

What a great way to spend Christmas! Thanks be to God that you have joined us to hear the wonderful Good News of Jesus today! When you go home, be sure to remember that Jesus is the best present we could ever have. He gave up His life so that we might have eternal life. What a great message to share!



# Thank you

FOR YOUR ALTAR GUILD CONTRIBUTIONS  
TO OUR BEAUTIFUL POINSETTIAS.

YOUR GIFT IS APPRECIATED.



Given By	In Memory of
Eugene & Carol Pribnow	Roland & Dorothy Seering and LaVerna Pribnow
Mr. & Mrs. Alex Swanson	Robert Weiss, Mr. & Mrs. Rudie Maass, and Mr. & Mrs. Fritz Swanson
Alexis, Andrew, Jenny, and Neil Krueger	Marie Krueger
Family of Ted Mootz	Tina Gaffney, Rose Mootz, Helen Thompson, Wilfred Saeger
Henry & Betty Mootz	Deceased members of Priske and Mootz family
Lora Foster	Ronald, Mary, Ann, David, Roland Jr. Foster and Kristine Shier
Bill & Irma Brockley	George Koepp, Ron Eddy, Idella Anacker, and Lovice Klemm
Polly Koepp	George Koepp
Your Loving Family	George & Amy Horton, Karen Herwig, and Kelly Herwig
Dale & Bonnie Horton	Joe & Arlene Horton, Clark & Wonda Bell, and Barbra Bell
Bill & Judy Haase	John & Sue Carlin, and Bob Kleist
Kathy Gerstenkorn	Russ Gerstenkorn, Peter O. Haakenson, baby Miles Haakenson
Carolyn Koepp	Donald Koepp and George Koepp
John & Sue Wilcox and Family	Our daughter, Amber Ann, Our Parents, Robert & Alice Wilcox and John & Alice Kastner
Sherry Oeftger	Ed & Lorraine Oeftger, Wallace Oeftger, Walter Monthey, and James & Gladys Hon
Tom & Cindy Luedeman and Family	Donal & Elaine Schumann
His Wife, Children, and Grandchildren	Jeff Huston
Mike & Bonnie Mulhern	Lester Joyce Paske, Stan & Marjorie Mulhern, Kathy Thompson, Cecelia Schimmel, Beverly Shimstine
Jodi Steel & Family	Lucy & George Krueger, Orvial & Marian Maass
Howard Dehn Family	John & Doris Mountford (parents), Edward & Josephine Dehn (parents), and Herb Dehn (brother)
June Radke	John Radke
The Weideman Family	Our dear son, Cody; Don's brothers, Alfred and Dennis; Brother-in-law, Tim; Our dear friend, Alice Atkinson, celebrating her 1st Christmas in heaven.
Their Children, Dale and Dave Roisum, and Deb Thompson	Robert & Audrey Roisum
Deb Raimer and Sons	Marv & Darlene Raimer, and Evelyn Praml
Virginia Miller	Russ Miller and Cheryl Widerich
Sonia Zook	Mom & Dad, Bud Zook, and Dan Zook

## Crusader Cards

**Crusader Cards are here!** Watch for St. John's Lutheran School students selling Crusader Cards or pick one up in the church office.

Price: \$15.00

### Portage:

- Red Apple Restaurant
- Canape Sandwiches
- Edgewater Green House
- Portage Country Club
- The Ball Room
- Craig's Popcorn Corner
- J&J Fireball Lanes
- Dairy Queen
- Dino's
- Pizza Ranch
- La Tolteca

### Westfield:

- It's Poppin, Westfield
- Thal Acres Golf
- Tiffany's Buds and Beans
- Amish Market

### Pardeeville:

- Johnny B's Rolling Smoke
- The Crooked Branch Coffeehouse

### Montello:

- Oyster Cracker

## Weekly Offerings

**December 17 (includes Advent midweek attendance)**

In-person Attendance: 483

Unrestricted Unified Received: \$12,615.41

Restricted Contributions Received: \$734.59

TOTAL: \$13,350.00

**Weekly Unrestricted Unified Needed: \$12,885.00**

YTD Unrestricted Unified Giving: \$313,694.35

**YTD Budgeted Unrestricted Unified Need: \$322,125.00**  
(week 25)

## Life Thoughts

**December 24 – Advent IV/Christmas Eve** – Almighty God has profound interest and investment in childbearing and childrearing (2 Samuel 7:12; Luke 1:31). He has made this relationship and vocation central to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Every mother and father, every son or daughter embodies the love of the Lord for humankind. While abortion attempts to conceal the realities, our sanctity-of-life advocacy gets to reveal this delightful mystery (Romans 16:25).

## Stewardship Thoughts

**John 1:12** – “**But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.**” What a joy to be called the children of God! We have a Father who cares for us and loves us. Therefore, we have no need to fear, for perfect love casts out fear. And with our fear set aside, we are free to serve the Christ who has become flesh and made His dwelling among us.

## LCMS Memory Verse Challenge

*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.*

Galatians 4:4-5

## Daily Lectionary

This week's readings comes from the Daily Lectionary found in the Lutheran Service Book page 299.

### Sunday,

Is. 44:21—45:13,  
20–25 &  
Rev. 12:1–17

### Monday,

Is. 49:1–18 &  
Matt. 1:1–17

### Tuesday,

Is. 49:22–26;  
50:4—51:8, 12–16  
&

Matt. 1:18–25

### Wednesday,

Is. 51:17—52:12 &  
Matt. 2:1–12

### Thursday,

Is. 52:13—54:10 &  
Matt. 2:13–23

### Friday,

Is. 55:1–13 &  
Luke 1:1–25

### Saturday,

Is. 58:1—59:3,  
14–21 &  
Luke 1:26–38

## Coffee Hour

**Adopt a Sunday! It's a fun and easy way to get to know your church family.** We encourage families and groups to “Adopt a Sunday” by hosting coffee hour on Sunday mornings. Hosting coffee hour involves providing a simple snack, making coffee, and enjoying fellowship time with our church families. Sign up in the Christian Life Center or email [churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com](mailto:churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com)

**December 24:**

Open

**December 31:**

Open

## Contact us: 608-742-9000

### Church:

option 4

Office Hours:

M—Th 8:00a–3:30p

[churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com](mailto:churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com)

Rev. Greg Hovland,

Senior Pastor

(c) 608-571-3360

[ghovland@stjohnsportage.com](mailto:ghovland@stjohnsportage.com)

### Child Development Center:

option 2

Office Hours:

M—F 7:00a–5:00p

[cdcoffice@stjohnsportage.com](mailto:cdcoffice@stjohnsportage.com)

Debra Drew,

Director

[ddrew@stjohnsportage.com](mailto:ddrew@stjohnsportage.com)

### School:

option 3

Office Hours:

M—F 7:30a–3:15p

[schooloffice@stjohnsportage.com](mailto:schooloffice@stjohnsportage.com)

Jim Krupski,

Principal

[jkrupski@stjohnsportage.com](mailto:jkrupski@stjohnsportage.com)

### St. John's Elder Directory:

Bob Fairfield 296-4012, Chairman

Roger Baerwolf 617-6088

Ken Chvojicek 697-2102

Bill Hageman 279-0272

David Hall 493-2125

Patrick Kirchenwitz 575-3959

Ron Mueller 369-1845

Pete Smith 697-3807

Gene Thompson 697-4786

Mark Witt 697-0224

To schedule your group activity or add a loved one to the prayer list, please contact the church office at 608-742-9000 option 4 or email [churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com](mailto:churchoffice@stjohnsportage.com).