**ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH, WOODLAND, MI**

**Christmas Eve, December 24, 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: Buffy & Emil Meyers**

To a people longing for hope and yearning for deliverance, the prophet Isaiah declared,

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined…For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:2, 6)

Tonight, we come seeking hope, peace, joy, and love, and we find these things in a child. God made flesh as a baby in a manger. A baby who is both the beginning and the end of our salvation, who dwells with us even now, our Emmanuel, God with us.

**Congregation: We live as people in the in-between who celebrate the arrival of the Light that shines in lost and broken places as we wait for the day when we will live in the fullness of God’s kin-dom.**

We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, our just peace, our fierce joy, the love that transforms us, and Jesus Christ, our wondrous Light. May the Light burning in our hearts guide us, comfort us, protect us, and tend us in all seasons and circumstances, reminding us that day and night, in the light and in the darkness, God is with us. Our salvation has come! Amen.

*Light five candles of the Advent wreath.* (Verse Four)



**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“What Child Is This?” ELW 296**



**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** (Verses Three & Four)





**Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray together.

**Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus’ presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**First Reading  Isaiah 9:2-7**

A reading from Isaiah.

2The people who walked in darkness  
  have seen a great light;  
 those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
  on them light has shined.  
 3You have multiplied the nation,  
  you have increased its joy;  
 they rejoice before you  
  as with joy at the harvest,  
  as people exult when dividing plunder.  
 4For the yoke of their burden,  
  and the bar across their shoulders,  
  the rod of their oppressor,  
  you have broken as on the day of Midian.  
 5For all the boots of the tramping warriors  
  and all the garments rolled in blood  
  shall be burned as fuel for the fire.  
 6For a child has been born for us,  
  a son given to us;  
 authority rests upon his shoulders;  
  and he is named  
 Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
  Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
 7His authority shall grow continually,  
  and there shall be endless peace  
 for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
  He will establish and uphold it  
 with justice and with righteousness  
  from this time onward and forevermore.  
 The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm Psalm 96**

1Sing to the Lord **|** a new song;  
  sing to the Lord, **|** all the earth.  
 2**Sing to the Lord, bless the name | of the Lord;**  
  **proclaim God’s salvation from | day to day.**  
 3Declare God’s glory a- **|** mong the nations  
  and God’s wonders a- **|** mong all peoples.  
 4**For great is the Lord and greatly | to be praised,**  
  **more to be feared | than all gods.**   
 5As for all the gods of the nations, they **|** are but idols;  
  but you, O Lord, have **|** made the heavens.  
 6**Majesty and magnificence are | in your presence;**  
  **power and splendor are in your | sanctuary.**  
 7Ascribe to the Lord, you families **|** of the peoples,  
  ascribe to the Lord hon- **|** or and power.  
 8**Ascribe to the Lord the honor due the | holy name;**  
  **bring offerings and enter the courts | of the Lord.**   
 9Worship the Lord in the beau- **|** ty of holiness;  
  tremble before the Lord, **|** all the earth.  
 10**Tell it out among the nations: “The | Lord is king!**  
  **The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved will judge the peo- | ples with equity.”**  
 11Let the heavens rejoice, and let the **|** earth be glad;  
  let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that **|** is therein.  
 12**Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your com- | ing, O Lord,**  
  **for you come to | judge the earth.**  
 13You will judge the **|** world with righteousness  
  and the peoples **|** with your truth.

**Second Reading Titus 2:11-14**

A reading from Titus.

11The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, 12training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, 13while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. 14He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation**



**Gospel  Luke 2:1-14[15-20]**

The holy gospel according to Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

1In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3All went to their own towns to be registered. 4Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. 5He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. 6While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 7And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.  
 8In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. 12This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” 13And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,  
 14“Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
  and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”  
[  
 15When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” 16So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. 17When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; 18and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. 19But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. 20The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.]

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**CHILDREN’S TIME**

**Sermon  Pastor Polly Standley**

**Hymn of the Day“It Came Upon a Midnight Clear” ELW 282**



**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**

Trusting in God’s good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

*A brief silence.*

Glory to you, God, for the song of the angels, proclaiming to the world Christ’s holy birth. Give your church a joyful song to sing, that we bring the good news of peace and salvation to all people. Mamrelund Lutheran Church in Kent City and Rev. Michael Conklin. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the stars that shine in the depth of the night. Provoke awe in our hearts at the expansive mystery of the cosmos. Open us to find beauty in the clear darkness of night and in the first glimmers of dawn. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the child born to us who establishes a kingdom of justice and righteousness. Break bonds of oppression, bring reconciliation to warring lands, and establish peace from this time onward and forevermore. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for Mary’s loving care. Lead us to tend to one another in time of need. Share the comfort of your presence with all people tonight who are alone or separated from loved ones due to estrangement, incarceration, or illness. We pray especially for all those affected by gun violence, Ukraine, Sudan, Turkey, and Syria. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the faithfulness of the shepherds in their vocation. Grant rest to any who feel exhausted from their work during this season: retail and restaurant workers, church musicians, administrative staff, and clergy, organizers of charitable-giving events, and service workers doing essential tasks. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the multitude of the heavenly host. We rejoice in the zeal of all your saints who have witnessed the appearing of your grace, and who reveal to us your salvation for all. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.

**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**

**“Away in a Manger” ELW 277**



**“The First Noel” ELW 300**



**“Angels from the Realms of Glory” ELW 275**



**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.**

**CANDLE LIGHTING**

**The Pastor will light her candle. Then the congregation should light their candles. Candles should be lit as we sing Silent Night, then turned off.**

**CAROL “Silent Night” ELW 281**



**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 “Joy to the World” ELW 267**



**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 Polly Standley**

**Musician: Martha Yoder**

**Acolyte: Kole Hokanson**

**Elder: Dan Utterback**

**Trustee: Mike Johnson**

**Offering Counters: Doug Mackenzie & Mike Johnson**

**Safety Person: Naomi Wilson**

**PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

With thanks for all God’s blessings and his love for all people. Our Bishops, Craig Satterlee Elizabeth Eaton, and the congregations of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod. **Mamrelund Lutheran Church in Kent City and Rev. Michael Conklin**

Prayers for our friends, for all who are sick or hospitalized and for all health care workers who care for them. We pray especially all those affected by gun violence, Ukraine, Sudan, Turkey, and Syria. All those members of Zion’s family traveling; all those homebound or in frail health; all those suffering with quiet, unknown needs or worries.

For those who serve on our behalf: public safety, utility workers, medical personnel, military personnel. For those who might be forgotten.

**This week at Zion:**

* Men’s Coffee, 8 AM Wednesday, December 27
* **Newsletter deadline, 8 PM Wednesday, December 27, 2023**

**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.