

December 17, 2023 • Third Sunday in Advent
9:00 and 11:30am



Zion lutheran
church

WELCOME TO ZION

When we gather for worship, we're receptive to God's word and we rejoice in God's grace through song, prayer, and Holy Communion. The history of Christian worship is rich with rituals formed by generations. These traditions, prayers, and pastoral teachings help connect our lives with Christ. In our daily lives, we show God's love by serving our community, both locally and globally.

We are a group of believers seeking to respond to Christ's call to worship and serve, even as we wrestle with the big questions of life. We want you to know that you and your questions, faith, and doubts are welcome here!

HOW WE WORSHIP

The Holy Spirit gathers people around the means of grace: the Word of God and the Sacraments. From the table of Holy Communion where Christ comes with forgiveness, life, and salvation, God sends us out to share the good news and care for those in need. Our worship follows this pattern in four parts: Gathering, Word, Meal, and Sending. By its very nature, Lutheran worship is participatory and the service is contained within this bulletin. Worship leaders guide us through the service and our responses are printed in **bold type**.

We welcome children in our worship services! If needed, a nursery is available down the hallway past the restrooms. The restrooms contain changing tables, as needed.

Throughout the service, members of Zion's music ministry offer their talents as an offering to God. Please receive their musical gifts as a time for prayer, contemplation, or praise of God rather than a performance to be applauded, so that we may worship God throughout our time here together.

Zion Lutheran Church

9944 Leslie Road • San Antonio, Texas 78254 • 210-688-3090 • zion@zionsa.org

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, gathers us in worship.

PRELUDE

9:00	<i>A Carol Jubilee</i> arranged by Sharon Elery Rogers	Handbells
11:30	<i>Canticle of the Turning</i> setting by Anne Krentz Organ	

THE CHRISMON TREE

The beautiful tree in our chancel is called a Chrismon tree. If you look closely, you'll see that it differs from Christmas trees in the relative simplicity of the colors - white and gold, which are the liturgical colors of the Christmas season. The chrismons themselves are a wide variety of Christian symbols, some of which reach back to the very beginnings of Christianity. The main goal of these symbols is to point us to Jesus Christ.

This year, we've also incorporated the smaller chrismons on the small trees in the Narthex. Throughout Advent, into Christmas, until Epiphany (which we celebrate January 7 here), the small trees and the large one help us keep Christ as the focal point of our celebrations.

WELCOME

Pastor Dan Heim

Please rise, as you are able.

Section end. Section end.

GATHERING HYMN

Hark, the Glad Sound

1 Hark, the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, the Sav - ior
 2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, in Sa - tan's
 3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, the bleed - ing
 4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of peace, your wel - come

prom - ised long; let ev - 'ry heart pre -
 bond - age held. The gates of brass be -
 soul to cure, and with the trea - sures
 shall pro - claim, and heav'n's e - ter - nal

pare a throne and ev - 'ry voice a song.
 fore him burst, the i - ron fet - ters yield.
 of his grace to en - rich the hum - ble poor.
 arch - es ring with your be - lov - ed name.

Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702-1751
 Music: CHESTERFIELD, Thomas Haweis, 1734-1820

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.

KYRIE

Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Christ, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy.

Christ, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy, have mer - cy.

Music: *Deutsche Messe*, Franz Schubert, 1797–1828; adapt. Richard Proulx, b. 1937
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PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

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.

Please be seated.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.

CHILDREN'S CHAT

Pastor Dan Heim

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 61:1-4, 8-11

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.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 126

Refrain

William Bradley Roberts



The LORD has done great things for us, and we are glad in-deed.

Psalm refrain reproduced from *Psalm Settings for the Church Year: Revised Common Lectionary*
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When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy. *Refrain.*

Then they said among the nations, The Lord has done great things for them.
The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.
Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the water courses of the Negeb. *Refrain.*

Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.
Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, will come again with joy
shouldering their sheaves. *Refrain.*

SECOND READING: 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-24

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.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Please rise, as you are able.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia, to
whom, O Lord, shall we go? You have the words of e -
ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

Text: *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, based on John 6:68 and Psalm 119:41-42; copyright © 2006, admin. Augsburg Fortress
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GOSPEL: LUKE 1:46B-55

Mary Visits Elizabeth
Spark Children's Bible Page 202

The holy gospel according to Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

⁴⁶And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. ⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. ⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please be seated.

SERMON

Pastor Kathi Johnson

Please rise, as you are able.

Assembly

My soul pro-claims the great-ness of the Lord, my
spir-it sings for joy in God my Sav-ior. You look with fa-vor up - on your ser-vant,
bless-ed is my name. You have done great things for me, ho - ly is_ your
name. You send your mer-cy to those who fear you through ev - 'ry age.
You have shown the strength of your arm, you have scorned the thoughts of the proud,
you cast down the might - y, you have lift - ed the low - ly, ho - ly is your
name. You have filled the hun-gry with good things, you have left the rich with emp-ty
hands, you have come to the help of your peo-ple, ho - ly is your name.
You have kept your prom - ise of mer - cy, the prom-ise that you made to our
fore - bears; to A - bra'm and Sar - ah and their chil - dren for - ev - er,
ho - ly is your name. Ho - ly is your name. Ho - ly is your name.

APOSTLES' CREED

Let us now confess our faith using the words of the Apostles' 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.

**catholic: universal*

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.

The musical notation consists of three staves in G major, 4/4 time. The first staff shows the Cantor and Assembly parts for the phrase "Hear our prayer, O Lord." The second staff is labeled "Spoken prayer petitions" and contains a melodic line for the petitions. The third staff shows the Cantor and Assembly parts for the phrase "Hear our prayer, O Lord." after each spoken petition.

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

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

Please be seated

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please check the back pages of this bulletin for additional announcements.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus.

OFFERING

At this time, we give our offerings with thanksgiving to God. These offerings support the mission and ministry of Zion, including the care of those in need. To give online, please visit ZionSA.org. Children are invited to come forward during the music and place their offerings in the jar to the left of the Chancel area (near the Sacristy door). During the offering music, the pastor sets the table with the elements for Holy Communion. Please know that this is the Lord's table, and all are welcome to receive Communion.

OFFERING MUSIC

9:00	<i>Joyful Christmas</i> arranged by Bill Ingram	Handbells
11:30	<i>Veni, Veni, Emmanuel</i> by Michael John Trotta	Youth Choir
Translation:	<i>O Come, O Come, the "I AM" that is with us, break the bond of the captive people! Who mourn in exile derived of the Incarnation of the Father. Rejoice! Rejoice! The great "I AM" will be born for you.</i>	
	<i>O Come, King of all nations. Come to make all whole, to save your servants from their separateness.</i>	
	<i>O Come thou Morningstar to shine on us by your coming. Dispel the clouds of night, drive away the shadows of death.</i>	

Please rise, as you are able.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. God of abundance,
we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Next page

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. And al - so 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.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

²
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and
might, heav'n and earth ring forth your glo - ry. Ho - san -
na! Bless'd is the one who comes in the name of the
Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na!

Text prepared by the English Language Liturgical Consultation, 1988, (alt.)
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Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: Blessed are you for the birth of creation. Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light. Blessed are you for your promise to your people. Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams. Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come ✠ among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered together by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus has taught us:

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

These are the gifts of God for you, the beloved people of God.

1 I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to
 2 I want to see . . . the bright-ness of God. I want to
 3 I'm look - ing for . . . the com - ing of Christ. I want to

fol - low Je - sus. God set the stars to give
 look at Je - sus. Clear Sun of righ - teous - ness,
 be with Je - sus. When we have run . . . with

light to the world. The star of my life is Je - sus.
 shine on my path, and show me the way to the Fa - ther.
 pa - tience the race, we shall know the joy of Je - sus.

Refrain

In him there is no dark - ness at all. The night and the

day are both a - like. The Lamb is the light of the

cit - y of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

Text: Kathleen Thomerson, b. 1934
 Music: HOUSTON, Kathleen Thomerson
 Text and music © 1970, 1975 Celebration.

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After communion, we rise and share in blessing and prayer.

BLESSING

May the true body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you always in God's grace.

Amen.

PRAYER

Let us pray. We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Section end

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us out in peace.

BENEDICTION

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 HYMN

All Earth is Hopeful (Toda la tierra)



To - da la tie - rra es - pe - ra al Sal - va - dor

- 1 All earth is hope - ful, the Sav - ior comes at last!
- 2 Peo - ple of Is - rael, you heard the proph - et tell:
- 3 Moun - tains and val - leys will have to be pre - pared;
- 4 We first saw Je - sus a ba - by in a crib.



yel sur - co_a - bier - to, la ob - ra del Se - ñor; es el
Fur - rows lie o - pen for God's cre - a - tive task: this, the
"A vir - gin moth - er will bear Em - man - u - el"; she con -
new high - ways o - pened, new pro - to - cols de - clared. Al - most
This same Lord Je - sus to - day has come to live in our



mun - do que lu - cha por la li - ber - tad, re -
la - bor of peo - ple who strug - gle to see how
ceived him, "God with us," our broth - er, whose birth re -
here! God is near - ing, in beau - ty and grace! All
world; he is pres - ent, in neigh - bors we see our



cla - ma jus - ti - cia y bus - ca la ver - dad. dar - nos li - ber - tad.
 God's truth and jus - tice set ev - 'ry - bod - y free.
 stores hope and cour - age to chil - dren of this earth.
 clear ev - 'ry gate - way, in haste, come out in haste!
 Je - sus is with us, and ev - er sets us free.

2 *Dice el profeta al pueblo de Israel:* 3 *Montes y valles habrá que preparar;*
“De madre virgen ya viene Emmanuel,” *nuevos caminos tenemos que trazar.*
será “Dios con nosotros,” hermano será, *Él está ya muy cerca, venidlo a encontrar,*
con él la esperanza al mundo volverá. *y todas las puertas abrid de par en par.*

4 *En una cueva Jesús apareció,*
pero en el mundo está presente hoy.
Vive en nuestros hermanos, con ellos está;
y vuelve de nuevo a darnos libertad.

Text: Alberto Taulé, b. 1932; tr. Madeleine Forell Marshall, b. 1946
 Music: TODA LA TIERRA, Alberto Taulé
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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is near.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

The King Shall Come setting by Anne Krentz Organ

AVAILABLE FOR PRAYER

Immediately following each service, Stephen Ministers are often available to pray with you at the altar rail. All prayers and conversations are confidential.

**THIS
WEEK
AT
ZION**



Scan QR code for
this month's
calendar

Sunday, December 17

Worship in person	9am	Sanctuary
Faith Formation Hour for all ages	10:15	Details next page
Adult Class with Pastor Kathi	10:15	Fellowship Hall
Worship in person and online	11:30	Sanc & YouTube
Nativity Story & Outdoor Fellowship	3pm	Prayer Garden

Monday, December 18

Game Group	1pm	Fellowship Hall
LMM Fellowship & Dinner	6:30	Sea Island Restaurant

Tuesday, December 19

Exercise Group	9am	Church 2
Memorial Service: George Wallis	11am	Sanctuary
Warriors Anonymous	7pm	Church 2

Wednesday, December 20

Weight Watchers Mtg	9:30	Church 2
MOPS Holiday PlayDate	10am	MC-1
Midweek Worship Services	1:00 & 6:30	Chapel (Church 1)
AA - Alcoholics Anonymous	7pm	FLC 202
Al-Anon Meeting	7pm	FLC 101
Chancel Choir and Youth Choir	7:15	Sanctuary

Thursday, December 21

Weight Watchers Mtg	9:30	Church 2
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Saturday, December 23

Weight Watchers Meetings	7:30 & 9:30am	Church 2
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Sunday, December 24

Advent 4 Worship	10am	Sanctuary
Christmas Eve Worship	3:00, 5:00, 7:00pm	Sanctuary
Online Christmas Eve Worship	5:00pm	YouTube

Campus closed December 25 and 26.

Worship Support

Altar Guild

Chris & Don Jones, Alyssa Brodbeck
Mary Jo Goldenbaum, Suzi Lockamy
Belynda McKenzie, Kathy Null
Linda & Roy Tschirhart
Susan & Joe Noonan

Lay Reader

9:00 Jake Apodaca
11:30 LeShea Clabough

Cantor

Lindsey Magee

Communion Servers

9:00 Paul Goldenbaum, Jake Apodaca
11:30 Suzi Lockamy, Laura Knoll

Livestream

Steve Johnson, Kevin McGee

Sound

Scott VanDoren

Ushers

9:00 David Umlang, Bev Rosel
Bonnie & Brinkley Harrell
Amy Swanson, Brad McClain
Linda Hansen
11:30 Pam Gammage, Chris Berg

Sunday Faith Formation for Children and Youth at 10:15

Meet in Ministry Center classrooms.

<i>Age or Grade</i>	<i>Room</i>
Two Years–Kinder	MC-3
Grades 1–4	MC-4
Grades 5–7	MC-5
Affirmation of Baptism (Confirmation) Grades 8–9	MC-7
High School Grades 10–12	MC-8

- December 24 and 31 - No Faith Formation Classes, Christmas Break
- January 7 - Intergenerational Epiphany Event, 10:15 in Fellowship Hall. All ages are invited.

Adult Sunday Morning Classes The Liturgical Year with Pastor Kathi

Come to the Fellowship Hall at 10:20. Discussion is loosely based on the book *Calendar: Christ's Time for the Church* by Laurence Hull Stookey (which is NOT required reading). Last class in series is today.

Down + Out

Meet in MC-6 (upstairs) at 10:15. Explore themes of the Lutheran Christian faith with John Macha and other volunteer leaders. Six-part video series “reintroduces you to the life-changing reality of God’s promises, and points the way to a completely different view of life in the light of where grace takes you.”

Coming in January: What Goes Into Planning Worship?

Join Pastor Kathi and Director of Music Ministries Rob Mikulski for a five-week series about planning worship. Topics include: how we plan liturgies for Sundays and Wednesdays, how sermons are written, how do we plan ahead AND allow room for the Holy Spirit to work?

This class series begins on January 14 in the Fellowship Hall during Faith Formation hour, 10:15am

TODAY Nativity Story Event

All are welcome to gather at the Zion Prayer Garden (between Church 1 and the Cemetery) for hot chocolate, roasting marshmallows on a fire pit, and a reading/impromptu pop-up presentation of the Nativity story. Meet in the Prayer Garden, next to Church 1, at 3pm.

Optional: Come dressed as a character from the Nativity story or choose from costumes supplied.



TOMORROW Game Group

December 18 at 1:00pm

Come for table games and daytime fellowship for all ages. Meet in the Fellowship Hall on the first and third Mondays. Algine Perry.



TOMORROW Men's Fellowship Dinner

Third Monday, December 18 at 6:30pm

All men are invited to meet at Sea Island (11715 Bandera) for food, thoughtful study, camaraderie, and all YOUR ideas for Men's Ministry! Contact David Umlang at imm@zionsa.org if you need more details.



v Bucks January 4

San Antonio LMM has reserved two sections of group seating in the Frost Bank Center. All are welcome to come cheer on our Spurs! Tickets are \$40 and \$55 - consider who'd like this for a Christmas gift.

Purchase deadline is Dec 21. Get your digital tickets with the QR here or fevo-enterprise.com/event/Lutheranmen6



STAFF CONTACT

Pastor Kathi Johnson *Monday*
Kjohnson@ZionSA.org

Pastor Dan Heim *Friday*
Dheim@ZionSA.org

Suzie Wyatt, *Thursday*
Administrator *afternoon*
Swyatt@ZionSA.org

Rob Mikulski, *Monday*
Music Director
Rmikulski@ZionSA.org

Sammy Mikulski, *Monday*
Theatre Director
Theatre@ZionSA.org

2023 CONGREGATION COUNCIL

Bud Halstead *President*
Chis Jones *Vice President*
Allen Cockrell *Treasurer*
Erica Macha *Secretary*
Carolyn Pfeiffer *At Large*
David Umlang *At Large*
Rachel Williams *At Large*
Pr. Kathi Johnson
Pr. Dan Heim

2024 CONGREGATION COUNCIL

Bud Halstead *President*
Allen Cockrell *Treasurer*
Other Council officers TBD.
Erica Macha, Chris Jones, David Umlang, Rachel Williams, Shiloh Love, Pr. Kathi Johnson, Pr. Dan Heim

OFFICE CONTACT



Mon-Thu 8:30am-5:00pm
Friday close at 3:00pm



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SONG OF MARY

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Advent and Christmas Services

Wednesday, December 20

1pm and 6:30pm in the Main Sanctuary

Advent Midweek Worship: Pause, Prepare, Ponder

Sunday, December 24

- *Sunday Morning Advent 4* worship service at 10am in the Main Sanctuary.
- *Christmas Eve* worship services at 3pm, 5pm, 7pm in the Main Sanctuary. Livestream on YouTube is at 5pm.

Sunday, December 31

Christmas Lessons and Carols - one worship service at 10am in the Main Sanctuary.

Zion Theatre Group presents



The **PLAY**
that goes
WRONG

January 5-7 & 12-14

Theatre seating tickets now available online (use QR or ZTG.boottix.net), and in the gazebo. Theatre seating is \$15 (\$10 child). Dinner show tickets are \$30 (\$20 child). Purchase dinner seating from Sammy, theatre@zionsa.org. Dinner seating is sold out for January 14.





Save the Date

June 17-21 and
June 24-28

Two unique, stand-alone weeks of
Camp Hope! Open

to those entering K-7th grades in Fall 2024. Camp Hope is a youth-run, adult-mentored day camp that builds Christian leaders through encounters with the Bible, Art, STEM, Drama, Worship and more. Youth entering 6th-7th grade (Disciple Campers) are challenged with off-site service projects at our mission partner Nichols Elementary School that prepare them to serve as future camp leaders. Registration info to come in January.

Youth Camp Hope Staff Applications

Older youth, apply now for volunteer support staff (current 7th-8th graders) or paid staff positions (current high schoolers). Apply via the QR. Interviews will begin over Winter Break. Staff can work one week or both.



Youth/Confirmation Mentoring Night January 11 in 2024

Middle & High School Dinner and Fellowship
6:30-8:30 in Ministry Center

Every other Thursday, Zion's high school and middle school youth meet to enhance their impact on their community, collectively – with service projects, Bible discussion that relates to their daily lives, dinner and something else fun – to build a community on mission.

Please use the QR code to RSVP so we have enough food and supplies!



*Your
generosity
empowers
Zion's ministry*

From Sunday morning worship to feeding families for the holidays, collecting clothing for local charity or relief supplies shipped hundreds of miles, to friendships fostered worldwide with simple hand stitches.

Because you kindly share your time, lend your skills, and support your ministry financially, Zion's impact reaches far beyond the four walls of our sanctuary. On behalf of everyone we're able to help, thank you for your contribution.

For more ways to support
Zion's mission, scan this
QR code.



Women of Zion

Join in activities and fellowship with other women in the congregation. Scan the QR code to get on the mailing list, or send an e-mail to WOZ@zionsa.org.

Women of Zion Events

- Tuesday January 9, **WOZ Bible Study & More.** Fellowship, service projects with a Bible study on the second Tuesday at 10:00am in the Fellowship Hall. All women are invited!



WOZ@zionsa.org

Quilting for LWR Resumes January 4*

1st and 3rd Thursdays at 9:30am

Want to try something new for the upcoming year? Even if you don't sew, consider learning some basics with LWR Quilters! If you DO sew, join in to help create simple quilts for Lutheran World Relief. The durable quilts we make are sent all over the world to be used as bedding, room dividers, and shelter. If you can't make it to the quilting meetings, quilt tops can be sewn at home at your convenience. Fabric is provided. Contact Diane Stewart for details.

Quilters will meet the first and third Thursdays of the month at 9:30 in the Fellowship Hall, beginning January 4.

For more information on LWR quilting, go to lwr.org and click on "quilts." Learn how a quilt can make a difference in someone's life.

The LWR Quilters are in need of new and gently used twin size and larger flat sheets for quilt backing. Sheets can be dropped off at the Fellowship Hall during Thursday quilting, 9:30-noon.

Crafty Bunch will Resume in January

Wednesdays at 9:30 - Date TBA

The Crafty Bunch meets in the Education Building on the west side of Leslie Road. Enter at the double doors, behind Churches 1 and 2. The craft room is the first room on the right. Bring your own project to work on.

Advent Reflection by Pastor Kathi Johnson

This weekend, we add a flute player to our nativity scene. The man is dressed simply, in the clothes of a shepherd or similar, so we can assume that he's another lowest-of-the-low who has come to worship Jesus. Yet again, we remember that Jesus is born for all, "full of grace and truth...From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace" (from John 1). It's good for us to have reminder after reminder of the grace of God!

Maybe in looking at this flute player (or one of the other figures) we can begin to see ourselves. We can begin to see that though we still sin ourselves, and are also surrounded by the effects of sin in our world, Jesus has come to show us - in the flesh - the very love of God for us.

We all need reminders of God's love every single day - maybe even more than once per day. So when you look at our nativity here, or your own at home, take a minute this week to ponder God's great love for you!

In peace,
Pastor Kathi

Zion is a Stephen Ministry Church!



Stephen Ministers Are Care-Givers, God Is the Cure-Giver

The role of a Stephen Minister is to give care. They listen, empathize, encourage, pray, and provide emotional and spiritual support on a weekly basis to hurting people for as long as the need persists. God works in and through them to bring hope and healing. If you are feeling lonely, experiencing a crisis, struggling through a difficult time, or simply find yourself stressed by everyday life, talk with one of our Stephen Leaders to learn more about Stephen Ministry. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to care for you!

To find out more about Stephen Ministry for you or someone you know, talk with one of our Stephen Ministry Leaders: 210-688-3090

DECEMBER 17, 2023
THIRD SUNDAY
OF ADVENT



Faith in Jesus brings joy.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	John 1:6-8, 19-28	John's witness to the light
Monday	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	Good news of deliverance
Tuesday	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24	A call to rejoice
Wednesday	Luke 1:39-55	The Magnificat
Thursday	Psalms 30	Thanksgiving for illness recovery
Friday	James 1:2-4	Faith and wisdom
Saturday	Psalms 126	A people who dream
Sunday	Luke 1:26-38	The birth of Jesus foretold

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." Psalm 126:1-2 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Almighty and living God, in you we find our hope, peace, and joy; during times of sadness and grief, give us faith to trust in your never-failing love through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, with this food give us strength to witness to your love and goodness through Jesus Christ, the one who has come to give us joy. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the God of peace give you joy at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 5:23)



DECEMBER 17, 2023

HYMN OF THE WEEK

Joy to the World

taking faith home

WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Think or talk about something that has brought you joy.
- When have you experienced joy with others in the Christian community?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Psalm 126.

The psalm begins with a reference to Israel's return from exile. It was too good to be true, but it was true. It was like a dream, but it was real. Relying on that memory, the people once again seek God's intervention: *"Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses of the Negeb"* (v. 4). The *wadis* are dry riverbeds (watercourses) in the south of Israel (Negeb) that look barren until they are filled with flash floods. Then living waters overflow the riverbanks. Psalm 126 poetically seeks a similar and dramatic restoration for God's life-giving powers to restore God's people. We are encouraged by the history of God's favor that reaches us again and again, now through Jesus. Psalms like this one strengthen us, trusting that the God who came in Jesus will continue to intervene in our lives with grace. Verse six describes a life of faith. We know what it is to mourn, but our life is meant for joy. In the meantime, we go out with our task at hand, seeds to be sown in faith, ready for a harvest of joy.

Discuss: How does faith in Christ lead you to live a life of joy?

Pray: **God of our past and future, give us faith to dream dreams filled with faith, hope, and love that our daily lives may know the eternal joy of Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme for this week, how can you support and encourage someone who is mourning?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The scripture readings during Advent point to Jesus. This week we light three candles on the Advent wreath. The third candle is the candle of joy. Psalm 126 describes the Israelites' joy and thanksgiving to God upon their return to Jerusalem after their exile in Babylon: *"Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy."* Think or talk about how God brings joy in good times and bad times.

Light the first candle of hope, the second candle of peace, and the third candle of joy and say: ***"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."*** (John 1:5)



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org