Third Sunday in Advent

December 17th, 2023

9:00 am / 10:30 am

Communion



280 Years of "Joyously proclaiming the good news of God's love"

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
SPRING CITY, PENNSYLVANIA
Founded in 1743

Sunday, December 17th, 2023 – services led by the Rev. Michael Poteet

INTRODUCTION

Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. Through his ministry of baptism, John is a faithful and joyful witness to the one who comes after yet ranks ahead of him. "All God's children got a robe," go the words of a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God's party.

PRELUDES

9:00 AM:

On Tannenberg: "O Come, O Come Emmanuel- Concertino: III. Allegretto"

Tune: Veni Emmanuel, French Processional, 15th C., Arr. J. William Greene

On Piano: "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"

Arr. Mark Hayes, Tune: Picardy, Trad. Fr. Carol

On Allen: "Bethlehem Lullabye" Tune: Lulaize Jezuniu, trad. Polish Carol, Arr. Rick Parks

10:30 AM

On Piano: "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"

Arr. Mark Hayes, Tune: Picardy, Trad. Fr. Carol

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

GREETING

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

C: And also with you.

CANDLE LIGHTING

Praise to you, O God, our salvation who is near.

You hold us in our waiting and keep us awake to the world.

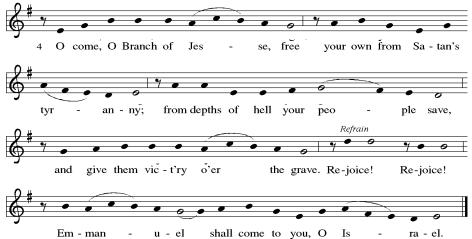
You show up in our lives at unexpected times.

Bless us as we light this candle to keep vigil for your arrival.

We trust that even though we do not know the day or the hour,

You hurry to gather all people to your peace.

C: Amen



PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

CONFESSION and FORGIVENESS

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

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,

who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation.

C: Amen.

P: God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance.

Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Everlasting God,

C: you love justice and you hate wrongdoing. We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to work against oppression.

We are complicit in systems of exploitation.

We choose comfort over courage.

We are careless with creation's bounty.

Look upon us with mercy.

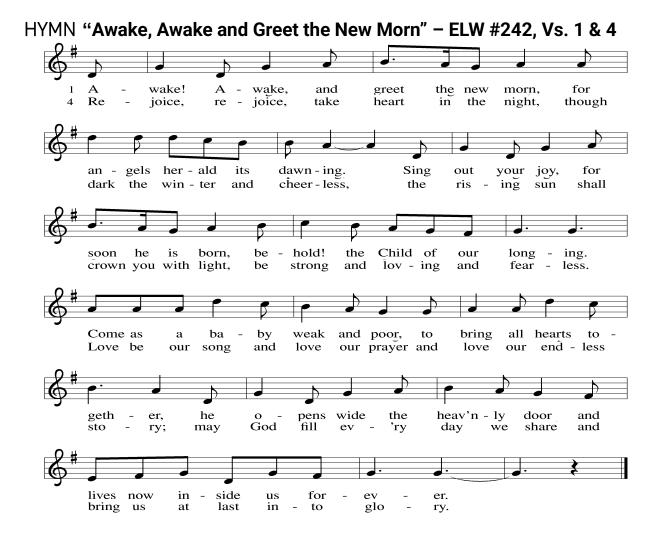
Turn our hearts again to you.

Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world. Amen.

P: Hear these words of assurance:
God clothes you with garments of salvation
and covers you with robes of righteousness.
In the tender compassion of + Jesus Christ,
your sins are forgiven.
God's covenant is eternal,

and God's blessing rests upon us all.

C: Amen.



Please be seated

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

FIRST READING: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.

¹The spirit of the Lord GoD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,

to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the LORD's

and the day of vengeance of our God:

favor,

to comfort all who mourn;

3to provide for those who mourn in Zion—

to give them a garland instead of ashes,

the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

They will be called oaks of righteousness,

the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations;

they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

⁸For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense,

and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations,

and their offspring among the peoples;

all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God:

for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,

he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,

as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,

and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots.

and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

R: Word of God. Word of Life. C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM 126

- ¹When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream.
- ²Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy.

 Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."
- ³The LORD has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.
- ⁴Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses of the Negeb.
- ⁵Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.
- ⁶Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

Please stand



GOSPEL: John 1:19-34

P: The Holy Gospel according to John

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,

'Make straight the way of the Lord,' "

as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' ³¹ I myself did not know him, but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel." ³² And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³ I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴ And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God."

P: The Gospel of the Lord. C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated

SERMON

Apostles' Creed

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

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A: With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

A brief silence.

A: Fill our mouths with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy as we bear witness to the great things you have done. Give your church a spirit of gladness as we gather and as we are sent. Merciful God.

C: receive our prayer.

A: Let the trees of the field sing your praise. Protect forests, orchards, rainforests, and all wooded areas from disease and deforestation. Keep us grateful for their gifts of oxygen, food, shade, and shelter. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: You love justice and promise your favor to those who are oppressed, brokenhearted, and incarcerated. Grant wisdom and compassion to those who work for public safety and all who work within prisons, jails, and courts, that mercy may increase and violence wither away. Merciful God, C: receive our prayer.

A: Give us strength to pray for our world without ceasing and provoke us toward love and good deeds for all who are in need especially Barbara Winter, Dave Grubb, Brian Mickiewicz, Brookelyn Rogers, Kurt Angstadt, David Tyson, Eric Harter, Rick Munz, Greg Wicker, Jeanette Kaufmann, Ashley Bazzley, Don Walt, Bill Hilbert, Ralph Metzger, Michael Bailey, Colleen Elliot, Cindy Batten, Bonnie Robins, Robin Sexto, Joan Emswiler and Hilary Cohen. Provide for all without adequate housing, food, employment, or access to health care. Empower us as helpers and advocates. Merciful God.

C: receive our prayer.

A: Open our hearts to those who serve as truth-tellers in our church and in our society. Bless leaders in church and society in their task of proclamation. Amplify voices of peacemakers, advocates, and especially those whose voices are ignored or marginalized. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

P: With gratitude we rejoice in the saints who witnessed to your life in all circumstances, in whom your Spirit was not quenched, even in death. Through them, teach us always to hold fast to what is good. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

P: Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy.

C: Amen.

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

P: The peace of the Lord be with you all.

C: And also with you.

Let us share the peace with one another

SPECIAL MUSIC

"Angels from the Realms of Glory"

Text: James Montgomery, Music: Henry T. Smart **Zion Bell Choir**

OFFERING PRAYER

A: God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior.

C: Amen.

Please stand



Believing in the real presence of Christ, this church practices communion hospitality. All baptized persons are welcome to participate in the Lord's Supper. Parent(s)/Grandparent(s) will place their hands on untutored young people for a blessing given by the Pastor. The response when receiving the bread and wine could be: "Amen" or "I believe." (Grape juice and Gluten Free wafers are available)

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 him thanks and praise.

P: It is indeed our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, Holy Father through Christ out Lord. And so, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

"Holy, Holy, Holy" - ELW #473 **HYMN** to, mico - ra-zón tea - do - ra. Ho - lv, ho - lv, ho - ly, heart, my heart a - dores you. my San - to_e-res - ra-zón be de-cir: ñor. heart is glad to say the words: You are ho ly, God.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P: Holy God, the beginning and the end, you are our salvation and our hope. We praise you for creating a world of order and beauty. When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair, you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy. At this end of the ages, your son Jesus came to bring us your love and to heal all the suffering world.

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 in 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 in remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his life, death and resurrection, we await his coming again in righteousness and peace. Send your Spirit on us and on this bread and wine we share: strengthen our faith, increase our hope, and bring to birth the justice and joy of your Son.

Through him, all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy church, both now and forever.

C: Amen

P: Lord, remember us in Your Kingdom and teach us to pray,

A: 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: In this meal, righteousness and peace meet together.

Come, take your place at the table.

C: Amen.

COMMUNION HYMNS

#1 - "Bread of Life From Heaven" - ELW #474

Text: Susan R. Briehl, Music: Argentine traditional, refrain; Marty Haugen

#2 - "You Satisfy the Hungry Heart" - ELW #484

Text: Omer Westendorf, Music: Robert E. Kreutz

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen us and keep us in his grace.

C: Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A: Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.

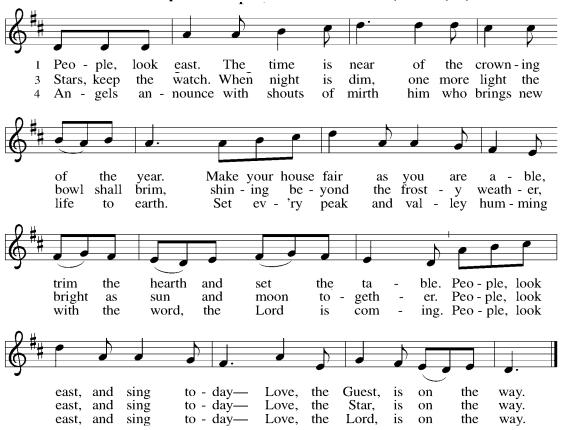
C: Amen.

BLESSING

P: The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit + remain upon you now and forever.

C: Amen.

THE SENDING HYMN "People Look East" - ELW #248, Vs. 1, 3, & 4



DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Keep awake.

C: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDES

9:00 AM

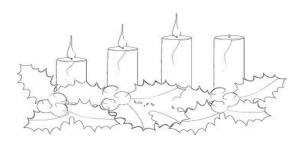
"The Advent of Our God"

Johann B. Konig, Arr. J. William Greene

10:30 AM

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

Traditional, Harmony by Michael Praetorius, Arr. by Mark Hayes



Bible Readings for the Week

Monday 1 Kings 18:1-18 Elijah condemns King Ahab Tuesday 2 Kings 2:9-22 Elisha receives Elijah's spirit

Wednesday Mark 9:9-13 Questions about Elijah Thursday Malachi 3:16-4:6 Elijah and the coming one

Friday Acts 3:17-4:4 Peter preaches about the prophets

Saturday Psalm 125 Prayer for blessing

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The Rev. Michael S. Poteet is an ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). A member of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, Mike served as a church pastor in Clifton Heights, PA for seven years. He currently serves the larger church as a Christian education writer for Abingdon Press, and as a biblical storyteller and guest preacher. Mike invites your feedback at bibliomike.com/contact.

Zion Lutheran Church

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Zion Lutheran Pre-School

Dawn Platchek, Director, Phone: 610-948-3440, e-mail: info@zionlutheranpreschool.com

Parish Post for the Week of December 17th – 23rd, 2023

Greetings everyone!

Thankful for 280 Years!

Sunday Worship Services at 9:00 and 10:30am Service led by: the Reverend Michael Poteet Third Sunday in Advent

Upcoming:

Guest Pastor - Dec. 17th, 24th

Third Sunday of Advent – **December 17th**

Christmas Eve Service – December 24th, 8:00 pm

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Spring City Pantry

The Pantry is now open on **Wednesdays 5:00-6:30pm & Thursdays 10:30am-Noon**Donation ideas: Canned Meat (pork, beef, tuna, chicken), Personal Care Products

The Pantry is in specific need of Cereal and Macaroni & Cheese.

Thank you to all who continue to fill the shopping cart. Please be mindful that we cannot distribute outdated, previously opened or unlabeled products.

Greetings from the Music Director:

Praise Band is on Sundays at 6:45 PM.

Bell Choir is on Sundays at 7:45 AM, before the services

Adult Choir is 6:45 PM on Thursdays.

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Just a reminder! AA meets in our Fellowship Hall every **Monday** evening at **7pm**.

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Christmas Eve Service

We have a Pastor for Christmas Eve!

We'll be welcoming Pastor Kris Peterson to our 8pm service! Join us!

Just to clarify:

We will be having 2 services on December 24th:

Fourth Sunday of Advent - led by Reverend Mike Poteet - 10:00 am

Christmas Eve - led by Pastor Kris Peterson - 8:00 pm