

# ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

319 South 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Albion, Nebraska 68620 www.zionalbion.org + office @zionalbion.org + 402-395-2043 Office Hours: Mon-Thurs: 9am-4pm; Fri: Office Closed

#### December 17, 2023 + FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

In the story of Jesus' humble origins — the lowly birth in a stable, the young peasant mother, the inclusion of poor shepherds — there is the idea that we all are called to adore Christ just as we are and that we have a God who chooses to work through ordinary means with ordinary people. And God calls us to be in community to hear this Good News — that we have a God Emmanuel, God With Us. So as the busyness of the Christmas season overwhelms you, and you're wondering if a pageant is even worth the fuss and bother, remember that nothing captures the magic and mystery of that first Christmas better than a pageant, despite the bent halos, giggling shepherds, and wandering sheep. Let the magic move in your heart as this pageant unfolds.

#### + GATHERING +

#### **Prelude**

(The prelude is a call to silent, personal preparation for worship.)

#### Welcome

Welcome to Zion Lutheran Church in Albion! We offer a warm welcome to all who are worshipping in person or by way of Vyve Cable Channel 21 and Facebook Live. We hope that you encounter a word of God's grace and love in this worship service.

Holy Communion will be celebrated today. At the table of our Lord Jesus Christ, God nourishes faith, forgives sin, and calls us to be witnesses to the Gospel. All who are baptized and believe in the real presence of Christ are welcome to share in the Lord's meal. Holy Communion will be distributed in person or by pre-packaged elements. If you are uncomfortable coming forward, please pick up the communion elements as you enter worship. We will partake of the sacrament as directed by the pastor within the worship service. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with an usher. Gluten Free wafers are available on request.





# The Fourth Sunday of Advent

## **Confession & Forgiveness**

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever.

Amen.

Together let us honestly and humbly confess that we have not lived as God desires.

(Silence is kept for self-reflection and confession.)

Loving and forgiving God,

we confess that we are held captive by sin.

In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray.

We have not welcomed the stranger;

we have not loved our neighbor;

we have not been Christ to one another.

Restore us, O God.

Wake us up and turn us from our sin.

Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.

People of God, hear this glad news:

by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free — free from all that holds you back

and free to live in the peaceable realm of God.

May you be strengthened in God's love,

+ comforted by Christ's peace,

and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, sts. 1, 3-4; tr. unknown, st. 2 Music: attr. John Francis Wade Public Domain

## Call to Worship

We are waiting on you, God. We are still waiting.

The darkness is deep, but look! The star is beginning to shine.

The everlasting light is coming closer. Hope is in the air. **Peace is promised. Joy is on the tips of our tongues.** 

Love is coming. Love divine, all loves excelling. We are waiting on love, and Love will come again.

# **Apostolic Greeting**

From the one who is, who was, and who is to come, from the Almighty Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit: grace, light, and peace be with you all.

And also with you.

# Prayer of the Day

Let us pray... (A brief silence is kept.)
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.

# **Advent Wreath Hymn**

(Tune #277)

In darkness enshrouded, the world waits for light
To shatter the shadowy darkness of night.
To greenery circled, the faithful draw near
And longingly listen, God's message to hear.

# The Lighting of the Advent Wreath

God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shine in your hearts,

to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus, our Lord.

The angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. We beheld the glory of the Word made flesh, the glory of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.

And with the angel,

there was a multitude of the heavenly host praising God.

(Advent Family lights four candle as the hymn is sung.)

As wick touches wick now four flames burn so bright As angels in glory shone forth on that night. May we shine the precious good news of this birth To ev'ry dark, shadowy corner of earth.

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples.

But the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Jesus Christ is the light of the world, the light no darkness can overcome.

When the chief Shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away.

Oh, keep us, Lord Jesus, in your mighty care
As for your arrival your people prepare.
The flames for the faithful, Lord, let them burn bright,
That hearts of all people in faith may ignite

#### + WORD +

#### **Scripture Reading**

2 Samuel 7:1-11, q16

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.

A reading from Second Samuel.

<sup>1</sup>Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, <sup>2</sup>the 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." <sup>3</sup>Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

<sup>4</sup>But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: <sup>5</sup>Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? <sup>6</sup>I 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. Wherever 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?" Now 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; <sup>9</sup>and 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. <sup>10</sup>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, <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup>Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

#### Luke 1:446b-55

Let us read Luke responsively.

<sup>46b</sup>My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

<sup>47</sup>my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup>for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:

<sup>49</sup>you, the Almighty, have done great things for me and holy is your name.

<sup>50</sup>You have mercy on those who fear you, from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup>You have shown strength with your arm
and scattered the proud in their conceit,

<sup>52</sup>casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting up the lowly.

<sup>53</sup>You have filled the hungry with good things

and sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup>You have come to the aid of your servant Israel, to remember the promise of mercy,

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

# **Scripture Reading**

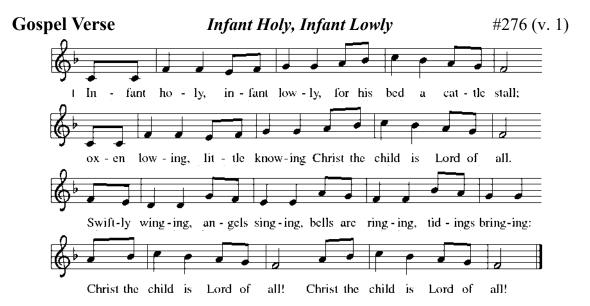
Romans 16:25-27

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.

A reading from Romans.

<sup>25</sup>Now 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 <sup>26</sup>but 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 — <sup>27</sup>to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.



Text: Polish carol: tr. Edith M. G. Reed, 1885-1933, alt.

Music: Polish carol Public Domain Holy Gospel Luke 1:26-38

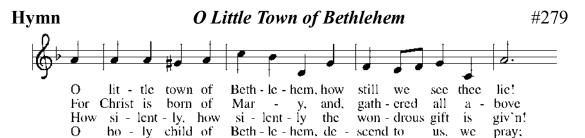
In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people from little known places. This king will not be born to royalty in a palace, but to common folk in a stall. Here Luke highlights the role of the Spirit, a special emphasis in this gospel.

The Holy Gospel according to Luke, the 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.** 

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

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

#### + CHRISTMAS PROGRAM +





Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893 Music: Lewis H. Redner, 1831-1908 Public Domain

#### Scene 1

Carol	Away in a Manger	SS Kids
	Scene 2	
Carol	Angels We Have heard on High	SS Kids
	Scene 3	
Carol	Go Tell It on the Mountain	SS Kids
	Scene 4	
Carol	We Three Kings	SS Kids

Joy to the World Hymn #267 (Kids may join their families as the Congregation sings verses 2-4) Joy the world. the Lord is come! Let carth to aHJoy the earth, the Sav reigns! Let their to ior No more let sin and SOT row grow nor thorns in -He rules the world with makes the truth and grace and pre ceive her king; let ev 'ny. heart pare him while fields hills. em - ploy, and floods. rocks. and songs the ground; he comes to make his bless ings fest tions prove the glo ries of his righ teous na room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture the sound-ing the sound-ing plains re - peat јоу, peat flow far the curse is found. far the curse is ness and won - ders of his love. and won-ders of

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

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Music: English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

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## **Apostles' Creed**

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Living together in trust and hope, let us confess our faith...

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell. 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 again 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.

# **Prayers of the People**

P God of power and might, fulfill your promise and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

(A brief silence is kept.)

- A Gracious God, all generations call you blessed.
  In this holy season
  we pray for our neighbors of other denominations and faiths.
  Inspire the faith of their people. Cultivate understanding among us and strengthen us in love and service to our community.
  Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.
- P Creator God, you scatter the proud.
  Everything we have belongs first to you.
  Bless and protect the seas, mountains, plains, forests, skies, and soils that surround us.
  Give us humility as we tend them.
  Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.
- A Righteous God, you humble the powerful and lift up the lowly. We pray for the leaders of all nations, that they amplify the voices of people in need. Guide all people entrusted with leadership, to create societies in which everyone can flourish. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

P Healing God, you pour out mercy to all who cry out to you. Surround everyone in need of healing in body, mind, or spirit with your tender presence, *especially*....
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.** 

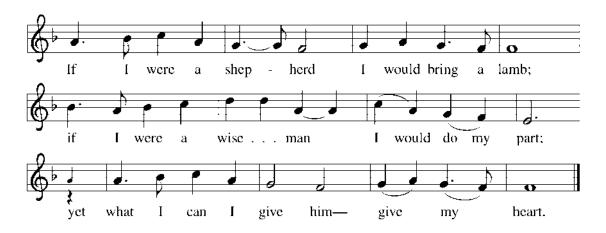
# A Compassionate God, you fill the hungry with good things and send the rich away empty. Nourish those who lack access to adequate food and nutrition. Bless the work of advocates, community organizers, and food pantries. Encourage others to provide for their neighbors in need. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

- P Here other intercessions may be offered either aloud or in silence.. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**
- A Eternal God, you are faithful to the promises you made to our forebears. We give thanks for the ministry of Katharina von Bora Luther and other ancestors who organized, planned, dreamed, encouraged, and reached out as they served you. We give thanks for the bold leadership of female leaders in our own time. Inspire others with their steadfast witness. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.
- P Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### **Peace**

The Peace of Christ be with you always. And also with you.

# Offering Response In the Bleak Midwinter #294 (v. 3) 3 What . . . can 1 give him, poor . . . as 1 am?

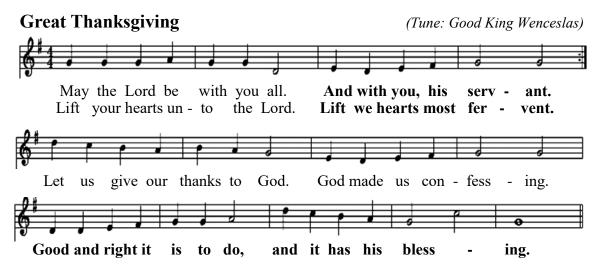


Text: Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1830-1894

Music: Gustav Holst, 1874-1934

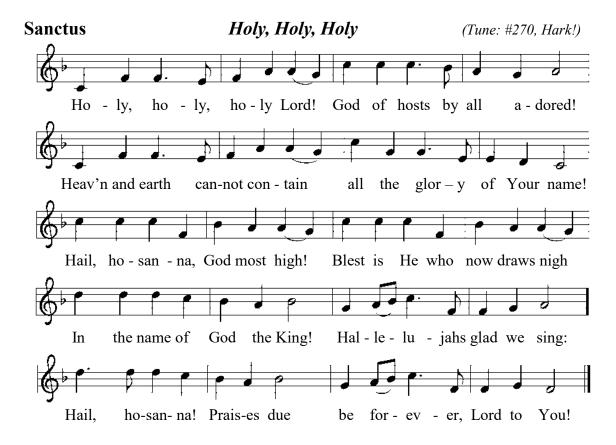
Public Domain

#### + MEAL +



# **Proper Preface**

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:



#### **Eucharistic Prayer & Words of Institution**

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.** 

# Lord's Prayer

Let us pray together as Jesus 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.

**Agnus Dei** Lamb of God (Tune: #517) O Lamb of God, in man - ger laid, the debt of the world you paid, that we from sin might find all have mer - cy grant on us; us peace. Public Domain

#### **Distribution**

If you are joining us from home or are taking communion from your seat:

The body of Christ, given for you. Amen.

The blood of Christ, shed for you. Amen.

Distribution Hymn Deck the Halls (Traditional)

Deck the halls with boughs of holly, Fa la la la la, la la la la.

'Tis the season to be jolly, Fa la la la la, la la la la.

Fill the world with sounds of Christmas, Fa la la la la, la la la la.

Sing for God Himself is with us! Fa la la la la, la la la la.

See the Holy Child before us, Fa la la la la, la la la la. Rise and join the angel chorus, Fa la la la la, la la la la. God is good beyond all measure! Fa la la la la, la la la la. Gave us everlasting treasure!

Fa la la la la, Fa la la la, Fa la la la la, la la la.

# Distribution Hymn

#### What Child Is This

#296



- I What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?
- 2 Why lies he in such mean es-tate where ox and ass are feed-ing?
- 3 So bring him in cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas-ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep-ing? Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead-ing. The King of kings sal - va-tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep-herds guard and an-gels sing; Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you; Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe. the son of Mar - y! hail hail, the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y! joy, for Christ is born. the babe. the son of Mar - y! joy,

> Text: William C. Dix, 1837-1898 Music: English ballad, 16th cent.

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#### **Table Blessing**

The Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in His grace. **Amen.** 

#### **Post-Communion Prayer**

Let us pray... (A brief silence is kept.)

God for whom we wait,

you come to us in the broken bread and the cup we share. Make us ready always to welcome Christ into our hearts, and send us forth to be your people in the world, announcing your coming among us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

#### + SENDING +

#### Announcements

#### **Benediction**

Now may God, before whom the angels veil their faces and in whose presence they delight — the Father, + Son and the Holy Spirit —

bless us, keep us, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

# **Sending Song**

# It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

#282



- 1 It came up on the mid-night clear, that glo rious song of old,
- 2 Still through the clo ven skies they come with peace-ful wings un furled,
- 3 And you, be neath life's crush-ing load, whose forms are bend-ing low,
- 4 For lo! The days are has-t'ning on, by proph-ets seen of old

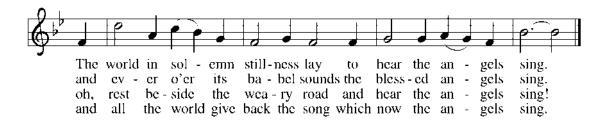


from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold: and still their heav'n-ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world. who toil a - long the climb-ing way with pain - ful steps and slow: when with the ev - er - cir - cling years shall come the time fore - told.



"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heavin's all-gra-cious king."

A - bove its sad and low-ly plains they bend on hov-'ring wing, look now, for glad and gold-en hours come swift - ly on the wing; when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen-dors fling,



Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876 Music: Richard S. Willis, 1819-1900

Public Domain

#### **Dismissal**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



"Mommy, who is Christmas Carol?"

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