

Zion's Evangelical Lutheran Church

2nd Sunday in Advent, December 8, 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 256 *Comfort, Comfort Now My People

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 "Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
2 For the her-ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.

Com-fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row's load.
call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.
Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be-fits God's ho - ly reign.

To God's peo - ple now pro-claim that God's par - don waits for them!
 Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.
 For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,

Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for - ev - er.
 Val - leys, rise to greet the Sav - ior; hills, bow down in hum - ble fa - vor.
 and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

Text: Johann G. Olearius, 1635–1711; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
 Music: *Trente quatre pseauxes de David*, Geneva, 1551

FREU DICH SEHR
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***LIGHTING ADVENT CANDLE** (Choir verse)

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 gives. 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.**

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray. God, we feel threatened by painful truths, but you build the path to peace through the wilderness. Speak boldly to us today so we can construct true peace upon the foundation of your care. 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: Malachi 3:1-4 (pg. 778 in pew Bible)

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. 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; 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. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

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

Responsive Reading: Luke 1:68-79 (pg. 832 in pew Bible, also below)

Leader: 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favourably on his people and redeemed them.

Congregation: He has raised up a mighty saviour for us in the house of his servant David,

L: as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

C: that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.

L: Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant,

C: the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us

L: that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear,

C: in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

L: And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

C: to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins.

L: By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us,

C: to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.'

SECOND READING: Philippians 1:3-11 (pg. 953 in pew Bible)

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. 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. 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 defence and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

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 3:1-6 (pg. 834 in pew Bible)

Before reading: P: The Holy Gospel According to St. Luke, the 3rd Chapter. **C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

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, during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, 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. 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; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." '

After the reading: P: The Gospel of our Lord. **C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY:** ELW 247 *Come Now, O Prince of Peace*

1 Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one bod - y.
 2 Come now, O God of love, make us one bod - y.
 3 Come now and set us free, O God, our Sav - ior.
 4 Come, Hope of u - ni - ty, make us one bod - y.

Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.

Text: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947; tr. Marion Pope Music: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947 Text and music © Geonyong Lee OSOSÖ 65 5 6

***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 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: #30 *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*
(green book)

#32 *Fling Wide the Door*

We Will Magnify your Love (next page)

1. When twi - light leaves the even - ing sky and night re - veals the
 2. When bit - ter days and bar - ren ground sap strength and pow - er and
 3. When rough ter - rain makes prog - ress hard, God lev - els what's in the

stars, the far ho - ri - zon hope of God comes sing - ing to our hearts.
 voice, ten - a - cious faith will hold us fast; God's hope will say, re - joice!
 way; a ten - der jus - tice will car - ry us, and care will not de - lay.

Refrain
 Your love is more than words, O God, a flame you kin - dle, a seed you sow, a
 rose that blooms in the snow, and we will mag - ni - fy your love.

***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: WOV 629 All Earth Is Hopeful**

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 All earth is hope - ful, the Sav - ior comes at last!
 2 Peo - ple of Is - rael, you heard the proph - et tell:
 3 Moun - tains and val - leys will have to be pre - pared;
 4 We first saw Je - sus a ba - by in a crib.

Fur - rows lie o - pen for God's cre - a - tive task: this, the
 "A vir - gin moth - er will bear Em - man - u - el"; she con -
 new high - ways o - pened, new pro - to - cols de - clared. Al - most
 This same Lord Je - sus to - day has come to live in our

la - bor of peo - ple who strug - gle to see how
ceived him, "God with us," our broth - er, whose birth re -
here! God is near - ing, in beau - ty and grace! All
world; he is pres - ent, in neigh - bors we see our

God's truth and jus - tice set ev - 'ry - bod - y free.
stores hope and cour - age to chil - dren of this earth.
clear ev - 'ry gate - way, in haste, come out in haste!
Je - sus is with us, and ev - er sets us free.

Text: Alberto Taule, b. 1932; tr. Madelein Forell Marshall, b. 1946 Music: Alberto Taule, b. 1932; arr. Skinner Chivez Melo, b. 1944-1992 Text and tune © 1973 Alberto Taule, admin Virgil C Funk Tr. © 1995 Madelein Forell Marshall, admin. Augsburg Fortress arr. © Estate of Skinner Chivez-Melo

***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: Andy Bomberger, Nancy Bowman, Pastor Ted Hummel, hurricane victims and all victims of violence.

Every Week at Zions: @ 10:30 Worship, 9:15 Sunday School
Wednesday night 5:30 meal, 6:15 Rejoicing Spirits worship, 6:50 Bible Study

This Week at Zions:

- Dec. 10, Tuesday @ 9:00 am Quilting
- Dec. 11, Wednesday @ 5:30 community meal, 6:15 pm Rejoicing Spirits worship, 6:50 Bible Study, 7:30 adult choir rehearsal

Next Week at Zions:

- Dec. 16, Monday @ 6:30 pm Church council meeting
- Dec. 17, Tuesday @ 9:00 am Quilting
- Dec. 18, Wednesday @ 10:00 am Preschool Event
- Dec. 18, Wednesday @ 10:30 am Ministerium meeting
- Dec. 18, Wednesday @ 5:30 community meal, 6:15 pm Rejoicing Spirits worship, 6:50 Bible Study, 7:30 adult choir rehearsal
- Dec. 19, Thursday @ 10:00 am Pre-School event

TODAY! Please stay after worship for Zion's annual meeting. We will elect new Council members and approve a spending plan for 2025. Copies of the proposed spending plan, together with a document explaining the **IMPACT** of this plan, are available near the usher's stations.

Also TODAY "Joy to the world the Lord is come!" Following worship and the congregational meeting, we will share a quick meal together and then carol to our local homebound members, Spang Crest, and Cedar Haven. YOU are invited to join us in making a joyful noise and spreading cheer! Questions? Contact Joanna Guldin-Noll.

THANK YOU for helping with Christmas gifts for local students. "Angel" tags are due back today. If you forgot yours, please let Pastor Caitlin or De Mohn know. *We have two special circumstances, late-addition families whose needs are on the "bell" tags.* "Bell" gifts are due back, wrapped, by Sunday, December 22. Again, thank you!

Advent has begun. This year we are taking an in-depth look at the traditional themes of "Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love" and considering how each of these are "more than words"--not just something we say, but a promise we can trust. Advent devotionals based on this theme are available by the usher's stations.

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!

We invite you to celebrate Jesus' birth by caring for babies and toddlers in need: We will have a diaper and wipe collection on Christmas Eve. These will be donated to JOY Pantry and distributed to families in our community.

Serving at Zion's	Today	Next Sunday
Lector	Stephanie Livingston	John Mohn
Prayer	Linda Wenrich	Linda Toth
Children's sermon	Terry Ludwig	Nancy Ludwig
Comm. Assts.	Deb Long, Kelly Rittle	Ed & Elaine Ludwig
Greeter		Stephanie Livingston
Acolyte	Nolan Anspach	Madelyn Rittle
Crucifer	Xander McQuaide	Daryl Hess
Altar Guild	Strattan/Wenrich	Bucks family
Elevette	Ann Kulp	Noel Strattan
Dec. Ushers	Rob McQuaide, Xander McQuaide, Rick Herr, 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.

Adoption Swaption, a local, non profit, Christian organization that helps foster and adoptive families with children's clothing, toys, food, and more, has outgrown the current building in Lickdale and is looking for another building with parking spaces in the local area. If you know of a church or other establishment that has space to rent, would you please contact Pastor Caitlin.

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.