**ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH, WOODLAND, MI**

**Third Sunday of Advent, December 13, 2020**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS & PRELUDE**

**Lighting of the advent wreath**

**Third Sunday of Advent: Joy**

Last Sunday we lit the candle of Hope, remembering the hope which comes in Christ, and we lit the candle of Peace, remembering God’s dream of a peaceful world. (Light Candles). Today we light the third candle of Advent, the candle of Joy.

In Advent, we are in a time of waiting. Like the Israelites who wandered through the Wilderness, waiting to come into the Promised Land, we wait for the coming of the Joy of Ages. We wait for the day where we can join our voices with the angels to sing “Joy to the World, the Lord is come!” We wait for the day when everlasting joy will be on each of us. We light this candle in Joy. (Light Candle)

**On this day, we remember the Spirit who breathes joy into our lives.**

**Gathering**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**Confession and Forgiveness**

In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.** **Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

**Gathering Song“Prepare the Royal Highway” ELW 264**



**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.**

**Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray together.

**Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**First Reading**    **Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11**

A reading from Isaiah.

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 favor,  
  and the day of vengeance of our God;  
  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.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm Psalm 126**

1When the Lord restored the for- | tunes of Zion,  
  then were we like | those who dream.  
 2**Then 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.  
 4**Restore our for- | tunes, O Lord,**  
  **like the watercourses | of the Negeb.**   
 5Those who | sowed with tears  
  will reap with | songs of joy.  
 6**Those who go out weeping, carry- | ing the seed,**  
  **will come again with joy, shoulder- | ing their sheaves.**

**Second Reading**  **1 Thessalonians 5:16-24**

A reading from 1 Thessalonians.

16Rejoice always, 17pray without ceasing, 18give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19Do not quench the Spirit. 20Do not despise the words of prophets, 21but test everything; hold fast to what is good; 22abstain from every form of evil.  
  23May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation**

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

**Alleluia. You have the words of eternal life.**

**Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel** **Mark 1:1-8**

The holy gospel according to Mark.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

6There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.  
  
  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.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON Pastor Becky Ebb Speese**

**Hymn of the Day “People Look East” ELW 248**



**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.**

\*Or, “he descended into hell,” another translation of this text in widespread use.

**Prayers of Intercession**

God of power and might, tear open the heavens and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

*A brief silence.*

God of preachers and messengers, you have entrusted your church with the work of proclaiming good news. Strengthen the witness of bishops, pastors, deacons, church musicians, lay leaders, and all people who contribute their prayers and talents to public worship. Embed your word in their hearts. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of every living creature, you announce the year of your favor for all of creation. Extend your kindness and relief to endangered animals and plants. Strengthen the human beings who rely on the rhythms of nature to make their living. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of all peoples and nations, you plant us as your oaks of righteousness and ask us to care for one another. Be present with the leaders of every nation as they govern. Give them a spirit of righteousness, that your goodness and mercy is revealed through their actions. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of exiles and wanderers, you repair what was once destroyed. We pray for people who have been displaced from their homes by fire, flood, earthquake, or storm. Support the work of Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Disaster Response, and all disaster relief organizations in their recovery efforts. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of the powerful and helpless, you clothe us with strength when our spirits are weak and weary. Bestow your spirit upon this congregation and empower us to comfort the people who turn to us in times of need. Make your church a place of refuge and healing. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of sinners and saints, you offer joy even in the midst of our grief. We are grateful for the beloved, imperfect people whose lives testified to your radiant. Anoint all who mourn with the oil of gladness. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**Peace**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**Offering & Offering Prayer**

Let us pray. God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**Thanksgiving at the Table**

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 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.

**Lord’s Prayer**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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.**

**COMMUNION**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is given and shed for you. You may receive your communion elements.

**Sending**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

**Blessing**

The God of steadfastness and encouragement

grant you to live in harmony with one another,

in accordance with Christ Jesus.

**Amen.**

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,

so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

The God of all grace ☩ bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

**Sending SonG “Soon and Very Soon” ELW 439**



**Dismissal**

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

**Thanks be to God.**

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**THANK YOU TO ALL WHO SERVED TODAY:**

**Presider: Rebecca Ebb-Speese**

**Musician: Martha Yoder**

**Elder: Jolene Griffin**

**Trustee: Jerry Engle**

**Offering counters: Doug Mackenzie and Mike Johnson**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

* + Council has voted to suspend in-person services until the positivity rate drops to 3%. People may continue to listen to the service in the parking and the service will be streamed.
  + Longest Night Service will be streamed at 5:00 PM on Wednesday, December 16.
  + Christmas Eve Service will be in parking lot at 6:00 PM. It will also be live streamed from the parking lot.
  + Along with donations of empty milk jugs/water jugs (leave inside back door), fill sand and candles are needed. Also needed are volunteers to set luminaries around the church and light them before the service. Please let Pastor Becky know if you can help.
  + Volunteers are needed for lay preachers on Jan. 24 and Feb 21. for Pastor Becky’s Sundays off
  + The ZLCW wishes to thank everyone who gave donations for our Thankoffering service. We collected $610 and the funds have been sent to the Women of the ELCA for their many programs. If anyone wises to receive a tax donation receipt, please contact me at 269-367-9191 and I will mail you one. Other years, I have put them in the mailboxes at church. Thank you, Carol Engle, ZLCW Treasurer.
  + Counters Needed. We are in need of a few more people to serve as volunteer counters for Sunday Offerings.  If you are willing to serve in this role, please let Martha or Karen know. Thank you.