

Zion Lutheran Church
Thief River Falls, MN

New Traditions Worship
Season of Advent

9:00 AM Worship
December 24, 2023

Pre-service Music
Welcome & Announcements
Call to Worship Nora Fay



SONG “We Light the Advent Candles”
We light the Advent candles against the winter
night

**to welcome our Lord Jesus, who is the world’s true light;
to welcome our Lord Jesus, who is the world’s true light.**

Text: Gracia Grindal
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LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Today we continue our celebration of Advent. On these Sundays leading up to Christmas, we have rejoiced in the great gift that is ours in Jesus Christ.

We light the candles of the Advent wreath. The candles signify that Jesus is the Light of the World. The evergreens remind us that Jesus is life and brings life to us. All these are arranged in a circle because life in Christ has no end.

Each Sunday we light an additional candle. As we do, we remember that Christ has come to us. He is Immanuel...God with us. Today is the fourth Sunday of Advent – the Sunday of Love.

Jesus shows us God’s perfect love. He is God’s perfect love in human form. Those who believe in him and live in him, live in love. Love transforms and perfects all things. It never ends.

We light this candle today to remind us that God is love. We thank God for the hope given to us, for the peace of God which passes all understanding, for the joy God pours into our hearts, and for the love that redeems us and shows us the way.

SONG “A Candle is Burning” *sung to the tune of “Away in a Manger”*
**A candle is burning, a candle of peace,
a candle to signal that conflict must cease;
for Jesus is coming to show us the way;
a message of peace humbly laid in the hay**

Text © 1986, Sandra Dean

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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,

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.

God clothes you with garments of salvation
and covers you with robes of righteousness.

In the tender mercy of ☩ Jesus Christ,
your sins are forgiven.

Amen.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Word

FIRST READING: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Instead of David building a house (temple) for God, God promises to establish David's house (dynasty) forever. Centuries later, after the Babylonian exile, no king sat on the throne. Even then, however, the people of Israel remembered this promise and continued to hope for a king, the messiah, God's anointed.

¹Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." ³Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" ⁸Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will

make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth.¹⁰ And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly,¹¹ from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house.¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

Word of God, Word of Life...Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Luke 1:46b-55

^{46b}My soul proclaims the greatness^l of the Lord,

⁴⁷my spirit rejoices in^l God my Savior,

⁴⁸**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your^l lowly servant.**

From this day all generations will^l call me blessed:

⁴⁹you, the Almighty, have done great^l things for me
and holy^l is your name.

⁵⁰**You have mercy on^l those who fear you,
from generation to^l generation.**

⁵¹You have shown strength^l with your arm
and scattered the proud in^l their conceit,

⁵²**casting down the mighty^l from their thrones
and lifting^l up the lowly.**

⁵³You have filled the hungry^l with good things
and sent the rich^l away empty.

⁵⁴**You have come to the aid of your^l servant Israel,
to remember the promise of mercy,**

⁵⁵the promise made^l to our forebears,
to Abraham and his children forever.

SECOND READING: Romans 16:25-27

Paul closes his letter to the Romans by praising God because, in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, God has revealed the promised, divine plan of salvation for all humanity. Paul proclaims this gospel of Christ in order to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations.

²⁵Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages

²⁶but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

Word of God, Word of Life...Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL of Luke 1:26-38

In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people from little known places. This king will not be born to royalty in a palace, but to common folk in a stall. Here Luke highlights the role of the Spirit, a special emphasis in this gospel.

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He 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. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The 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. ³⁶And 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. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then 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.

Sermon Pastor Kristin Ostercamp

Hymn of the Day "My Soul Proclaims your Greatness" ELW #251

SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

Baptism of Xander Cameron Stewart, son of Morgan & Ross Stewart
Sponsors are Shelley & Ryan Holweger

In Holy Baptism our gracious heavenly Father frees us from sin and death by joining us to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are born children of a fallen humanity; by water and the Holy Spirit we are reborn children of God and made members of the church, the body of Christ. Living with Christ and in the communion of the saints, we grow in faith, love, and obedience to the will of God.

Who is presented to receive the sacrament of Holy Baptism?

Parents: Xander Cameron

I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin and confess the faith of the church, the faith in which we baptize. Do you renounce all the forces of evil, the devil and all his empty promises?

I renounce them.

Do you believe in God the Father?

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

**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.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**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.**

The child is Baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you

Let us pray...God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we give you thanks for freeing your sons and daughters from the power of sin and for raising them up to new life through this holy sacrament. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon **Xander** the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence.

Xander Cameron, Child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.

Parents, Sponsors, People of God, as Riker Emmett has been here baptized, you are now entrusted with these responsibilities: you should faithfully bring him to the services of God's house, and teach her the Lord's prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. As he grows in years, you should place in his hands the Holy Scriptures and provide for his instruction in the Christian faith, that living in the covenant in his Baptism and in communion with the Church, she may lead a godly life unto the day of Jesus Christ. Do you promise to fulfill these obligations? If so say, I do.

The candle is lit

Jesus says in Matthew 5:

"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house." In the same way, **Xander**, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Let us welcome our brother in Christ.

We welcome you into the Lord's Family. We receive you as a member of the body of Christ, a child of the same heavenly Father, and worker with us in the kingdom of God.

THE SHARING OF PEACE

The Peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

OFFERING/ OFFERTORY "Your Little Ones, Dear Lord" ELW #286 v. 1&3

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Your little ones, dear Lord, are we,
and come your lowly bed to see;
enlighten ev'ry soul and mind,
that we the way to you may find. | 3 Oh, draw us wholly to you, Lord,
and to us all your grace accord;
true faith and love to us impart,
that we may hold you in our heart. |
|---|---|

text: Hans A. Brorson, 1694-1764; tr. Harriet Krauth Spaeth, 1845-1925, alt.

PRAYERS

During these weeks of waiting and expecting, where people live in fear of the unknown,
we pray for peace.

Where people are confused about your will for their lives or for the world,
we pray for clarity.

Where people doubt your presence and your word,
we pray for trust.

Where people are curious, and await the future with hopeful anticipation,
we pray for wonder.

Other petitions will be offered here.

Most of all, when the world longs for you,
we pray you help us respond with glad tidings of comfort and joy.

We pray all this in the name of Jesus, our long-expected Savior.

Amen.

COMMUNION

BLESSING

BENEDICTION

SENDING HYMN "Canticle of the Turning" ELW #723

DISMISSAL

Go into the world knowing Christ and making him known.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Post-service Music

WELCOME! ZION'S LAY MINISTRY/EVANGELISM BOARD EXTENDS A SPECIAL WELCOME TO YOU THIS MORNING. MAY YOU BE FED SPIRITUALLY DURING THIS TIME OF WORSHIP.

OUR THANKS TO TODAY'S WORSHIP LEADERS/ASSISTANTS

Pastor: Kristin Ostercamp Pianist: Laura Rude Organist: Marie Longo

Greeters: Reader : Kami Spears Acolytes:

Ushers: Wayne & Jeri Nomeland

OUR PRAYERS TO ALL GOD'S CHILDREN STANDING IN THE NEED OF PRAYER.

Especially: Those under a doctor's care, those who grieve, and all who are moving through a challenging season.

Rose bouquet in memory of Nels Lindseth, brother-in-law of Richard Jorde

TODAY WE WELCOME THROUGH THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM: (9:00)

Xander Cameron Stewart, son of Morgan & Ross Stewart.

Xander's sponsors are Shelley & Ryan Holweger

ZION WORSHIP SERVICE ONLINE Sunday mornings you can listen to the 9:00AM service online. Go to: www.ziontrf.org. in the black banner click Listen Online, Click on the RED link to KTRF.

BROADCASTS today are in memory of Ione Sparby by Wally Sparby.

WEBSITE sponsor for December is Chris, Nicky, Caitlynn & Brianne Ellison sponsored in memory of Joe & Ginny Armstrong.

SEEKING THE STAR- Where will you see the star? Keep your eyes open as a star travels through our building making its way into the sanctuary on Christmas Eve where it will shine above the altar.

NEW YEAR'S EVE DINNER CHURCH, Sunday, Dec. 31, 4:00 PM in the Zion Fellowship Hall -

A dinner church is simply the church gathered around the dinner table. On New Year's Eve when the world as so many are rushing into the New Year, you are invited to gather for a meal with your church family. We fellowship with one another, hear scripture and meditate on the Word.

We will say our prayers and share in the Lord's Supper.

A main dish and bread will be provided. You are invited to bring a side dish or dessert. If you want to join and don't have the energy to do one more thing, there will be enough for all!

This is a festive occasion. Wear sparkles and sequins, pop on a bow tie, pull out a favorite hat or come as you are comfortable. All are welcome!

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR WORK AND WITNESS!

Dec. 11-17 Offerings: \$11,890. Dec 1-17 Offerings: \$27,472. Weekly Goal: \$6,547.

VANCO ELECTRONIC GIVING –Sign up available on Zion's website or contact the church office.

2024 OFFERING ENVELOPES - Offering envelopes are in the narthex for next year.

Those on Vanco electronic giving do not have envelopes. If you cannot find yours, contact the church office.

Reminder - any contribution intended for 2023 must be received by Monday, January 2nd to be included on 2023 giving. If you are mailing, please mail early as postmark does not guarantee it will be received by Jan. 2nd.

Getting Through the Holidays When You've Lost a Loved One: Although the holidays can be a painful time after losing a loved one, they can also be a time to cherish fond memories and traditions.

This *Care Note* guides you through the holidays and beyond so that your focus will be on your loved one's life not their death. Please pick one up for yourself from the table in the Narthex. Grab another to share with a family member or friend. *Care Notes* are available in the Narthex and by the Offices on a variety of topics for all ages. They are provided by Parish Health.

Sharing the Peace - Due to the increase in COVID cases and the upcoming flu season, Parish Health would like to return to elbow bumping instead of hand shakes and only verbal messages for the Peace greetings during the church service. An increase in our hand washing is also strongly suggested. Thank You!

Parish Health Notes— The red of holly berries, the green of fir trees, the gold of candlelight or stars, the whiteness of snow fields...these are the colors of Christmas. Human beings have always been cheered or excited by warm colors like red or yellow, and soothed by cool colors like blue and green.

Red, the color of greatest excitement, is also a special color of December. In the language of religious symbols, it stands for fire, blood, and charity. At Christmas people enjoy gathering together. And, wherever they are, people are likely to be their kindest and most charitable.

Green is a symbol of nature, a symbol of youth and the hope of eternal life. Christmas is a feast of hope, with a newborn child as its eternal symbol.

White, as a religious symbol, stands for light, purity, joy, and glory.

We see it in the robes of Christmas angels and in Christmas snow or in snowflakes. In Northern Europe and America, snow covers the ground at Christmas. In southern California roses are blooming. On Florida beaches people are sunbathing. Yet in warm places like these, snow spangles the windows of stores and lies under many Christmas trees. It is artificial snow, but a link with the northern Yuletide.

Gold stands for sunlight and radiance. It is the color of shining Christmas stars, sparking tinsel, glowing candles, or blazing electric bulbs. Artists through the ages have shown Christ in a pool of light, or with a bright halo around his head.

Regardless of religion, almost everyone enjoys the colors of Christmas: cheerful red, hopeful green, snowy white, and dazzling gold.

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the Magi, and the peace of the Christ child. May the peace, love, and comfort of the season be with you and yours throughout the holidays....and into the new year!

- *Parish Health*

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:

Today: Sunday, Advent 4, Dec. 24:

9:00 Zion worship/Baptism/Broadcast ch. 3; KTRF
No Sunday School/ Cornerstone Kids
No Coffee fellowship

Next Sunday, Dec. 31:

9:00 Zion worship/Broadcast ch. 3; KTRF
No Sunday School/ Cornerstone Kids
No Coffee fellowship
4PM Dinner Worship in the Fellowship Hall

December 24: Christmas Eve Services

4 Zion Christmas Worship
5:30 Silver Creek Christmas Worship/Holy Communion
10 Zion Christmas Worship/Holy Communion
12 Zion broadcast on cable ch. 37

Monday, Dec 25: Christmas Day

Offices Closed

Tuesday, Dec 26:

9-12 Faith Community Nurse hours

Thursday, Dec. 28

9 SAIL exercise
12:30 Respite Care