**ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH, WOODLAND, MI**

**Second Sunday of Advent, December 10, 2023**

**\*If you are listening in your car, please tune your radio to FM 87.7\***

**ANNOUNCEMENTS & PRELUDE**

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH, Read by: Ken and Karen Heise**

In days when God’s people longed for peace, Isaiah declared, “Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins” (Isaiah 40:1).

We who gather today also seek comfort and peace, yet we are unsatisfied with ideas of peace that tell us to keep quiet and go with the flow. We long for real peace, true peace, just peace.

**Congregation: We wait as people who yearn for peace that bears the fruit of community, equity, and flourishing for all.**

We light these candles as signs of God’s shocking hope and just peace. May they be beacons calling us to repent and to live the good news of Jesus Christ as we wait and watch and labor for the day when all people can gather together to worship and glorify God. Amen.

*Light two candles of the Advent wreath.* (Verse Two)



**GATHERING**

The Lord is coming, always coming. When you have ears to hear and eyes to see, you will recognize him at any moment of your life. Life is Advent; life is recognizing the coming of the Lord. (Henri Nouwen)

**Confession and Forgiveness**

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

**Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires know, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our 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.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ☩ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

**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.**

**o cOME, O COME EMMANUEL** (Verse Two)





**Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray together.

**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. Amen.**

**First Reading  Isaiah 40:1-11**

A reading from Isaiah.

1Comfort, O comfort my people,  
  says your God.  
 2Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
  and cry to her  
 that she has served her term,  
  that her penalty is paid,  
 that she has received from the Lord’s hand  
  double for all her sins.  
 3A voice cries out:  
 “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,  
  make straight in the desert a highway for our God.  
 4Every valley shall be lifted up,  
  and every mountain and hill be made low;  
 the uneven ground shall become level,  
  and the rough places a plain.  
 5Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
  and all people shall see it together,  
  for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”  
 6A voice says, “Cry out!”  
  And I said, “What shall I cry?”  
 All people are grass,  
  their constancy is like the flower of the field.  
 7The grass withers, the flower fades,  
  when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;  
  surely the people are grass.  
 8The grass withers, the flower fades;  
  but the word of our God will stand forever.  
 9Get you up to a high mountain,  
  O Zion, herald of good tidings;  
 lift up your voice with strength,  
  O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,  
  lift it up, do not fear;  
 say to the cities of Judah,  
  “Here is your God!”  
 10See, the Lord God comes with might,  
  and his arm rules for him;  
 his reward is with him,  
  and his recompense before him.  
 11He will feed his flock like a shepherd;  
  he will gather the lambs in his arms,  
 and carry them in his bosom,  
  and gently lead the mother sheep.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13**

1You have been gracious to your **|** land, O Lord;  
  you have restored the good for- **|** tune of Jacob.  
 2**You have forgiven the iniquity | of your people**  
  **and blotted out | all their sins.**  
 8I will listen to what the Lord **|** God is saying;  
for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn their **|** hearts to you.  
 9**Truly, your salvation is very near to | those who fear you,**  
  **that your glory may dwell | in our land.**  
 10Steadfast love and faithfulness have **|** met together;  
  righteousness and peace have **|** kissed each other.  
 11**Faithfulness shall spring up | from the earth,**  
  **and righteousness shall look | down from heaven.**  
 12The Lord will indeed **|** grant prosperity,  
  and our land will **|** yield its increase.  
 13**Righteousness shall go be- | fore the Lord**  
  **and shall prepare for | God a pathway.**

**Second Reading 2 Peter 3:8-15a**

A reading from 2 Peter.

8Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. 9The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. 10But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.  
 11Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, 12waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? 13But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.  
 14Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; 15aand regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation**



**Gospel  Mark 1:1-8**

The holy gospel according to Mark.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

1The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.  
 2As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,   
 “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
  who will prepare your way;  
 3the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:  
  ‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
  make his paths straight,’ ”  
4John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 6Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. 8I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**CHILDREN’S TIME**

**Sermon  Pastor Jim Morgan**

**Hymn of the Day“Comfort, Comfort Now My People” ELW 256**



**CREED**

Joining with church in all times and places, let us affirm our faith.

**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**

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.*

Send forth your faithful people with words of promise and forgiveness. Teach your church to be bold in revealing your good news in word and in deed. We pray especially for Trinity Lutheran Church in Kalamazoo, Rev. Ken Johnson, and Rev. Jacob Lehman. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Reveal your majesty in mountain peaks, flowing rivers, and blossoming wilderness roads. Heal the earth where it longs for renewal. Bring wholeness to the earth and all its creatures. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Turn the hearts of the nations toward righteousness and peace. Increase cooperation for justice between countries, commonwealths, political parties, and diplomatic leaders. In times of prosperity, direct leaders to be generous for the sake of all. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Comfort your people with tender words of love and healing. We pray especially for all those affected by gun violence, Ukraine, Sudan, Turkey, Syria, and the Middle East. Surround all who are grieving, all who know depression or anxiety, or all who feel lonely or forgotten. Be a steadfast presence when all else feels uncertain. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Grant holy patience to all who are waiting this season. Give hope to those seeking employment. Bring reassurance to people awaiting new diagnoses or treatments. Protect expectant parents. Watch with those who keep bedside vigil. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

With you a thousand years is like a day. Bless the memory of the saints from ages past and the anticipation of saints yet to be born. Inspire us to live with faith as we await your new heaven and new earth. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

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

**Amen.**

**Peace**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**Offering & OFFERING SONG**

The joy of the Lord is my strength,

The joy of the Lord is my strength,

The joy of the Lord is my strength,

The joy of the Lord is my strength.

**Offering Prayer**

Let us pray. Blessed are you, O God, ruler of heaven and earth. Day by day you shower us with blessings. As you have raised us to new life in Christ, give us glad and generous hearts, ready to praise you and to respond to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**Great Thanksgiving**

**Dialogue**

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.**

**Holy, Holy, Holy**



**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.**

**Invitation to Communion**

Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

**communion** \**continuous*

*\*People are welcome to kneel at the altar rail for a time of prayer after they receive their communion elements*

**SongS During Communion**

**“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” ELW 254**



**“I Am the Bread of Life” ELW 485**



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**Prayer after Communion**

Let us pray. God of abundance, with this bread of life and cup of salvation you have united us with Chrit, making us one with all your people. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

**Sending**

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

**Blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

**Amen.**

**Sending SonG “How Firm a Foundation” ELW 796**



**Dismissal**

Go in peace. Share the good news.

**Thanks be to God.**

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**Thank you to all who served in worship today!**

**Presider: Pastor Jim Morgan**

**Musician: Jayne Flanigan**

**Acolyte: Lexi Griffin**

**Elder: Bufy Meyers**

**Trustee: Martha Yoder**

**Offering Counters: Diane Griffin & Carlotta Willard**

**Safety Person: Naomi Wilson**

**This week at Zion:**

* Council Meeting, 6:30 PM Tuesday, December 12
* Men’s Coffee, 8 AM Wednesday, December 13
* Women’s Fellowship C&R’s restaurant, 9AM Thursday, December 14

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

* **Door Locking Policy:** Our door locking policy relies on having a volunteer(s) each Sunday to serve as the Safety Person of the Day. On Sundays where no one has volunteered, if someone arrives at church and is willing to be the Safety Person of the Day, we will follow the door locking policy. If no one steps forward to serve as the Safety Person of the Day, the doors will not be locked as there will be no one to monitor the church cell phone and let late arrivals into the church. Please consider volunteering for this important duty
* **Benevolence Fund:** Please prayerfully consider giving to the Benevolence fund. Through November, we are $1,414 short of our 2023 budget approved commitment of $4,200. If the commitment is not achieved, the balance will come out of the church's general fund. If you have any questions, please feel free to see Karen Heise or a member of council. Thank you.
* **Church Musician Opening**: We have an opening for the position of church musician for two Sundays a month starting in January 2024. The musician would play liturgy and hymns for our Sunday worship services. If you are aware of anyone who may be interested in sharing their musical gifts with Zion, please contact Buffy Meyers. It is a paid position.
* **Call Committee Update:** The Call Committee continues to meet and research candidates from the synod. Please pray for wisdom and patience for the Call Committee and the congregation.

**LAKEWOOD COMMUNITY COUNCIL CHRISTMAS PROJECT 2023**

Here is information about the annual Christmas Basket project, sponsored by the Lakewood Community Council. A Thrivent Action Grant has been granted for $250 and will be used to purchase the children’s gifts and some socks, hats, and gloves/mittens.

The schedule is as follows:

* Tuesday, December 12 from 9 AM-noon: receive and organize food from Feeding America. Set up tables and make up boxes.
* Wednesday, December 13 from 9 AM-noon: Distribute food into boxes.

\*If needed, 6 PM-9 PM: Finish packing food into boxes.

* Thursday, December 14 from 9 AM-noon: Pack letters, meat certificates, seal boxes, number boxes, and tape information to side of boxes.
* Friday, December 15 from 9 AM-noon: Match up gift bags with boxes, sort boxes into communities, set up for distribution.
* Saturday, December 16 from 9 AM-noon: Deliver boxes to families.

Questions should be directed to Claude Smith.