

Zion's Evangelical Lutheran Church

4th Sunday in Advent, December 22, 2024

Pastor Caitlin M. Kurtz

Zion's worship services are live-streamed and archived on YouTube. While the focus is always on the worship leaders and the sanctuary at large, your voice and image may be included as part of the recording. If you do not wish to appear on film, please sit in, or under, the balcony and ask an usher for communion to be brought to your seat. If you have any other questions, please speak with Pastor Caitlin. Thank you for your understanding and support in spreading the Gospel message!

Welcome and Announcements and Prelude

**(Congregation please stand as able)*

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: We gather in the name of the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **C: Amen.**

P: Today, as we confess our sins, we recognize how easily we overlook the gifts God gives. And we accept the sad truth that our limitations often create the conditions for sin.

Silence is kept for confession.

P: Let us pray.

C: God, we want a faith that feels like more than words, but we lack your power to embody goodness. We hear your call to serve others yet feel too worn out to make the food. We hunger to taste justice but fear the burning spice of the meal.

We want our place at your table but resist sitting beside a stranger. We have lost our appetites for mere thoughts and prayers, but we fail to match our intentions to our actions. Forgive us and restore us with the healing wholeness of your presence.

P: Brothers and sisters in Christ, God knows you are imperfect. But God did not invite you here today because of what you have done or how you have behaved. God loves you and always cares much more for you than your shortcomings. God forgives all your sins in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. **C: Amen.**

*GATHERING HYMN: ELW 292 *Love Has Come*

You are invited to face the back of the church for the opening hymn. As the cross is processed into the congregation you may continue to sing toward it.



1 Love has come— a light in the dark - ness! Love shines forth in the
2 Love is born! Come, share in the won - der. Love is God now a -
3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us! Love is life ev - er -



Beth - le - hem skies. See, all heav - en has come to pro - claim it;
sleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of his moth - er;
last - ing and free. Love is Je - sus with - in and a - mong us.



hear how their song of joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to
what is the name her heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the
Love is the peace our hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the



you, a Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.
name she whis - pers; Love! Love! Je - sus, Im - man - u - el.
gift of Christ - mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

LIGHTING ADVENT CANDLE

L: We light these Advent candles with thanks for what has been, and hope for what is yet to come. As we do, we notice the gifts God has given this week. God, we reach for unreasonable hope;

C: and you prepare an incomparable future.

L: God, we breathe in your peaceful refuge,

C: for you have made a place where we can safely rest.

L: Joy ebbs and flows each day, holy God., **C: so we pray to you in honesty.**

L: Your love grows unseen, holy God; **C: we prepare for you every day.**

Choir sings an Advent verse as the candle of Love is lit.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Let us pray. Jesus, you shape the world around us, even when you remain just out of sight. As we listen today, help us prepare our lives for you with loving anticipation. In the name of Christ we pray. Amen.

CHILDREN'S SERMON *as the children come forward, please join in singing:*

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
the stars in the sky looked down where he lay;
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

FIRST READING: Micah 5:2-5a (pg. 756 in pew Bible)

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

After the reading: **Congregation: Thanks be to God**

RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 80:1-7 (pg. 470 in pew Bible, also below)

Leader: Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!

Congregation: You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh.

L: Stir up your might, and come to save us!

C: Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

L: O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?

C: You have fed them with the bread of tears, and given them tears to drink in full measure.

L: You make us the scorn of our neighbours; our enemies laugh among themselves.

C: Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

SECOND READING: Hebrews 10:5-10 (pg. 976 in pew Bible)

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt-offerings and sin-offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, "See, God, I have come to do your will, O God" in the scroll of the book it is written of me.' When he said above, 'You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sin-offerings' these are offered according to the law, then he added, 'See, I have come to do your will.' He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

After the reading: **Congregation: Thanks be to God**

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** (tune: *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly #44 green book*)

Alleluia, Alleluia, Lord to whom now shall we go?

Alleluia, Alleluia, Let Your blessings through us flow!

You have words of life eternal, help us to hear them, and to tell all

In your wisdom, make us grow; in your wisdom, make us grow.

***GOSPEL READING:** Luke 1:39-55 (pg. 831 in pew Bible)

Before reading: P: The Holy Gospel According to St. Luke, the 1st Chapter.

Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.' And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

After the reading: P: The Gospel of our Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY:** ELW 723 *Canticle of the Turning*

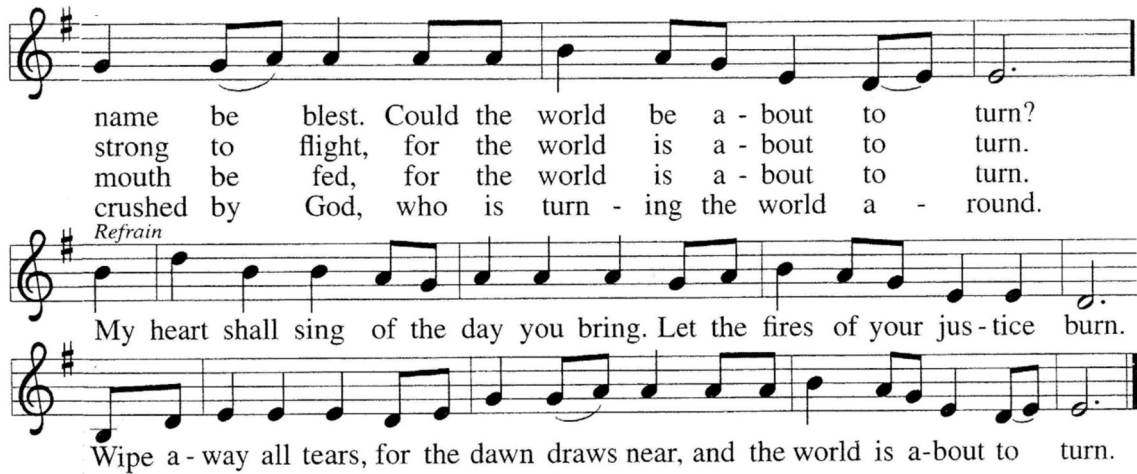
1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
2 Though I am small, my . . . God, my all, you . . .
3 From the halls of pow'r to the for - tress tow'r, not a
4 Though the na - tions rage from . . age to age, we re -

God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
work great . . things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the
stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your
mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -

won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
jus - tice tears ev - 'ry ty - rant . . from his throne.
liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.

You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to
The hun - gry poor shall . . weep no more, for the
This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the

weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the
food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread, ev - 'ry
prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be



name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
 strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.

Refrain
 My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.

Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

Text: Rory Cooney, b. 1952, based on the Magnificat Music: Irish traditional Text © 1990 GIA Publications, Inc. ROF COUNTY DOWN Irregular

PROFESSION OF FAITH

P: With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

C: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Note: the word "catholic" here means the church around the world.

OUR OFFERINGS: OUR TRUST, PRAYERS & GIFTS

***PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

(after hearing, "Lord in your mercy," respond: **Hear our Prayer**)

(after hearing the final prayer petition, "Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ." respond: **Amen**)

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

P: The peace of Christ be with you. **C: And also with you.**

CHOIR ANTHEM

OFFERING WITH OFFERTORY

During this portion of the worship service, we offer to God a portion of what God has first given us, trusting that God will use these gifts to do God's work in the world. We offer thanks to God with financial gifts, song, and prayer. Or you can scan this QR code to go to our electronic giving website: <http://www.zionsjonestown.com/giving/>, where you can choose to give either through PayPal, or Simply Giving, which is our regular electronic offering service, offering both one-time, and regular, automatic options.



***POST OFFERING VERSE (tune: *What Child Is This*)**

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; Come, peasant, king, to own him.
 The King of kings salvation brings; Let loving hearts enthrone him.
 Raise, raise the song on high, The virgin sings her lullaby;
 Joy, joy, for Christ is born, The babe, the son of Mary!

***OFFERING PRAYER**

P: Together we pray. Holy Spirit, bless these small gifts we offer.

C: You set the table with plenty of love.

P: Prepare room in your home

C: for my neighbor and me.

P: Prepare a place in your vision

C: for my neighbor and me.

P: Prepare a seat at your table

C: for my neighbor and me.

P: Holy Spirit, you bless these gifts we offer.

C: **You set the table with plenty of love.**

***THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

*P: The Lord be with you. C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts. C: **We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. C: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P: God, yours was the First Thought; before any human lived or knew your name, you whispered, and creation built itself around your words. Before your ancient people knew the depth of your love, you promised them goodness, and led them to freedom. C: **Your love grows unseen.**

P: Before the world knew your face, your own child was born in a quiet stable.

C: **Your love blooms in the dark.**

P: Before we knew the depth of your love, your child died, crucified, and you forgave, and new life grew in the grave.

C: **Your love echoes in the silence.**

P: Once you made Mary agelessly blessed. Once you transformed turncoat disciples into the family of the forgiven. You wrote the words for their hope, and they sang the song of joy. What you have done for them you have also done for us. So we sing your praise.

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY** (Tune: *Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella*)

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly One— God of pow - er, God_ of might. Heav'n and
earth are full of your glor - y. Ho - sa - na in the high - est. Blessed! Blessed
is the one who comes_ Blessed! Blessed! in_ the name of God.____

***WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

On a night of betrayal, Jesus pulled close friends closer to eat with them one last time. He 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. Jesus, we remember you died.

C: **We remember.**

P: We remember God's love sparked life in your dead body.

C: **We remember.**

P: We remember you shall return to empty every grave.

C: **We remember.**

***LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Grounded in these promises, we pray the way Jesus taught us :

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.

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**


P: Come, taste the goodness of God's mercy and marvel in what God has done for you.

This is the Lord's table where all are welcome. At the ushers instruction, you are invited to come forward, pick up either a pre-filled grape juice cup, or empty communion cup, and kneel or stand at the communion railing. (gluten free wafers are available for those who need that , please let Pastor know when you are communing) Here, you will first receive the bread, and then either a blessing of your grape juice, or the wine poured into your glass. After consuming both elements, return to your seat by the side aisle, placing your empty glass in the tray.

*Those who are worshipping at home this morning are invited to **pray this prayer**, trusting that Christ's spiritual presence is with you at all times and places. If you would like Pastor Caitlin to bring communion to your home, call her at 717 865 3652 and she will be glad to do so.*

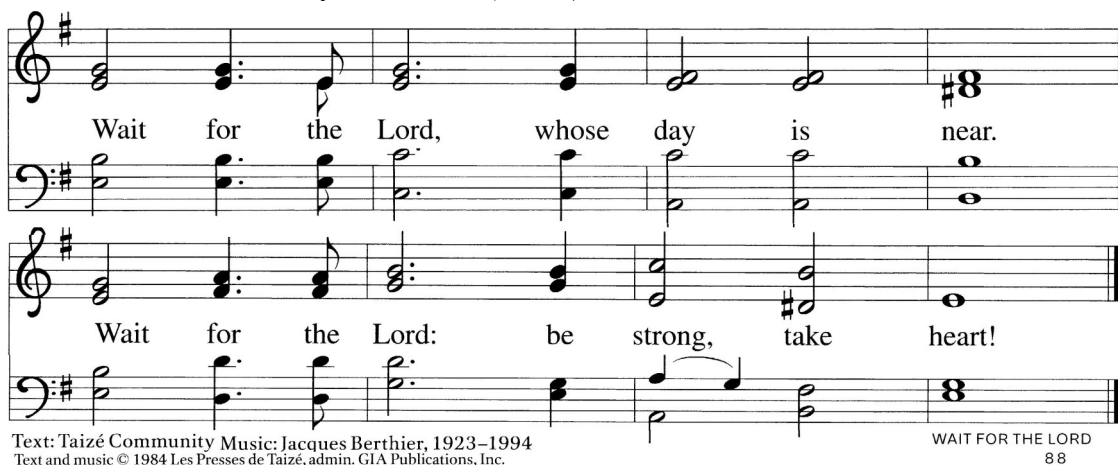
“Loving Jesus, since I cannot at this moment receive you in bread and wine according to your promise in the sacrament of Holy Communion, I ask you to come to me in Spirit. Feed me, for I am hungry; strengthen me, for I am weak; enliven and sanctify me with Your sacred Body and Blood. Deliver me from all sin and make me always obedient to Your commands. Let me never be separated from You, my Savior, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit live and reign one God forever and ever. Amen.”

LAMB OF GOD (tune: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*)



O Lamb of God you take a-way our sin; have mer-cy on us, give_ us your
 peace. Pre -pare us to re- ceive_ your grace and teach us how to fol - low your ways. Re-
 joice! Re- joice! E - man - u - el has come to you, O Is - ra - el.

COMMUNION HYMNS: #315 *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*
 (green book) # 34 *Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel*
 #262 *Wait for the Lord* (below)



Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.
 Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

Text: Taizé Community Music: Jacques Berthier, 1923–1994
 Text and music © 1984 Les Presses de Taizé, admin. GIA Publications, Inc. WAIT FOR THE LORD
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***POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

P: God, what you have planned for us unfolds slowly.

C: **Your love is often unrecognizable, unappreciated, gentle and unnoticed.**

P: But in this place we have noticed that which we often don't see.

C: **We have tasted your unspoken goodness. And now we will magnify your love.**

***BENEDICTION**

P: This world longs to know that God's love is more than words. Here, you have shared the advent of God's goodness, a foretaste of the feast to come. You carry the blessing of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Now go into the world, expecting God's justice, and nurturing God's peace.

C: **God, we will magnify your love.**

***SENDING HYMN:** ELW 248 *People, Look East*

As the cross is processed to the rear of the sanctuary as we sing, you are invited to turn your body towards the rear, symbolic of our desire to follow Christ out into the world.

1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the crown - ing
2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is
3 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the
4 An - gels an - nounce with shouts of mirth him who brings new
of the year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble,
plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to nour - ish,
bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y weath - er,
life to earth. Set ev - 'ry peak and val - ley hum - ming
trim the hearth and set the ta - ble. Peo - ple, look
that in course the flow'r may flour - ish. Peo - ple, look
bright as sun and moon to - geth - er. Peo - ple, look
with the word, the Lord is com - ing. Peo - ple, look
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Guest, is on the way.
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Rose, is on the way.
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Star, is on the way.
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881–1965 Music: French carol; arr. Barry Rose, b. 1934
Text © Miss E. Farjeon Will Trust, by permission of David Higham Associates Arr. © 1999 Novello & Co. Ltd., London

BESANCON
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***DISMISSAL**

P: Go in peace, Christ is with you. C: Thanks be to God!

We're glad you're here! Whether today is your first day at Zion's, or your thousandth, we're glad you're here, and we look forward to worshipping with you. If you're new, or it's been a while, we invite you to fill out one of the "We're glad you're here" white envelopes located in the pew back to ensure our records are correct, and so we can connect with you further. Completed cards can be placed in the offering plate. Thank you, and welcome!

This week we especially remember in our prayers: Family and friends of Anna Houser, Andy Bomberger, Nancy Bowman, Pastor Ted Hummel, hurricane victims and all victims of violence.

This Week at Zions:

Dec. 24, Tuesday @ 6:30 pm Christmas Music Meditation
Dec. 24, Tuesday @ 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Service
No Quilting or Wednesday Activities this Week. Merry Christmas!
No Sunday School Next Sunday: December 29!

Next Week at Zions:

Dec. 29, Sunday, NO Sunday School, 10:30 am Worship
Dec. 31, Tuesday @ 9:00 am Quilting
Jan. 1, 2025, Wednesday -No activities this week.

Joins us at Zion's for Christmas Eve! Piano and organ music meditation begins at 6:30 pm. Candlelight worship begins at 7:00 pm. The service will be livestreamed on YouTube! It's a lovely experience to attend evening worship, hope you can make it!

The JOY Pantry staff recently put out a plea for disposable baby diapers and baby wipes. In response, Mission Ministry would like to collect diapers and baby wipes on Christmas Eve as a way to honor Jesus' birth as we care for those in need. If you would like to bring diapers or wipes as a gift, please put them under the tree in the Gathering Area before the end of the year. *Other items that are needed are personal care supplies. In January, we will begin collecting toothpaste, tooth brushes, body wash, soap, and deodorant.*

TODAY: The NL Ministerium is hosting a Longest Night/Blue Christmas worship service on Sunday December 22 at 7 PM at Ono United Methodist Church. This service especially welcomes those who find 'the joy of Christmas' difficult, but still long to hear the Good News of the Christmas story. Whether you're grieving the loss of a loved one, struggling financially or physically, feeling overwhelmed by the heaviness of the world, weary, or experiencing any other difficulty, this service summons you to come just as you are to encounter the hope of Christ in candlelight, prayer, and music.

Thank You to Alyssa, Adam and Elsie Duh for lighting our Advent Wreath this week!

Bell gifts are due back, wrapped, TODAY! Again, thank you!

As you think about Christmas and end-of-year gifts, we ask you to consider supporting Zion's with a special gift. Together, we have done incredible ministry in Christ's name this year--helping to open the Northern Lebanon Clothing Closet, creating and sending forth 40+ quilts to families affected by disaster, teaching scripture to people of all ages in Sunday School, Men's and Women's Bible studies, Zion's Preschool, Babies and Bibles, and Release Time, providing support, counseling, and prayer shawls to individuals in crisis, and extending welcome to individuals with special needs at Rejoicing Spirits and the DDS dance...just to name a few. We are grateful for your gifts of time and money that have helped make these ministries possible, and ask for your help to finish the year strong. **THANK YOU** for your generosity and support

Serving at Zion's	Today	Next Sunday
Lector	Ed Ludwig	Nancy Ludwig
Prayer	Leah Wolfe	Matt Wolfe
Children's sermon	Joanna Guldin-Noll	Christine Techky
Comm. Assts.	Linda Wenrich, Kelly Rittle	Linda Wenrich
Greeter	Elaine Ludwig	
Acolyte	Annabella Hess	Daryl Root
Crucifer	Rob McQuaide	Madison Hess
Altar Guild	Strattan/Wenrich	Merkel family
Elevette	Steve Bucks	Tom Frey
Dec. Ushers	Rob McQuaide, Xander McQuaide, Logan Livingston, Al Reiner	

MUSICIAN: Maryann Guldin
SOUND: Houser family
ZION'S OFFICE: 717-865-2848
zions@comcast.net

VIDEOGRAPHER: James Cascarino
PASTOR: Caitlin M. Kurtz
PASTOR'S OFFICE: 717-865-3652
pastorckurtz@gmail.com

This year's Christmas tree is adorned with quilted squares crafted by the quilting group, Peace Through Pieces. Each square has a dove on it to symbolize peace—a reminder that Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). A quilt uses many different kinds of material, sometimes even scrap pieces which some might deem as junk, that are then carefully stitched together to create something beautiful. So too, God uses each of us, with all of our faults, and brings us together as members of the Body of Christ, united to bring love and peace to the world.

Worship Bags for Children have been refreshed! These bags are designed to help young ones engage in the worship service, and are now divided by age (0 - 4 and 5+) They can be found in the upstairs narthex area by the double doors. After worship, please return them there. If they need new materials, please place them by the mailboxes outside the secretary's office.

Weekly Sunday School classes begin at 9:15 AM each Sunday, for children as young as three, up through adults. See Pastor Caitlin for more information about classes.

2025 offering envelopes are ready for new members and people who have recently used envelopes to give. Envelopes are located on the windowsill outside of the Church Secretary's Office. If you don't see your name and would like an offering envelope, please contact Kerri Price or the Bonny, Church Secretary.