

## Sermon followed by Service

January 2, 2022

Titus 3:4-7

I don't know about you, but my timing is all off. I'm not talking about my dance timing - never had it, never will. I'm not talking about my stock market timing - never had it, never will. I'm talking more about my timing in here and in here [my heart and mind]. I can't blame it on COVID, but after one year, 9 months, how many weeks of COVID, I feel like my timing - in here and in here [my heart and my mind] - is all off. I seem to be spinning in a cycle of false starts and slow starts and worse starts.

First, the false starts. I remember back in late spring 2020 - eight to ten weeks after COVID started - I asked Dr. Tim if we could be starting up, back to normal, in early fall 2020. False start. Then, late fall 2020, our *Welcome Home* worship series, another false start. I don't remember how many service folders we printed for that Sunday; we didn't use them all, not by a long shot. Before then, since then, I don't know how many more starts I planned, thinking we'd be ready for a full start, only to trip and slip into another false start.

That's not the only way my timing is off. Sometimes I find myself wearing my mask when no one else is here in the whole building. And other times I find myself talking with someone, face to mask, my face to their mask, talking with someone who is taking care of their frail, aging parent, and they are being so careful not to get mom or dad sick. I don't need to judge them fearful - I find so many more people being careful for others than fearful for self. Other times I find myself talking with someone, face to mask, my face to their mask, talking with someone whose heart is heavy - maybe even a bit prickly - because every week they're getting an earful, a hurting-heartful, from a loved one working in a hospital, a loved one feeling crushed by all the COVID cases they're caring for. Nobody has gotten in my face yet, but I hear about the looks. And I have to admit - another false start on my part.

It's not just false starts that show my timing is off. I have the slow starts. The slow starts checking in on that dear family with the health issues, the slow starts checking in on that dear family who seems to be able to go and do whatever, wherever, except for anything at church. Add to that, slow starts in helping you check in on those families who are so dear to our Jesus. And it's not just me with the slow starts, is it? Not just me with the slow starts in doing what God has given

us to do. Why the slow starts? Oh, we have our reasons, don't we? We're being careful - careful not to share COVID, careful not to judge. Or we're so tired and busy - tired and busy, why? Would God say I have good reasons? Or would God say I have lousy excuses? How about you? What would God say is behind your slow starts?

False starts, slow starts. There's something worse, isn't there? And that's the no starts. Maybe we feel jerked around; maybe we feel judged; maybe we feel forgotten - and we're not moving, we're not budging, we're just going to plant ourselves until who knows what. Or maybe we just feel stuck. Planted in the "no start" position. Stuck in the "no start" position. Content in the "no start" position. It can feel good, like hypothermia can feel good before slipping away. Being content in the "no start" position can be a hypothermia of the soul, that slips into a coma of the soul, that slips into death of the soul.

*Where do you see false starts, slow starts and no starts in your life?*

I don't know about you, but with all my false starts, slow starts, and no starts, I need a new start. A new start bigger and better than a new calendar, a new year. A new start into a life with no false starts, slow starts, or no starts. A new start into a life with no COVID or cancer. A new start into a life with no hurt or heartache. A new start into a life where we never have to bite our tongue or kick our self or wish we could start all over. A new start into a life of perfect timing where every step we take is the right step at the right time, where every move we make is the right move at the right time. Today our Lord gives us that new start. Sounds good, doesn't it?

*When do we get that new life?*

So how? How does our Lord give us that new start? In baptism. In the water and Word of baptism, God works in us a rebirth and renewal. In the water and Word of baptism, the Holy Spirit makes us new. New and alive as the children of God. New and alive, connected with Jesus inside us. New and alive, with the Holy Spirit powering us. New and alive, with the Father himself making his home with us!

New and alive as the children of God, we aren't children of false starts, slows starts, and no starts; we may have them, but we are children alive and new with God, alive with a new life in us and a new life ahead of us. New and alive as the

children of God, we aren't children of COVID and cancer; we may get them, but we are children of God with healing in us and healing ahead of us. New and alive as the children of God, we aren't children doomed to a life of hurt and heartache; our hearts may hurt and ache, but we are children with God living a life of healing and hope with heaven ahead of us. New and alive as the children of God, we aren't children who will be forever biting our tongues and forever kicking our backsides; we still step in it now and then, but we are children of God, alive with the Spirit working God's love in us, alive with the Spirit working God's love through us.

We might think, I'm not seeing that. First, let me tell you what God sees. He sees Jesus. No false starts in his life; no slow starts in his life; no "no starts" in his life. From heaven to earth, when the time was right, when God said: "Let's go; let's do this," from heaven to earth, Jesus did what God gave him to do, and lived the life God gave him to live. Baptized with water and the Spirit, Jesus didn't slow start or no start. He took on the life God had for him; he took on the battles God had for him. Baptism didn't make life easy for Jesus; in fact, Jesus was baptized for battle. But in baptism God set Jesus up to fight and to win the battles that were ahead of him. Baptized with water and the Spirit, Jesus wasn't on his own, but Jesus had new power to live the life God had for him. Living as a baptized child of God, Jesus didn't let the evil of the world didn't trip him, trap him, stop him; living as a baptized child of God, Jesus didn't let the blessings of the world didn't trip him, trap him, distract him. Not even the curse of the cross with your sin and my sin could stop him. You remember Jesus on the cross - "it is finished." And you remember Jesus on Easter - alive and well - no false starts, no slow starts, no "no starts." From heaven to earth and back to heaven again, the Father sees Jesus starting and finishing what he came to do.

Now, in baptism, God sees you. He sees your false starts, slow starts and no starts washed away - forgiven. He sees you covered over with the perfect life of Jesus. He sees you spotless, blameless, radiant, right for life with God himself.

When is that good for? Not just the moment of our baptism, but for life. When false starts have you feeling foolish, guilty, remember your baptism. When slow starts have you feeling sluggish and slow, remember your baptism. When "no starts" have you feeling stuck and content in your stuckedness, remember your baptism. Washed by water and the Word, you are made new and alive, washed and forgiven for life with God.

What does that mean for us? Some day, when the timing is right, we'll get to fit into the new life God has for us in heaven. It will be so good to live that new life with you in heaven. But first, we get to fit into the timing and new life God has for us here - a life of new starts, new starts today, new starts every day. It's good to start the new year with you; it's good to start a new life with you. In this new year, may God bless you with his new start timing! Amen.

*How will you live God's life of new starts this year?*

*How will you live God's life of new starts today?*

**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
*A Family Connecting in Christ*



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# WELCOME TO ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

## Masked

With the renewed mask mandate across Illinois, we now offer masked worship - Saturdays at 5 and Sundays at 9. If you have questions, please ask!

## To Our Guests

- We pray that you receive a warm welcome and are blessed by the message of God's Word in our lessons and hymns. If you have questions, please ask!
- Our service is designed to focus us on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit does that by exposing our need for Christ and by showing us the wonders of God's grace in Christ – forgiveness and peace, help, and hope for life in this world, and life forever with God in heaven.
- Please join us after Sunday service for fellowship and Family Bible Hour.

## Our Communion Practice

We practice close communion, the Biblical and ancient practice of the church. We invite our congregation members and visitors from sister WELS or ELS congregations to join us, but ask Christians from other denominations to kindly respect our practice. Further explanation is in the pew racks or from our pastor.

## We Care about Your Children

We love to have children with us in worship.

- Children's worship bulletins and "church bags" (with paper, colors, and Bible story books) are available in the Narthex Gathering Area.
- If your children are crying loudly, our nursery, Gathering Area (back of church), and downstairs Fellowship Hall are audio-equipped for you and your young children. When your children are ready, come back so we can worship together.

## We Care about Your Special Needs

- **Large Print** Service Folders are available from an usher.
- **Hearing Assistance** for those with hearing aids is provided through our Hearing Loop or personal hearing devices available at the "sound table."
- A **wheelchair lift** is available for your assistance; please ask an usher.



## Our Facilities

Restrooms are in our Fellowship Hall, downstairs and to the right of the kitchen.

## Our Ministry

St. John offers an excellent preschool-8th grade school program. We are members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) - [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net).

## GATHERING RITE ON HOLY BAPTISM

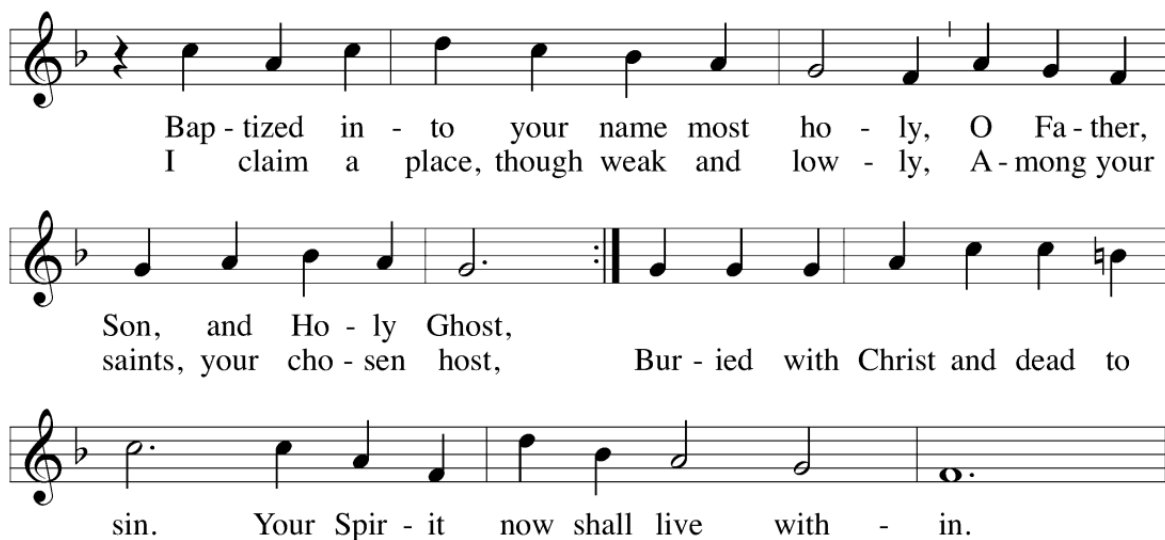
**IN OUR WORLD TODAY ...** we have been enduring false starts and slow starts to the point that we might feel stuck in a no-start rut.

**IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ...**we get to power up with the new start our Lord works in Baptism - every day, we get to live a new life with the power and promise of our Lord!

### INVOCATION

**P:** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C:** Amen.



Bap - tized in - to your name most ho - ly, O Fa - ther,  
I claim a place, though weak and low - ly, A - mong your  
Son, and Ho - ly Ghost,  
saints, your cho - sen host, Bur - ied with Christ and dead to  
sin. Your Spir - it now shall live with - in.

**P:** I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

**C:** **Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.** (*John 3:5,6*)

**P:** Surely we were sinful at birth, sinful from the time our mothers conceived us. (*Psalm 51:5*)

**C:** **But we were washed, we were sanctified, we were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.** (*1 Corinthians 6:11*)



My lov - ing Fa - ther, there you took me To be hence-  
My faith - ful Sav - ior, there you let me The fruit of



forth your child and heir.  
all your sor - rows share. O Ho - ly Spir - it, com - fort



me When threat - 'ning clouds a - round I see.

P: As baptized children of God, we confess our sins.

C: **Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.**



My faith - ful God, you fail me nev - er; Your pro - mise  
Oh, cast me not a - way for - ev - er If words and



sure - ly will en - dure.  
deeds be - come im - pure. Have mer - cy when I come de -



filed; For - give, lift up, re - store your child.



P: Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless (Ephesians 5:25-27). Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son (+) and of the Holy Spirit.

C: *(spoken)* Amen.



All that I am and love most dear - ly— Re - ceive it  
Let me con - fess my faith sin - cere - ly, And help me



all, O Lord, from me.  
your own child to be! Let noth - ing that I am or



own Serve an - y will but yours a - lone.

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Eternal Son of God, you are called Jesus, a name that proclaims you to be the Savior of all people. Give us strength in the new year to live each day to the honor of your name; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### FIRST READING

**Titus 3:4-7**

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN**

*"All Who Believe and Are Baptized"*

**Hymn 692**

All who believe and are baptized shall see the Lord's salvation;  
baptized into the death of Christ, they are a new creation;  
through Christ's redemption they shall stand  
among the glorious, heav'nly band of ev'ry tribe and nation.

With one accord, O God, we pray: grant us your Holy Spirit;  
help us in our infirmity through Jesus' blood and merit;  
Grant us to grow in grace each day  
that by this sacrament we may eternal life inherit.

**SECOND READING**

**Romans 6:4-13**

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin - because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN**

*“Renew Me, O Eternal Light”*

**Hymn 689**

Renew me, O eternal Light, and let my heart and soul be bright,  
illuminated with the light of grace that issues from your holy face.

Destroy in me the lust of sin, from all impureness make me clean.  
O grant me pow’r and strength, my God,  
to strive against my flesh and blood.

Create in me a new heart, Lord, that gladly I obey your Word.  
O let your will be my desire and with new life my soul inspire.

Grant I only you may love and seek those things which are above  
till I behold you face to face, O Light eternal, through your grace.

**GOSPEL**

**Luke 3:15-17, 21-22**

The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” ...

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

HYMN OF THE DAY

*"To Jordan's River Came Our Lord"*

Hymn 377

To Jordan's river came our Lord, The Christ, whom heav'nly hosts adored,  
The God from God, the Light from Light,  
The Lord of glory, pow'r, and might.

The Savior came to be baptized— The Son of God in flesh disguised—  
To stand beneath the Father's will And all His promises fulfill.

As Jesus in the Jordan stood And John baptized the Lamb of God,  
The Holy Spirit, heav'nly dove, Descended on Him from above.

Then from God's throne with thund'rous sound  
Came God's own voice with words profound:  
"This is My Son," was his decree, "The one I love, who pleases Me."

The Father's word, the Spirit's flight Anointed Christ in glorious sight  
As God's own choice, from Adam's fall To save the world and free us all.

Now rise, faint hearts: be resolute! This man is Christ, our substitute!  
He was baptized in Jordan's stream, Proclaimed Redeemer, Lord supreme.

SERMON

CONFESSION OF FAITH

NICENE CREED

**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 fully 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 in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We believe in one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

#### **PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

**P:** May this be a time, O Lord, for confession and repentance. Forgive us for the apathy that harms our faith and hinders our works. Forgive us for boasting of our past achievements and for blaming others for our present problems. Rid us of indifference to public worship and Bible study. Destroy the distrust that plagues us, and shatter every thought and word that harms the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

**C:** **Create in us pure hearts, O God, and renew steadfast spirits within us.**

**P:** Let this be a time, O Lord, when you renew us again by Word and sacrament, when you reform our hearts and minds, and when you restore to us the joy of fellowship and service. Grant to us in this age and in this place the courage, steadfastness, and dedication of those who have gone before us.

**C:** **May the Lord our God be with us as he was with our fathers; may he never leave us nor forsake us.**

**P:** Let this be a time, O Lord, when we recommit and reconsecrate ourselves to the ministry of the gospel. Let us find joy in our unity, zeal for our work, and success in our labor.

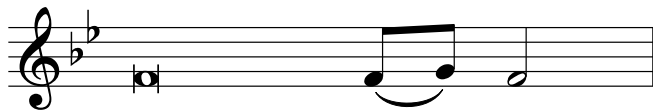
**C:** **May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us, that his ways may be known on earth, his salvation among all nations. Amen.**

## THE SACRAMENT

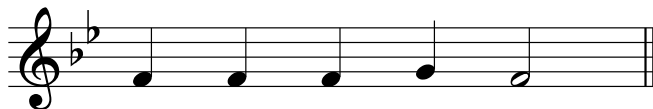
(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

(Individually packaged wafers are gluten-free.)

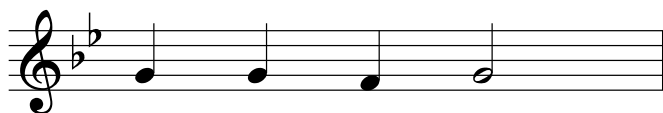
*The following responses may be spoken or sung.*



The Lord be with you.



**And also with you.**



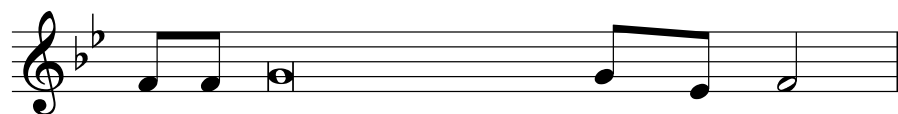
Lift up your hearts.



**We lift them up to the Lord.**



Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



**It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord who promised that wherever two or three come together in his name, there he is with them to shepherd his flock until he comes again in glory.

Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Sanctus

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er, God of  
might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na  
in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the  
name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est,  
ho - san - na in the high - est!

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Lord God, you are worthy to receive thanks and praise from all people. You created the world and all who live in it, and in your mercy you saved us. We give thanks to you for the grace of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Though in very nature God, he took the nature of a servant and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. He offered himself as a sacrifice for sin and redeemed us from its curse and penalty. He rescued us from the terrors of death and restored eternal life with you. He conquered our enemies and gained for us the kingdom of grace and glory.

Bless us as we receive your Son's body and blood, and lead us to remember his suffering, death, and resurrection. Forgive our sins and fill us with the hope of new life in heaven. Hear our praise and receive our thanks as we worship you— the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

### LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

### WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my + body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my + blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**Amen.**

### JESUS, LAMB OF GOD

### Agnus Dei

The cantor/choir sings the first phrase.

Je - sus, Lamb of God; you take a - way the  
sin of the world, have mer - cy on us.



Je - sus, Lamb of God; you take a - way the  
 sin of the world, have mer-cy on us.  
 Je - sus, Lamb of God; you take a - way the  
 sin of the world: grant us your peace.

**DISTRIBUTION**

**PRAYER**

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
**his mercy endures forever.**

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,  
**we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet you have given us in this Sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love.

By your Spirit, help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

**BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

**Amen.**

## CLOSING HYMN

## *"With the Lord Begin Your Task"*

Hymn 776

With the Lord begin your task; Jesus will direct it.  
For his aid and counsel ask; Jesus will perfect it.  
Ev'ry morn with Jesus rise, And, when day is ended,  
In his name then close your eyes; Be to him commended.

Let each day begin with prayer, Praise and adoration.  
On the Lord cast ev'ry care; He is your salvation.  
Morning, evening, and at night Jesus will be near you,  
Save you from the tempter's might, With his presence cheer you.

With your Savior at your side Foes need not alarm you;  
In his promises confide And no ill can harm you.  
All your trust and hope repose In the mighty Master,  
Who in wisdom truly knows How to stem disaster.

If your task is thus begun With the Savior's blessing  
Safely then your course will run, Naught your soul distressing.  
Good will follow ev'rywhere While you here must wander;  
You at last the joy will share In the mansions yonder.

## OFFERING

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### Acknowledgments

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## **125 Years of Sharing God's Grace in Libertyville** **St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church - 1897-2022**

125 years in the heart of Lake County  
70 years on the corner of West Park Avenue and Garfield  
49 years of St. John Lutheran School

### **Celebrating the Past and the Heart God has for Us Today!**

#### **St. John Libertyville Sunday - January 23, 2022**

We celebrate our past and look forward with a special morning of worship, remembering, and celebrating with a Thanksgiving meal. (Be ready to RSVP!)

How can you help? Wouldn't it be great to have ...

- a delicious Thanksgiving Meal! (Contact Sheryl Linnemann)
- some fun (helping members old and new to get to know each other)? (Contact Sheryl L.)
- *Show and Tell* displays (from our archives?) showing how God has blessed us! (Contact Nancy Toberman)

#### **Christian Life Resources Sunday - February 20, 2022**

With a heart for the life God gives us, we were a primary partner in establishing this growing ministry. Let's see how we can continue to make a difference in saving lives in this broken world. (Guest preacher, Rev. Jeff Samelson, from Christian Life Resources)

How can you help? Wouldn't it be great to have ...

- Brunch! (Contact Sheryl Linnemann)
- *Show and Tell* how St. John shared the heart of Jesus starting "WELS Lutherans for Life" (Contact Pastor)

#### **St. John Church / School / Community Picnic - September 17 or 18, 2022**

Imagine the delicious aromas and tastes of food trucks.  
Imagine special musical entertainment.  
Imagine church / school / neighbors coming together to be friends and family.

How can you help? Let Sheryl know you would like to help!

#### **St. John Antigua Sunday - October 9, 2022**

With a heart for sharing Jesus, we were a primary partner in establishing a congregation and school on this Caribbean island. Let's see what Jesus has done, and what he can keep on doing through us!

How can you help? Let Pastor know you would like to help!