

**The child in my womb  
leaped for joy!**



**Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
*A Liturgy of Everlasting Light*  
**Candle of Joy**

**December 22, 2024 + 9am**

**Zion-Public WiFi password: Zion54484**  
**Congregational responses are in BOLD.**

All are welcome to receive Jesus' unconditional gift of God's grace through the sacrament of Holy Communion. Regardless of your church membership or affiliation, all are encouraged to participate in communion or to come forward for a blessing.

*\*The communion bread is homemade by congregation members and contains gluten and honey. For those with allergies or sensitivities, an alternative will be provided upon request.\**

Children of all ages are encouraged to worship with the whole community in Christ. Children's worship bags are available in the back of the sanctuary.

Page numbers that are listed are found in the front of the cranberry-colored hymnal on the bottom of the page. Hymn numbers are listed in bold, large print on the top of the page.

If you would like home communion, hospital visit, or a conversation with the pastor, please contact the church office at 715.687.4110 or at [office@zionstratford.org](mailto:office@zionstratford.org) or Pastor Amy Heinz at 608.498.5772 or [pastoramy@zionstratford.org](mailto:pastoramy@zionstratford.org).

**Ministers:** All the People of God through the love of Jesus and the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit

**Pastor:** Rev. Amy Heinz

**Administrative Assistant:** Kathy Busche

**Organists:** Judy Polege, Marge Redetzke, Ryan Huther

**Custodian:** Maryel Schoenfuss

**Missionaries:** Steven & Bethany Friberg, Tanzania

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## PRELUDE

### CENTERING AND BELLS' CALL TO WORSHIP

### WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

### MISSION MOMENT

#### We Gather in Grace

### LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

During Advent we remember the light that shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it.

**Though sorrow may last for the night, joy comes in the morning.**

For all who face the sting of loss, God's Word speaks:

**Though sorrow may last for the night, joy comes in the morning.**

For all who wrestle with the unknown of tomorrow, God's Word speaks:

**Though sorrow may last for the night, joy comes in the morning.**

For all who battle the questions that arise in the silence, God's Word speaks:

**Though sorrow may last for the night, joy comes in the morning.**

This morning we light four candles. When the darkness of life feels overwhelming, the first candle ignites our hope in God's unfailing truth. When the chaos of life seems all-consuming, the light of the second candle reveals the Prince of Peace. When humanity responds with senseless acts and hurtful words, the light of the third candle radiates God's command to love as we have been loved. The fourth candle reminds us that no matter what our circumstances, there is joy in the coming Christ who opens our eyes to the everlasting light.

### INVOCATION

We gather in the name of God, the Creator of Light; +Jesus, the Light of the World; and the Holy Spirit, the Light who illumines our path.

**Amen**

### HYMN

*"The Angel Gabriel From Heaven Came"*

**ELW 265**

## **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

In this season of light, let us go before God and confess how our words and actions contribute to the darkness rather than adding to the light.

God of Love and Light,

**we confess that we are not always the light-bearers you desire us to be. We shine a spotlight on the transgressions of others while trying to keep our own sins hidden in the dark. We burn bridges by being impatient, opinionated, and judgmental. We inflame others by lashing out in anger. We go through our days enveloped in the gloom of fear and doubt. We let our witness become a smoldering ember until it dies out completely. Forgive us Jesus, Everlasting Light. Come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel. Teach us to walk as children of light, surrounded by your love, forgiveness, and healing. We ask this in the name of Christ. Amen.**

God is light, and in God there is no darkness at all. If we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

**Amen.**

## **GREETING**

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

**And also with you.**

## **KYRIE**

Lord, have mer - cy\_ on your peo - ple. Christ have mer - cy\_ on\_ us.  
Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.\_ Chri - ste e - le - i - son.

Shine your light in\_ to our dark-ness. Fill us\_ with your ho - ly love.  
Heal all\_ con - flicts be- tween na - tions. Teach us\_ how to\_ live as one.

Be our strength in times of\_ trou - ble. Set us free from chains that\_ bind.  
Show us how to love our\_ neigh - bor. Run to those who\_ cry for\_ help.

Breathe new\_ life in - to our\_ spir - its. Pu - ri - fy our\_ hearts and minds.  
Word made flesh who lives a - mong us; Christ our\_ Lord, Em - man - u - el.

## HYMN OF PRAISE

Glo - ry be to God on high. Peace, good-will to all the earth. Let us sing a  
Love has come to dwell with us. Light now shines on ev - 'ry - one. Hope has lift - ed

joy - ful song to the Christ, the Liv - ing Word. Glo - - -  
up our hearts. Joy has made, in us, a home.

- - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o; Glor -

- - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

**Gracious Creator,**

**As we prepare for the coming of your Son, Jesus, transform us so we may reflect his light. Make us beacons of compassion, generosity, and peace, for the sake of the one who shows us your way, Jesus Christ, our Emmanuel.**

**Amen.**

## We Hear the Word of God

### CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

#### COMPLEMENTARY READING

#### Psalm 113

<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD!

Praise, O servants of the LORD;  
praise the name of the LORD.

<sup>2</sup> Blessed be the name of the LORD  
from this time on and forevermore.

<sup>3</sup> From the rising of the sun to its setting,  
the name of the LORD is to be praised.

<sup>4</sup> The LORD is high above all nations  
and his glory above the heavens.

<sup>5</sup> Who is like the LORD our God,  
who is seated on high,

<sup>6</sup> who looks far down  
on the heavens and the earth?

<sup>7</sup> He raises the poor from the dust  
and lifts the needy from the ash heap,

<sup>8</sup> to make them sit with princes,  
with the princes of his people.

<sup>9</sup> He gives the barren woman a home,  
making her the joyous mother of children.

Praise the LORD!

#### READING

#### Luke 1:26-45

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup> But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> The angel

said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup> He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” <sup>34</sup> Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” <sup>35</sup> The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>36</sup> And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. <sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God.” <sup>38</sup> Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

<sup>39</sup> In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup> where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup> and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup> And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? <sup>44</sup> For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**SERMON**

**Stirring Up Wonder**

Rev. Amy Heinz

**HYMN**

*“My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness, Lord”*

**ELW 251**

## **APOSTLES' CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come 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 THE PEOPLE**

Keep watch, O Lord, with all who work or watch or weep, and in your great mercy, give ear to our prayers for all.

God of hope,  
be with all who are waiting for a miracle.

Waiting for God;  
**hear our fervent prayer.**

waiting for justice;  
**hear our fervent prayer.**

waiting for a diagnosis;  
**hear our fervent prayer.**

waiting for a phone call;  
**hear our fervent prayer.**

waiting for a job;  
**hear our fervent prayer.**



waiting for death;

**hear our fervent prayer.**

waiting for inspiration;

**hear our fervent prayer.**

waiting for the right moment;

**hear our fervent prayer.**

waiting for the fighting to stop;

**hear our fervent prayer.**

waiting for day to dawn;

**hear our fervent prayer.**

waiting for a baby to be born;

**hear our fervent prayer.**

Hear our cries as they rise to your throne,  
cries from those who wait in God's house.

We pray in the name of Emmanuel.

**Amen.\*\***

### **SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

### **We Share the Meal**

**OFFERING**

*"A Tiny Child Will Come"*

**ZLC Choir**

**OFFERTORY**

*"In the Bleak Midwinter"*

**ELW 294 v3**

### **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

**God of Light, our world can be a very dark place. Therefore, we return to you the gifts of ourselves, our time, and our resources, trusting you will use them to set the world aglow with your loving presence. May our offerings continue to shine brightly before others so they may see our good works and give glory to you. We ask this in the name of Christ.**

**Amen.\*\***

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

At the beginning of creation God said, "Let there be light;" and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. In ancient times God led the Israelites through the desert with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The priests of old kept a perpetual fire burning in the temple to remind us that God is the light which cannot be extinguished.

Finally, Jesus, the Word, who was with God since the beginning of creation, became flesh and lived among us. We have seen his glory shining in our world, full of grace and truth. Christ's light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. We are commanded not to hide this light under a bushel basket, but to put it on a lamp stand so that everyone can see it. With our lights burning brightly, we now join the saints and angels in a hymn of praise to God, the Everlasting Light.

## SANCTUS



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

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

### DISTRIBUTION SONGS

*"O Lamb of God" (to the tune of O Come, O Come, Emmanuel)*

*"He Came Down"*

**ELW 253**

*"All Earth Is Hopeful"*

**ELW 266**

### BLESSING AND PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

#### We Serve the World in God's Name

### BENEDICTION

In gratitude to God, and empowered by the Spirit, let us strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying: Come, Lord Jesus! And may God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

### CLOSING SONG

*"People, Look East"*

**ELW 248 v1,4**

### DISMISSAL

Lay aside works of darkness, put on the armor of light, and go in peace,

**with open doors, open hearts, and open hands.**

**Thanks be to God!**

### POSTLUDE

Most liturgical texts were written and/or adapted by David Eck, ©2011. The words to the *Kyrie*, *Hymn of Praise*, *Sanctus*, and *Lamb of God* were written and/or adapted by David Eck, ©2011. All tunes are traditional carols and traditional arrangements with no copyright restrictions.

Additional liturgical texts have been adapted for local use  
by the Rev. Amy Heinz.

# Notes, Prayers, and Thoughts

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## **Zion Lutheran Church**

*Open Doors, Open Hearts, Open Hands*

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