

**ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA**  
Thief River Falls, MN  
**Season of Advent / Sunday School Christmas Program**  
Holy Communion  
December 17, 2023 9:00 AM

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## PRELUDE

*(\*Please stand as you are comfortable)*

### **\*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.**

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### **LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE**

Today we continue our celebration of Advent. On these Sundays leading up to Christmas, we rejoice 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 third Sunday of Advent – the Sunday of Joy.

**Our joy is in God and Jesus Christ. Like peace, joy is a gift from God. It overtakes us and fills us when we remember what God has done and what God has promised to do.**

We light this candle today to remind us that Christ came, and is coming, so that all people might have a rich and abundant life. We thank God for the hope given to us, for the peace of God which passes all understanding and for the joy God pours into our hearts.

### **SONG      “A Candle is Burning”** *sung to the tune of “Away in a Manger”*

**A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright.**

**A candle of hope in December’s dark night.**

**While angels sing blessing from heaven’s starry sky,**

**our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.**

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.**

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM**

### **2023 Sunday School Christmas Program Worship**

*Children Process with Battery Operated Candles and Lamps while the congregation sings*

#### **Procession: Lost in the Night ELW #243**

- 1     Lost in the night do the people yet languish,  
        longing for morning the darkness to vanquish,  
        plaintively sighing with hearts full of anguish.  
        Will not day come soon? Will not day come soon?
- 2     Must we be vainly awaiting the morrow?  
        Shall those who have light no light let us borrow,  
        giving no heed to our burden of sorrow?  
        Will you help us soon? Will you help us soon?
- 3     Sorrowing wand'ers, in darkness yet dwelling,  
        dawned has the day of a radiance excelling,  
        death's deepest shadows forever dispelling.  
        Christ is coming soon! Christ is coming soon!
- 4     Light o'er the land of the needy is beaming;  
        rivers of life through its deserts are streaming,  
        bringing all peoples a Savior redeeming.  
        Come and save us soon! Come and save us soon!

#### **READER 1- Nora Fay**

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

There was nothing but emptiness and darkness.

But the Spirit of God moved over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. <sup>4</sup> God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night."

**All   And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.**

READER

The second day, God created the sky and saw it was good.

**All   And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.**

READER

The third day, God created the land and God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup>

**All   And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.**

#### **READER 2- Blake Scheef**

The fourth day, God made the sun and moon and the stars. And God saw that it was good.

**All   And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.**

READER

The fifth day, God created fish and whales and the birds. And God saw that it was good.

**All And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.**

READER

The sixth day, God made wild animals and livestock And God saw that it was good. On the sixth day, God created humankind in his own image, God saw all that was made, and it was very good.

**All And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.**

READER

The heavens and the earth were completed. By the seventh day God had finished the work. God rested and the seventh day was made holy.

SONG: This Is the Day

READER 3- Quinn Harris

READER 4- Farrah Hart

READER 5- Paisley Sorenson

READER 6- Kora Harris

READER 7- Miley Bruggeman

Song, “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” Duet- Nora Fay, Lilly Bregier

READER 8- Landen Dunn

*Jesus’ Birth Foretold, based on Luke 1:26-38*

Narrator- AJ Fay, Mary- Lola Sorenson, Gabriel- Jace Walseth

Song: Refrain from “Here I am, Lord”

*Joseph’s Dream, based on Matthew 1:18-25*

Narrator- Zachary Ostercamp, Angel- Amellia Wilson

Song: Refrain from “Here I am, Lord”

READER 9- Brooklyn Leines

READER 10- Isabel Kainz

*The Birth of Jesus, based on Luke 2:1-7*

Narrator 1- Ella Hart, Narrator 2- Dani Hart, Narrator 3- Caden Nelson

Song: Away in the Manger

READER 11- Farran Fain

Song: Happy Birthday Jesus

*The Shepherds and the Angels, based on Luke 2:8-20*

Narrator-Aubree Lian, Angel- Lola Sorenson, Choir/All, Shepherd- Odin Johnson

READER 12- Penny Nelson

Song: This Little Light of Mine/Joy to the World

**NOISY OFFERING for Austin's Hope - We sing "The Bells of Christmas" ELW # 275**

**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.

**COMMUNION**

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer- Cornerstone Kids Sing

**Songs during communion:**

"O Little Town of Bethlehem" ELW#279

"The First Noel" ELW#300

"What Child Is This" ELW#296

**BLESSING**

**BENEDICTION - Cornerstone**

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 Wiseman, and the peace of the Christ Child. Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever. Amen

**SENDING HYMN "Angels From the Realms of Glory" ELW #275**

**SENDING**

Go into the world knowing Christ and making him known. **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

**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: Wanda & Jerry Schuster, Syver Bertilrud      Communion: Tim & Kristi Numedahl  
Ushers: Glenice & Krista Johnson      Acolytes: Landen Larson, Mikkel Bertilrud  
Advent Readers: Zac & Jenna Svir family

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**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.

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

**BROADCASTS** today are in memory of Loved Ones by Dick & Jan Haugen.

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

**THANK YOU** to Laura Rude, Laura Fay, Amber Holtan, and all our Sunday School teachers & kids, Cornerstone youth and parents for celebrating Christmas with your good work on the program today. Keep shining your lights!

**ADVENT LONGEST NIGHT WORSHIP** Wednesday, Dec. 20 - Supper will be served at 5:30 followed by worship at 6:30pm. - All are welcome!

**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.

**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR WORK AND WITNESS!**

Dec. 4-10 Offerings: \$4,156. Dec 1-10 Offerings: \$15,582. Weekly Goal: \$6,547. Carpet donations: \$6,410.

**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.

**POINSETTIAS** If you wish to bring a poinsettia or flower to share for Christmas services, you may bring them in the week of Christmas. If you are sharing the flower in memory or in honor of a loved one, please call or email the church office by December 18th to have it listed in the Christmas bulletin.

**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** — Coping with the holidays....Many bereaved persons dread the holidays as often it can be difficult to face the prospect of celebration while missing the individual they loved. Others may welcome the holidays, finding in them an opportunity for diversion as well as support as families and friends gather. Whatever one's perspective on the holidays is, it is important to avoid two strategies that are bound to fail. The first of these is to try to ignore the holidays. Another strategy which is equally poor is to keep the holidays just as they always were. This is bound to fail. After all, traditions cannot be the same. Someone loved is not there.

The holiday can be observed a bit differently. This can be done in a number of ways. For example, one can alter the traditional menu, celebrate in a different place, or add or subtract activities that were part of previous traditions. The fact is that the deceased person is often the uninvited guest. That individual is on everyone's mind. It can help as well to include the deceased within the holiday. Lighting a candle, offering a prayer in remembrance, or toasting the person are all ways that can be helpful in acknowledging the presence of that absence. This breaks the conspiracy of silence and offers opportunity for others to share memories, stories, and grief. Most importantly, share and communicate these ideas with all the others involved and when there is conflict, find compromise. The holidays may not be easy, but they can affirm that even in our grief, we can respond with thanks and gratitude for the gifts of the person we loved and have now lost.

"Grief is a most peculiar thing; we're so helpless in the face of it. It's like a window that will simply open of its own accord. The room grows cold, and we can do nothing but shiver. But it opens a little less each time, and one day we wonder what has become of it." Arthur Golden, *Memoirs of a Geisha*. - *God's Blessing and Peace Parish Health*

#### **SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:**

##### **Today: Sunday, Advent 3, Dec. 17:**

9:00 Zion HC worship/Sunday School Christmas Program/Broadcast ch. 3; KTRF  
10 Sunday School/ Cornerstone Kids  
10 Food & Fellowship  
11 Silver Creek Holy Communion Worship  
12 Zion broadcast on cable ch. 37

##### **Monday, Dec 18:**

9 SAIL exercise

##### **Tuesday, Dec 19:**

9-12 Faith Community Nurse today  
1:30 TRCC communion  
2:30 Oakland Park communion  
5:30 Zion Council

##### **Wednesday, Dec 20:**

9 Bible Study  
5:45 God's Joy  
**5:30 Advent Supper**  
**6:30 Advent Longest Night Worship**  
7:15 Choir

##### **Thursday, Dec. 21**

9 SAIL exercise  
12:30 Respite Care

##### **Friday, Dec. 22:**

8 Men's Breakfast

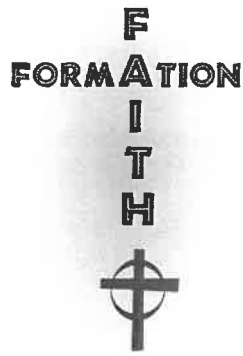
##### **Next Sunday, Advent 4, Dec. 24:**

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

##### **December 24: Christmas Eve Services**

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

##### **December 25: No service**



**Sunday School**— age 3 thru Grade 5 from 10-11 AM

**Cornerstone Kids**—Grade 6 & 7 meet from 10-11 in the youth room.

**Christmas Program**—December 17th during 9:00 worship.

**Confirmation Students** - are asked to attend Wednesday Advent Services. Regular Classes resume in January.

**YOUTH NOTES:**

**Thank you to our families for providing treats for coffee following worship each Sunday.**

**Please bring 2 dozen baked goods on or before Sunday,**

January 7: Jaime & Ashley Miramontes, Jared & Alyssa Vandestreek, Jared & Stephanie Kainz, Jason & Ashley Klaven

**NOISY OFFERING for December** will go to **Austin's Hope** - Dec. 10th & 17th

**God's Creation Calendars** - 2024 Calendars are available \$8.00 each. Limited number available.

**FOOD & FELLOWSHIP** - Join us for breakfast served after worship on Sunday, December 17th. Free-will donation goes to youth programming. Breakfast will be served by 9th Grade students.

