

December 31, 2023 • First Sunday of Christmas  
Service of Lessons and Carols  
10:00am



**Zion** lutheran  
church

## WELCOME TO ZION

We are a historic church that loves being part of the vibrant, growing community of northwest San Antonio. We bring people together knowing we are fallible and imperfect, and we help share God's love and grace.

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 modern lives with Christ.

Faith is an ever-present curiosity. As we live our daily lives, we explore God's teachings and respond with God's love by serving our community, locally and globally. If you're looking for a church that has all the answers for you – well, that isn't us!

We are a community 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! So come and join us as we explore life with God.

## HOW WE WORSHIP

The Holy Spirit gathers people around the means of grace - the saving Word of God and the sacraments. From the table of Holy Communion where Jesus Christ comes with forgiveness life and salvation, God sends us out to share the good news and to care for those in need. Our worship follows this pattern in four parts: Gathering, Word, Meal, and Sending.

Worship leaders guide us through sacrament and prayer and our responses are printed in bold type.

Throughout our service, members of Zion's music ministry offer their talents as an offering to God. We invite you to 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](mailto:zion@zionsa.org)

# GATHERING

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

PRELUDE

*How Great Our Joy!* arr. Pethel

Elyse & Dean Hearn  
Flute and Clarinet

WELCOME

*Please rise, as you are able.*

# Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;  
 2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;  
 3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;

give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;  
 now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!  
 now ye need not fear the grave; Je - sus Christ was born to save!

ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man-ger now.  
 He has o - pened heav-en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.  
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.

Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!  
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!  
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866  
 Music: IN DULCI JUBILO, German carol, 14th cent.; arr. Robert L. Pearsall, 1795–1856

## 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.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our 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.*

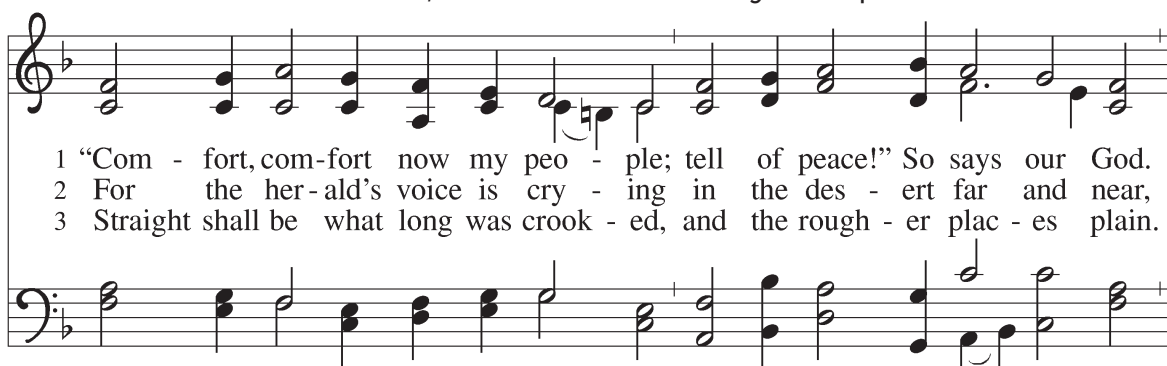
## FIRST READING: ISAIAH 40:1-11

<sup>1</sup>Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. <sup>4</sup>Every 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. <sup>5</sup>Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

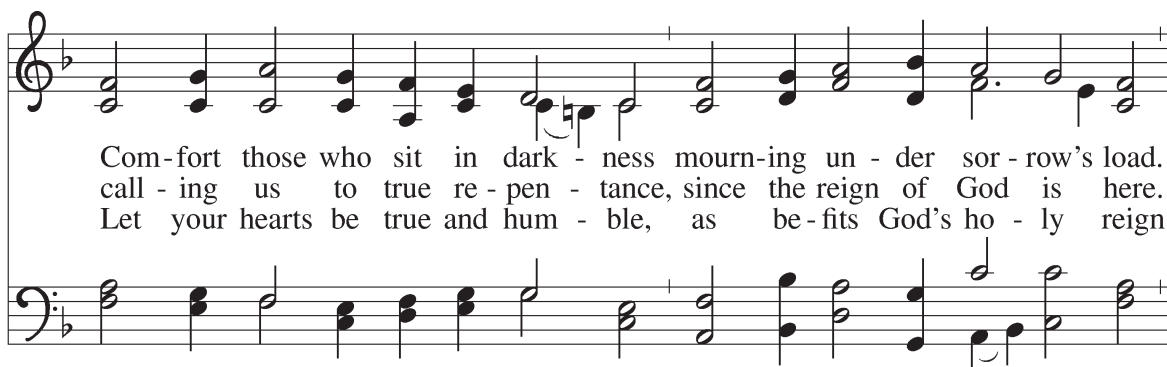
<sup>6</sup>A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. <sup>7</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. <sup>8</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. <sup>9</sup>Get 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!" <sup>10</sup>See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. <sup>11</sup>He 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.

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

## Comfort, Comfort Now My People



1 "Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.  
2 For the her - ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,  
3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



Com-fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row's load.  
call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.  
Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be-fits God's ho - ly reign.



To God's peo - ple now pro-claim that God's par - don waits for them!  
Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.  
For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for - ev - er.  
Val - leys, rise to greet the Sav - ior; hills, bow down in hum-ble fa - vor.  
and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

Text: Johann G. Olearius, 1635–1711; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.  
Music: FREU DICH SEHR, *Trente quatre pseumes de David*, Geneva, 1551

## SECOND READING: LUKE 1:57-67

<sup>257</sup>Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. <sup>58</sup>Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

<sup>59</sup>On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. <sup>60</sup>But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John." <sup>61</sup>They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." <sup>62</sup>Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. <sup>63</sup>He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed. <sup>64</sup>Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. <sup>65</sup>Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. <sup>66</sup>All who heard them pondered them and said, "What then will this child become?" For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

<sup>67</sup>Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

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

# Blessed Be the God of Israel

1 Blessed be the God of Is - ra - el who comes to set us free  
2 With prom-ised mer - cy will God still the coy - e - nant re - call,  
3 My child, as proph-et of the Lord you will pre- pare the way,

and rais - es up new hope for us: a Branch from Da-vid's tree.  
the oath once sworn to A - bra-ham, from foes to save us all;  
to tell God's peo - ple they are saved from sin's e - ter - nal sway.

So have the proph-ets long de-clared that with a might-y arm  
that we might wor - ship with-out fear and of - fer lives of praise,  
Then shall God's mer - cy from on high shine forth and nev - er cease

God would turn back our en - e - mies and all who wish us harm.  
in ho - li - ness and righ - teous-ness to serve God all our days.  
to drive a - way the gloom of death and lead us in - to peace.



THIRD READING: LUKE 2:1-7

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph 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. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>And 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.

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

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly



1 In - fant ho - ly, in - fant low - ly, for his bed a cat - tle stall;  
2 Flocks were sleep - ing, shep - herds keep - ing vig - il till the morn - ing new



ox - en low - ing, lit - tle know - ing Christ the child is Lord of all.  
saw the glo - ry, heard the sto - ry, tid - ings of a gos - pel true.



Swift - ly wing - ing, an - gels sing - ing, bells are ring - ing, tid - ings bring - ing:  
Thus re - joic - ing, free from sor - row, prais - es voic - ing, greet the mor - row:



Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!  
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

Text: Polish carol; tr. Edith M. G. Reed, 1885–1933, alt.  
Music: W ŻŁOBIE LEŻY, Polish carol

## FOURTH READING: LUKE 2:8-16

<sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,  
<sup>14</sup>“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”  
<sup>15</sup>When 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.” <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

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

### Angels from the Realms of Glory

1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
2 Shep - herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,  
4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son,

once you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:  
God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light.  
ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to the e - ter - nal Three in One.

*Refrain*

Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king.

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Angels from the Realms of Glory'. It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The lyrics are printed below the vocal lines. The first system contains the first three lines of the hymn. The second system contains the next three lines. The third system is labeled 'Refrain' and contains the final line of the hymn. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and simple melodic lines.

Text: James Montgomery, 1771–1854, alt., sts. 1–3; *Salisbury Hymn Book*, 1857, st. 4  
Music: REGENT SQUARE, Henry T. Smart, 1813–1879

## FIFTH READING: JOHN 1:1-14

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup>in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

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

### Love Has Come



1 Love has come— a light in the dark - ness! Love shines forth in the  
2 Love is born! Come, share in the won - der. Love is God now a -  
3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us! Love is life ev - er -



Beth - le - hem skies. See, all heav - en has come to pro - claim it;  
sleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of his moth - er;  
last - ing and free. Love is Je - sus with - in and a - mong us.



hear how their song of joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to  
what is the name her heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the  
Love is the peace our hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the



you, a Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.  
name she whis - pers; Love! Love! Je - sus, Im - man - u - el.  
gift of Christ - mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

*Please rise as you are able.*

## 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.

Each petition ends: Hear us, O God.

Please respond: **Your mercy is great.**

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

**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](http://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

	<i>The First Noel</i> , arr. Schuster	Elyse & Dean Hearn Flute and Clarinet
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*Please rise, as you are able.*

## OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. God of abundance,  
**receive and bless these gifts we have offered.**  
**Join our hearts with the song of the angels,**  
**and gather us at your table of celebration.**  
**Strengthen us to share with all the world**  
**the abundance of your grace upon grace,**  
**poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.**  
**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. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. 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

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.**





COMMUNION HYMN  
What Feast of Love



1 What feast of love is of-fered here, what ban-quet come from heav - en?  
2 What light of truth is of-fered here, what cov - e - nant from heav - en?  
3 What wine of love is of-fered here, what crim-son drink from heav - en?



What food of ev - er - last-ing life, what gra - cious gift is giv - en?  
What hope of ev - er - last-ing life, what won-drous word is giv - en?  
What stream of ev - er - last-ing life, what pre - cious blood is giv - en?



This, this is Christ the king, the bread come down from heav - en.  
This, this is Christ the king, the sun come down from heav - en.  
This, this is Christ the king, the sweet - est wine of heav - en.



Oh, taste and see and sing! How sweet the man - na giv - en!  
Oh, see and hear and sing! The Word of God is giv - en!  
Oh, taste and see and sing! The Son of God is giv - en!

Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, b. 1939

Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.

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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. God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## SENDING

*God blesses us and sends us out in peace.*

## BLESSING

God bless you and keep you, ✠ Jesus grant you grace and truth, and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts, now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN *on next page*

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is near.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## POSTLUDE

*Joy to the World*, arr. Pethel

Elyse & Dean Hearn  
Flute and Clarinet

## 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.*

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# Joy to the World

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -  
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their  
 3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -  
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the

ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him  
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and  
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings  
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -

room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture  
 plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing  
 flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
 ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

and heav'n and na - ture sing, and

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.  
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.  
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heav'n and na - ture sing,

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748  
 Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

**THIS  
WEEK  
AT  
ZION**



Scan QR code for  
this month's  
calendar

**Sunday, December 31**

Worship 10am Sanctuary & YouTube

**Monday, January 1**

Campus Closed for New Years Day

**Tuesday, January 2**

Exercise Group 9am Church 2  
Warriors Anonymous 7pm Church 2

**Wednesday, January 3**

Crafty Bunch 9:30 Ed Bldg Craft Rm  
AA - Alcoholics Anonymous 7pm Church 2 *thru Jan 10*  
Al-Anon Meeting 7pm FH *thru Jan 10*

**Thursday, January 4**

Quilting for Lutheran World Relief 9:30 Fellowship Hall  
Weight Watchers Mtg 9:30 Church 2  
Dinner Out (RSVP to Chillstroms) 6:30 Cover 3 Restaurant  
Fiesta Flutes Rehearsal 7pm Church 2

**Friday, January 5**

Pre-Show Dinner 6:30 Family Life Center  
*The Play That Goes Wrong* 7:30 Family Life Center


**Saturday, January 6**


Weight Watchers Meetings 7:30 & 9:30am Church 2  
Pre-Show Dinner 6:30 Family Life Center  
*The Play That Goes Wrong* 7:30 Family Life Center


**Sunday, December 7**

Worship in person 9am Sanctuary  
Intergenerational Epiphany Event 10:15 Fellowship Hall  
Worship in person and online 11:30 Sanc & YouTube  
Pre-Show Dinner 1:30 Family Life Center  
*The Play That Goes Wrong* 2:30 Family Life Center

**OFFICE CONTACT**

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

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**STAFF CONTACT**

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Pastor Dan Heim	<i>Friday</i>
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Administrator	<i>afternoon</i>
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