

Sunday December 13, 2020 Advent 3

Setting 4

Prelude:

Welcome: A warm welcome to all who have gathered for worship today on this the Third Sunday of Advent.

News and Announcements:

Please Pray for Those Who are Ill, in Hospital, or Requested

Special Prayers: Florence Felske, Richard Hubert, Dorian Verch, Sharon Watt, Leona Woito.

SERVICE BROADCAST ON COGECO

Cogeco Community Channel is now broadcasting Zion's services at 9:00 a.m. and 12 noon on Sunday mornings, a week later. Advent 2 service will be broadcast on December 13th at 9:00 a.m. and again at 12 noon.

GLUTEN FREE COMMUNION BREAD

If you wish to receive a gluten-free host (bread) as we commune today, please let Pastor Stephen know prior to this morning's celebration or ask one of our guides to share that information with him.

Important Christmas Eve Worship Information, Including How To Register For Worship On Christmas Eve

We will gather for worship on Christmas Eve, December 24 at 11:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m., and 7:00 p.m. at Zion. Please note that these times are somewhat different from last year, mostly because we need time to clean the Church after each time we gather this year. The 11 a.m. worship will be recorded and will be available for viewing Christmas Eve on our website or on our

Facebook page for people who, because of Covid restrictions, would prefer to remain at home on Christmas Eve.

Joining us on-line is one way that you can still be part of our celebrations on Christmas Eve. Please remember that attendance at each of our Christmas Eve celebrations cannot exceed 100 people, which is allowed by Public Health for our Church. Perhaps you might consider, for this year only, planning to attend at 11:00 a.m. or 7:00 p.m. as the mid-afternoon attendance tends to usually be much higher in this parish than the other times on Christmas Eve and we may not have sufficient allowable seating at 3:00 p.m.

Please register your intent to join us for worship by phoning the Parish office, anytime from Monday to Thursday, in the morning (9:00 a.m. until Noon) up until December 21, giving us the time you plan to attend on Christmas Eve, as well as the names of those who will be attending with you. Volunteers will assist Jean with the registering, and will be happy to receive your phone call.

CHRISTMAS DONATIONS

If you wish to sponsor a poinsettia, or make a donation to a special fund in memory of a loved one, or in thankfulness to God for His many blessings, please make your **written** request on a donation form (*located on the registration table by the entrance*), and deposit it either in the offering basket, or place it in the office correspondence mailbox located on the steel office door by the elevator. Filling out one of these forms will ensure that your announcement will appear exactly as you wish. Your special Christmas donation may be designated to one of the following funds: Building, Organ Restoration, Stained Glass Window Repair, Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR), Good

Shepherding, General, etc. **The last day to make this special request is December 17th.**

OFFERING ENVELOPES – Please note that the offering envelopes for 2021 are ready and available to be picked up. They are located in the Parish Hall along the wall in front of the kitchen. Please ensure physical distancing when going into the hall to pick up your envelopes. As in previous years, please do not use these envelopes until 2021. Envelope numbers change from year to year, and it makes inputting donations a little harder when envelopes are not used for the current year. Thank you for your understanding.

GUIDING LIGHT DEADLINE – Please note that this Friday, December 18th, is the deadline for the January issue of the Guiding Light. Please have all submissions into Jean at the office by this date. Thank you.

FAREWELL TO PASTOR STEPHEN & JAN

On December 27th we will be saying farewell to Pastor Stephen and Jan. Due to Covid restrictions, we will be including our sending messages during the service. We will have a basket for cards and notes that you would like to leave for Pastor Stephen and Jan. For anyone unable to attend, you may drop off or mail your cards to the church office. Susan Dupuis

GIFTS FROM THE HEART CATALOGUE – Give a meaningful gift from the comfort of home with Canadian Lutheran World Relief's Gifts from the Heart catalogue. Your gift to a loved one will provide meaningful, tangible items for people around the world facing hunger, poverty and the threat of COVID-19. No matter which gift you choose, the gifts you give will change lives

and touch your loved ones! Visit www.clwr.org/GFTH to learn more. Catalogues can also be picked up at the registration table by the entrance.

Today's Video Has Been Brought To You By Zion Lutheran Church's Production Crew:

Presider: Pastor Stephen Scheidt

Musician: Blaine Sack

Worship Assistant/Reader: Ellen Vandersleen

Videorecorder: Ty Phannenhour

Projectionist: Alex Hammel

Credit Researcher: Diane Hammel

Today's Scheduled Worship Leaders

Counters: Doug & Pauline Malliff, Susan Dupuis

Guides: The Grosskleg Family

Sexton: Koit Rull

This Week at Zion – December 14 - 20

Tuesday	9:30 a.m.	Tai Chi (Intermediates)
	7 p.m.	Narcotics Anonymous
Wednesday		BULLETIN DEADLINE
Thursday		DEADLINE FOR CHRISTMAS DONATIONS
Friday		GUIDING LIGHT DEADLINE
Sunday	10 a.m.	Holy Communion with guest pastor and homilist, Rev. Leena Jensen

Confession: In the name of the Father, and of the +Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**

Most merciful God, **we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.**

For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the +Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn as the Advent Wreath is lit: ELW 282 It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

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:

Prayer of the Day: God of Elizabeth and Mary, you visited your servants with the news of your advent among us in the birth of a holy child. Make our hearts leap for joy, and fill our mouths with songs of praise, that we may announce glad tidings of peace, and welcome the Christ in our midst. **Amen.**

First Reading: Micah 5: 2 – 5a

A reading from Micah.

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

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

Song to Welcome the Gospel: WOV 638 Holy Child Within the Manger

Gospel: Luke 1: 39 - 45

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

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry,

“Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of the Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”

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

Homily: In the Gospel of Saint Luke, great joy and rejoicing are signs that the Lord has come into our midst. This joy was expressed by people like Elizabeth, and even her unborn son, John the Baptist, who were waiting for the coming of the Messiah, the promised one. That joy increases in the Gospel of Saint Luke until Christmas Eve, when the heavens burst forth in the song of the angels, singing, “Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God’s people on earth” as the Christ child arrives in our midst.

I have always loved the idea that, on Christmas Eve, we get to sing with the angels and that heaven and earth mingle their voices together in joyful praise of God, who is born into our very midst. Everyone, everywhere, revels with delight at the mystery of the incarnation and the holy birth of the one who is God among us.

I also like the idea that the song of the angels, and many other songs of wonder and rejoicing, were written before the Gospel of St. Luke, and the writer of Luke borrowed them from the early church because they were so cherished. Usually, it is the other way around. People are inspired by scripture to write songs and hymns. But the writer of Luke’s Gospel was inspired by songs and canticles to write scripture. That is partly why Luke’s Gospel is so different from the other three gospels, and probably why it is so beautiful.

The writer of Luke's Gospel relished the idea that we could sing with the angels, and exult with the faithful, and so many songs and canticles of the early Church found their way into the Gospel of Saint Luke...possibly because they were actually the foundation of the Gospel itself.

Luke's gospel is not shy to talk about the joy that is ours in Christ...a joy, that, to the world around us might even seem irrational as we bask in the glory of God's great kindness.

Luke's Advent and Christmas stories...like the one we heard today about Elizabeth and her unborn son, John the Baptist, are very playful stories. The idea that John the Baptist, yet unborn, is jumping with joy in the womb when he meets the yet unborn Christ, probably sounds a little silly to many. But it seems that even John, yet to be born, cannot resist the joy of being in the presence of the one that he is being born to proclaim...and so he does a baby breakdance in the womb of Elizabeth, his mother.

And Elizabeth's joy, greeting Mary, matched the joy of her unborn son John. She realizes that she is greeting the one who will be the mother of our Lord and the fulfiller of all that God has promised. How could she help but be ecstatic about something so wonderful and mysterious.

For Elizabeth, the promise God spoke through the prophet Micah, the promise we heard this morning, was coming true in her lifetime. The long-expected Messiah who would come from the line of King David was appearing and the long wait was over. We hear the promise this morning as well from Micah and it is just as much for us as it was for Elizabeth, that something wonderful will happen in Bethlehem ...and there, God will start to draw all people back home and into peace through this holy child...and lead us on the paths of peace.

Our Lord, being born in Bethlehem, has this wonderful way of drawing us all to him, even when we are apart from each other, and bringing us peace, even in the midst of our sometimes chaotic and troubling lives - which is exactly what Micah told us he would do. This is a good thing, because Christmas this year will seem a lot less than perfect for most of us and may even be a disappointment for many of us, who ache to be with our families and loved ones.

Our celebration may well depend on how well we can manage to remember to celebrate what Christmas is and not what it once was ... that Christ, no matter what is happening around us, was still born for us, and that we will share his life forever because he shared his life with us. Nothing can take that joy away from us. Elizabeth's profound joy is our joy as well.

Everything that is troubling us will eventually pass away, but the steadfast love our God, the love of the God of the manger and the cross, will never leave us.

Elizabeth and her son, John the Baptist, help us to remember that profound joy is a very good thing indeed, because it is our way of delighting in all that God has done for us, and for the promises fulfilled in Christ our Lord. May their joy be ours this holy season, as we also delight in all that God has done for us, and is for us, in the birth and life of Christ our Lord, Emmanuel, God with us. Amen.

Hymn: Renewing Worship 108 Unexpected and Mysterious

Prayers of the Faithful: Merciful God of peace, your word, spoken by the prophets, restores your people's life and hope. Fill our hearts with the joy of your saving grace, that we may hold fast to your great goodness. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Make us strong to join you in your holy work, as friends of strangers and visitors, companions of those whom others shun, and as the happiness of those whose hearts are broken. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of generosity, we thank you for the gifts you have given us that we can share with others as an offering to you, along with our thankful hearts. Bless all we give and do in your name, that your Holy Work and your Holy Will may be done among us and in your world. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for Florence Felske, Richard Hubert, Dorian Verch, Sharon Watt, Leona Woito, and all who seek your healing touch and the gift of your peace. Hold them in your mercy, and journey with them in their illness, bringing them healing and peace. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are ill with Covid-19 and for all who care for them and all who are working on vaccines. Bless this Holy Work. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Hear our humble prayers, that we may serve you in holiness and faith, and give voice to your presence among us as you come to us in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you now and forever. **Amen.**

Gathering all our prayers into one, we pray the prayer that you have 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.**

Blessing: May our Gracious God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us in the Risen Life of Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Song: ELW 298 The Bells of Christmas

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude:
