

# Historic Zion Lutheran Church

## DIVINE SERVICE FOR THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY

9:00 am ..... Monday, December 25, 2023

### RECEIVING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER AT ZION

As intended by Christ and as practiced by the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church throughout her history, "Closed Communion" is observed in this congregation, in which the Lord's Supper is distributed only to those:

- (a) who have been **baptized** in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit;
- (b) who have been **instructed** in the truth of Holy Scripture as taught in the Lutheran Confessions, who have been **confirmed** in this Lutheran faith, and who now confess the same doctrines that are taught in this congregation, holding membership in a congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod;
- (c) who **believe that in this sacrament the real body and blood of Christ are truly distributed to them and orally received by them**, bestowing on them the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation;
- (d) who **sincerely repent** of all their sins, and desire to receive God's forgiveness in this holy meal.

Guests at our services, before receiving the sacrament, are requested to affirm these facts with one of our pastors. Thank you for honoring our practice. If you are looking for a church home, would like to be a member of Zion, or would like to learn more about the Christian Faith, please speak to one of our pastors about our membership classes.

✠ = *appropriate to make the baptismal sign of the cross*  
When "rise" or "kneel" is indicated, it is appropriate to sit if needed

#### [ Rise ] **Invocation**

*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. .... Amen!*

*The Congregation rises, turns towards the entrance of the nave, and faces the Cross of Christ, the reminder of Christ's promise to come and dwell among His people as they are gathered in His name.*

#### **Processional Hymn ..... Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful ..... Burgundy Hymn 379**

[ Be Seated ]

#### **Kyrie ..... setting by J. Brudieu**

[ Rise ]

#### **Gloria in Excelsis ..... Hark! the Herald Angels Sing ..... Burgundy Hymn 380**

#### **Salutation**

*The Lord be with you.*



**And with thy spir— it.**

**Collect for Christmas Day:** *Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*



**A ——— men!**

[ Be Seated ]

#### **+ The Office of the Word of God +**

#### **Old Testament Reading..... Isaiah 52:7-10**

[ After the reading ] *This is the word of the Lord. .... Thanks be to God.*

#### **Gradual Hymn ..... Rejoice, Rejoice ..... Burgundy Hymn 391**

**Epistle of the Day ..... Hebrews 1:1-12**

[ After the reading ] *This is the word of the Lord.* ..... **Thanks be to God.**

[ Rise and face the Processional Cross for the Gospel Procession. ]

**Alleluia Sequence ..... Oh, Rejoice, Ye Christians ..... Burgundy Hymn 897**

[ Sing the Twelve-fold Alleluia below and stanzas 1 & 2 BEFORE the Gospel.

Stanzas 3 & 4 will be sung after the Gospel is proclaimed. ]

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,  
ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -  
lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -  
lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

**Holy Gospel ..... St. John 1:1-18**

[ The Gospel is announced. ]

[ The Gospel is proclaimed. ]

Glo - ry be to Thee, O Lord!

Praise be to Thee, O Christ!

**Hymn ..... Oh, Rejoice, Ye Christians ..... Burgundy Hymn 897**

[ Sing stanzas 3 & 4. After singing stanza 4, sing the Twelve-fold Alleluia below. ]

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,  
ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -  
lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -  
lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

**Confession of Faith (The Nicene Creed)**

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven

[ Bow ] And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, And was made man;



mys - tic Close, Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.  
 neath the sun, Ev - er - more and ev - e - more.  
 hell to lie, Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.  
 arms re - ceived, Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.  
 prais - es cry! Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.  
 an - swer - ing, Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.

**Sermon**

**+ The Office of Confession of Sins and Holy Absolution +**

*Having heard the Word of God, and as we prepare for the great gift of the Holy Sacrament of Christ's body and blood, let us confess our sins and receive God's forgiveness.*

[ Kneel ]

*Our help is in the name of the Lord ..... Who made heaven and earth.  
 I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord. .... And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.*

*O almighty God, merciful Father, ..... I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.*

*Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. . . . . Amen!*

[ Rise ] **Prayer of the Church**

*Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs: [ After each petition ]:..., Lord, in Your mercy: ..... Hear our prayer.  
 [ After the final prayer ]:..., one God, now and forever ..... Amen.*

[ Be Seated ] **Offerings**

**Choral Voluntary ..... For Unto Us ..... G. F. Handel**  
 [ from the oratorio, The Messiah. ]

[ Rise ] **Offertory Hymn ..... Break Forth ..... Burgundy Hymn 378: St 1**  
 [ Sing stanza 1 only. ]

**+ The Office of the Sacrament of the Altar +**

**Preface**

*The Lord be with you.*

*Lift up your hearts.*

And with thy spir - it.

We lift them up un - to the Lord.

*Let us give thanks unto the Lord, our God.*

It is meet and right so to do.

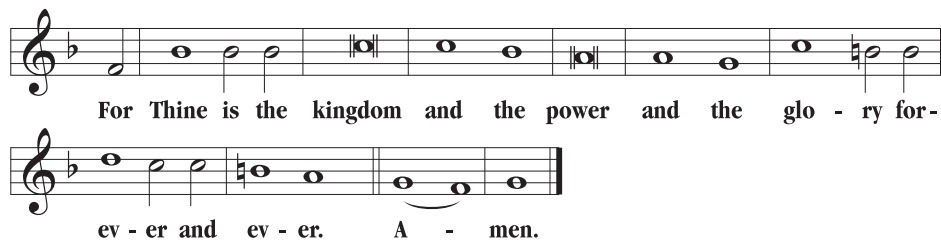
**Proper Preface for Christmas**

*It is truly meet, right and salutary . . . . . ever more praising You and saying:*

**Sanctus Hymn ..... Let All Mortal Flesh ..... Burgundy Hymn 621**  
 [ Choir alone sings stanza 1; Men alone sing stanza 2; Women alone sing stanza 3; All sing stanza 4. ]

[ Kneel ] **Lord's Prayer**

[ Pastor chants: ] *Our Father who art in heaven; . . . . . but deliver us from evil.*



For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glo - ry for -  
ev - er and ev - er. A - men.

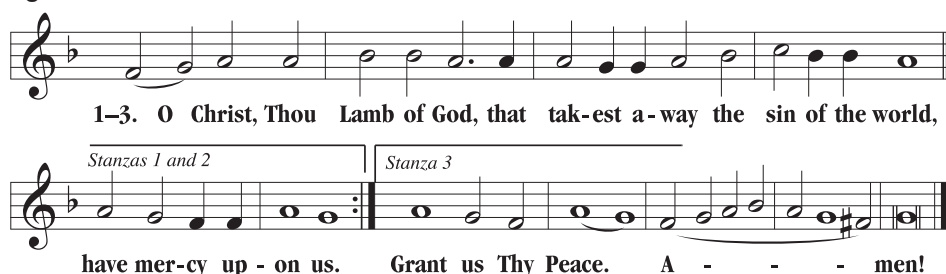
**Words of Institution, Pax Domini**

*The peace of the Lord be with you always!*



A - men.

**Agnus Dei**



1-3. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the sin of the world,  
have mer-cy up - on us. Grant us Thy Peace. A - - - men!

[ Be Seated ]

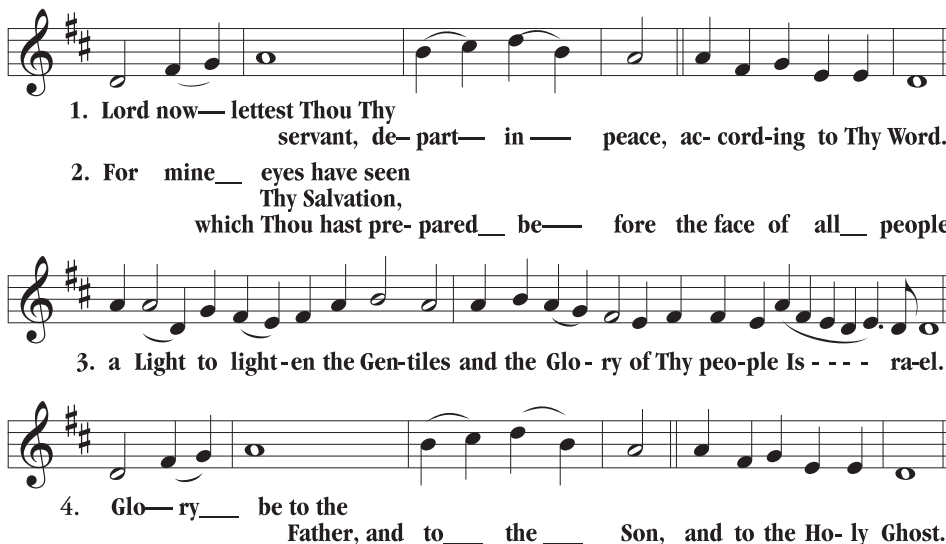
**Distribution Hymns** ..... **What Child Is This** ..... **Burgundy Hymn 370**

**Now Sing We, Now Rejoice** ..... **Burgundy Hymn 386**

**Eucharistic Benediction**

*The Body and Blood of your Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting! ✠ Depart in Peace! ..... Amen!*

**Post-Communion Canticle** ..... **The Nunc Dimittis**



1. Lord now— lettest Thou Thy  
servant, de— part— in — peace, ac— cord— ing to Thy Word.

2. For mine\_\_ eyes have seen  
Thy Salvation,  
which Thou hast pre— pared\_\_ be— fore the face of all\_\_ people.

3. a Light to light-en the Gen— tles and the Glo— ry of Thy peo— ple Is - - - ra-el.

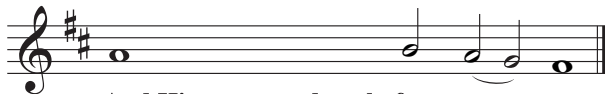
4. Glo— ry\_\_ be to the  
Father, and to\_\_ the \_\_ Son, and to the Ho— ly Ghost.



5. As it \_\_\_ was in the beginning, is now, and e-ver shall be, world with-out end. A-men.

### Post Communion Rite

*Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good.*



And His mercy endureth for - ev — er.

### Prayer of Thanksgiving ... one God, now and forever.



A — men.

*The Lord be with you.*



And with thy spir — rit.

*Bless we the Lord.*



Thanks be to God.

### Benediction

*The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and ✠ give you peace.*



A-men, A-men, A - men.

*During the Recessional, the Congregation turns and faces the Processional Cross, the symbol of Christ's promise to remain with and lead His people as they now go and live in the world in His name.*

Recessional Hymn ..... Joy to the World ..... Burgundy Hymn 387

Postlude ..... From Heaven Above ..... J. S. Bach



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*The hymn, Of the Father's Heart Begotten, and the Twelve-fold "Alleluia" are in the public domain.*

## Readings for the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord

### The Old Testament Reading is Isaiah 52:7-10

How beautiful upon the mountains  
are the feet of him who brings good news,  
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,  
who publishes salvation,  
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."  
The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice;  
together they sing for joy;  
for eye to eye they see  
the return of the LORD to Zion.  
Break forth together into singing,  
you waste places of Jerusalem,  
for the LORD has comforted his people;  
he has redeemed Jerusalem.  
The LORD has bared his holy arm  
before the eyes of all the nations,  
and all the ends of the earth shall see  
the salvation of our God."

### The Epistle is Hebrews 1:1-12

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

For to which of the angels did God ever say,  
"You are my Son, today I have begotten you"?

Or again,

"I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"?

And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,

"Let all God's angels worship him."

Of the angels he says,

"He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire."

But of the Son he says,

"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,

the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.  
You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;  
therefore God, your God, has anointed you  
with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.”

And,

“You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning,  
and the heavens are the work of your hands;  
they will perish, but you remain;  
they will all wear out like a garment,  
like a robe you will roll them up,  
like a garment they will be changed.  
But you are the same, and your years will have no end.”

### **The Gospel is John 1:1-18**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.



# Hymns for the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord

## LSB379 O Come All Ye Faithful

John F. Wade

1. O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant!  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold Him Born the king of angels;

*Refrain:* O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord!

2. Highest, most holy, Light of Light eternal,  
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;  
Son of the Father Now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*
3. Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God In the highest: *Refrain*
4. Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to Thee be glory giv'n!  
Word of the Father Now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*

## LSB380 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Charles Wesley

1. Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;  
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;  
With the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

*Refrain:* Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

2. Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail the incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as Man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel! *Refrain*
3. Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings, Ris'n with healing in His wings.  
Mild He lays His glory by, Born that man no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth. *Refrain*

**LSB391 Rejoice, Rejoice This Happy Morn**

Birgitte Katerine Boye.

1. Rejoice, rejoice this happy morn, A Savior unto us is born,  
The Christ, the Lord of glory!  
His lowly birth in Bethlehem The angels from on high proclaim  
And sing redemption's story!  
My soul, extol God's great favor; Bless Him ever For salvation;  
Give Him praise and adoration!"

**LSB897 O Rejoice, Ye Christians Loudly**

Christian Keimann

*Twelvefold Alleluia:* Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

1. O rejoice, ye Christians, loudly, For our joy has now begun;  
Wondrous things our God has done.  
Tell abroad his goodness proudly, Who our race has honored thus,  
That He deigns to dwell with us.

*Refrain:* Joy, O joy, beyond all gladness, Christ has done away with sadness!  
Hence, all sorrow and repining, For the Sun of Grace is shining!

2. See, my soul, thy Savior chooses Weakness here and poverty;  
In such love He comes to thee.  
Neither crib nor cross refuses; All He suffers for thy good  
To redeem thee by His blood. *Refrain*

*The Reading of the Holy Gospel*

3. Lord, how shall I thank Thee rightly? I acknowledge that by Thee  
I am saved eternally.  
Let me not forget it lightly, But to Thee at all times cleave  
And my heart true peace receive. *Refrain*
4. Jesus, guard and guide Thy members, Fill them with Thy boundless grace,  
Hear their prayers in ev'ry place.  
Fan to flame faith's glowing embers; Grant all Christians, far and near,  
Holy peace, a glad new year! *Refrain* then *Twelvefold Alleluia*

**Of the Father's Heart Begotten**

Prudentius

Printed in Service Bulletin

**LSB378 Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light**

Johann Rist

1. Break forth, O beauteous heav'nly light, And usher in the morning.  
Ye shepherds, shrink not with affright, The day of grace is dawning.  
This Child, though weak in infancy, Our confidence and joy shall be,  
The pow'r of Satan breaking, Our peace with God now making.

**LSB621 Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence** Liturgy of St. James, 5th cent.Choir  
only

1. Let all mortal flesh keep silence And with fear and trembling stand;  
Ponder nothing earthly minded, For with blessing in His hand  
Christ our God to earth descending Comes our homage to demand.
- M 2. King of kings yet born of Mary, As of old on earth He stood,  
Lord of lords, in human vesture, In the body and the blood,  
He will give to all the faithful His own self for heav'nly food.
- W 3. Rank on rank the host of heaven Spreads its vanguard on the way  
As the Light of Light descending From the realms of endless day,  
Comes the pow'rs of hell to vanquish As the darkness clears away.
4. At His feet the six-winged seraph, Cherubim with sleepless eye,  
Veil their faces to the presence As with ceaseless voice they cry:  
"Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, Lord Most High!"

**LSB370 What Child Is This**

Juraj Tranovsky

1. What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet While shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the king, Whom shepherds guard and angels  
sing; Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The babe, the son of Mary!
2. Why lies He in such mean estate Where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here The silent Word is pleading.  
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through, The cross be borne for me,  
for you; Hail, hail the Word made flesh, The babe, the son of Mary!
3. So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh; Come, peasant king, to own Him.  
The King of kings salvation brings; Let loving hearts enthrone Him.  
Raise, raise the song on high, The virgin sings her lullaby;  
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, The babe, the son of Mary!

**LSB386 Now Sing We, Now Rejoice**Latin and German, 14<sup>th</sup> cent.

1. Now sing we, now rejoice, Now raise to heav'n our voice;  
He from whom joy streameth Poor in a manger lies;  
Not so brightly beameth The sun in yonder skies.  
Thou my Savior art! Thou my Savior art!
2. Come from on high to me; I cannot rise to thee.  
Cheer my wearied spirit, O pure and holy Child;  
Through Thy grace and merit, Blest Jesus, Lord most mild,  
Draw me unto Thee! Draw me unto Thee!
3. Now through His Son doth shine The Father's grace divine.  
Death was reigning o'er us Through sin and vanity  
Till He opened for us A bright eternity.  
May we praise Him there! May we praise Him there!
4. Oh, where shall joy be found? Where but on heav'nly ground?  
Where the angels singing With all His saints unite,  
Sweetest praises bringing In heav'nly joy and light,  
Oh, that we were there! Oh, that we were there!

**LSB387 Joy to the World**

Isaac Watts

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King:  
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room And heav'n and nature sing,  
And heav'n and nature sing, And heav'n and nature sing.
2. Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ,  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy.
3. No more let sins and sorrows grow Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make His blessings flow Far as the curse is found,  
Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is found.
4. He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness And wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love, And wonders of His love.

# *The Feast of the Nativity*

*December 25, 2023*

*9:00 AM*



*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1*



In loving memory of our beloved parents Carl & Myrtle Albersmeyer,  
Byrle & Joyce Greenamyre  
by Carl & Rosie Albersmeyer & families

In memory of Baby Bahr, Elizabeth Hope Bahr  
by Michael & Amber Bahr

In loving memory of William Bengs and Walter & Adeline Bengs  
by Clarann Bengs

In loving memory of our parents  
Paul & Esther Bieberich and David & Agnes Shutt  
by Don & Beth Bieberich

In loving memory of Paul & Esther Bieberich and  
Paul Menze & Hilda Bieberich  
by Dwight & CarolLu Bieberich

Dedicated to all our family and friends  
by Mike & Rita Davies

In memory of Eileen Porter and Sylvia Ganaway  
by Julie Ganaway

To my mother Virginia Hollman and grandmother Hulda Sonne  
by Beth Hollman

To my beloved wife Virginia Hollman  
by Richard Hollman

In loving memory of my parents Alonzo & Ora Edmonds  
by Alanza Jackson

In loving memory of Spiro Kostoff & Anne Kostoff  
and Karen Kostoff Wood  
by the Family



To honor the Christ Child  
by Rev. George & Lois Lange

In loving memory of Dr. Robert & Katherine Leininger  
and Fred, Betty, Teresa & John Beckman  
by Kevin & Maribeth Leininger

In loving memory of Willie Manning  
by Rose Manning

In honor of Robert & Loretta Manth, Albert & Caroline Manth,  
Ferdinand & Henrietta Bornkamp, and Mrs. Clara Tegtmeier  
by Jennifer Manth

In loving memory of Walter & Georgianna Ostermeyer  
O come all ye faithful, joyful and “triumphant”  
from their thankful children Karen, Kim, David, and Kirk

“Now in the manger we may see God’s Son from eternity,  
The gift from God’s eternal throne  
Here clothed in our poor flesh and bone. Alleluia!”  
by Pastor & Marge Punke

In loving memory of my parents Albert & Emma Dirks  
by Marilyn Shafter

In loving memory of my wife Jill, my parents David & Savannah,  
my sister and nephew Artis & Michael Barksdale  
by Clarence Stokes

In loving memory of Bryce Shull  
by Jim & Judy Voelz

In loving memory of William Wallschlaeger  
by Carolyn Wallschlaeger and family

“Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! ... Repeat the sounding joy.”

by André Woodard

In loving memory of Margaret Trachsel

by Charlene Young

# Celebrate

## The Birth Of Christ

### *Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church*

*Zion Lutheran Church is the body of Christ at Hanna and Creighton in Fort Wayne, Indiana that:*

- *Receives Christ's gifts in Word and Sacraments; and*
- *Responds to God's love in Christ by*
  - *Reaching out to those who do not know His love; and*
  - *Revealing His love in acts of kindness and mercy.*

2313 Hanna St., Ft. Wayne, IN 46803

744-1389 Fax 744-2421

#### **The Pastoral Ministry At Zion**

**Senior Pastor:**

**Rev. Douglas D. Punke, MDiv (341-5397)**

**Field Workers:**

**Paul Mroczenski, Matthew Harris**

#### **The Teaching Staff At Lutheran South Unity**

**Teachers:**

**Amber Bahr, Principal**

**Yvonne Schwantz, Michael Cullen, Chase Mertz,**

**Danielle Ramsey, John Kuker, Abbey Zelt,**

**John Fink, Hannah Maresh, Karen Koehlert, Rachel Wiegman, Natalie Reynolds,**

**Lizzy Hoham, Marcus Rush**

#### **The Support Staff**

**Organist and Director of Parish Music:**

**Michael Hollman, MM**

**Church Office Manager:**

**Melvia Culpher**





# What Doctor Luther Says:

## *About the Good Tidings of Christ's Work for Us*

[T]he gospel is a preaching of the incarnate Son of God, given to us without any merit on our part for salvation and peace. It is a word of salvation, a word of grace, a word of comfort, a word of joy, a voice of the bridegroom and the bride, a good word, a word of peace. Isaiah says, chapter 52 [:7], "How beautiful ... are the feet of those who bring good tidings, who publish peace, who preach good tidings." But the law is a word of destruction, a word of wrath, a word of sadness, a word of grief, a voice of the judge and the defendant, a word of restlessness, a word of curse. ... "The law is the power of sin" ..., and "the law brings wrath" ...; it is a law of death .... Therefore for those of us who are held captive, who are overwhelmed by sadness and in dire despair, the light of the gospel comes and says, "Fear not" ..., "comfort, comfort my people" ..., "encourage the fainthearted" ..., "behold your God" ..., "behold the Lamb of God, who takes away die sin of the world" .... Behold that one who alone fulfils the law for you, whom God has made to be your righteousness, sanctification, wisdom, and redemption, for all those who believe in him ...]. When the sinful conscience hears this sweetest messenger, it comes to life again, shouts for joy while leaping about full of confidence, and no longer fears death, the types of punishments associated with death, or hell. ...

Therefore the true glory of God springs from this gospel. At the same time we are taught that the law is fulfilled not by our works but by the grace of God who pities us in Christ and that it shall be fulfilled not through works but through faith, not by anything we offer God, but by all we receive from Christ and partake of in him. "From his fulness have we all received", and we are partakers of his merits.

*Luther's Works*, 31:231.



Beloved in Christ,

Every week we are presented with what Dr. Luther has to say about a text or topic. I hope you read them. He said this about the coming of the Christ Child: “Behold Christ lying in the lap of his young mother, still a virgin. What can be sweeter than the Babe ... Look at the Child, knowing nothing. Yet all that is belongs to him, that your conscience should not fear but take comfort in him. Doubt nothing. Watch him springing in the lap of the maiden. Laugh with him. Look upon this Lord of Peace and your spirit will be at peace. See how God invites you in many ways. He places before you a babe with whom you may take refuge. You cannot fear him, for nothing is more appealing to man than a babe. ... Come to him, lying in the lap of the fairest and sweetest maid. You will see how great is the divine goodness ... Trust him! Trust him! Here is the Child in whom is salvation.” From Martin Luther’s Christmas Book.

“Behold Christ! Trust him! Here is your salvation.” Your Savior came down in all of our fragility as this babe; He came into our brokenness to fix it — not by power and might but by humility, suffering, and cross. That’s the reason we rejoice; the Christmas message is more than a baby in a manger; His swaddling cloths portend His burial cloths. That’s the whole story: the lowly Christ, our joy; the suffering Christ, our peace; the risen Christ; our hope. Behold this Christ! Trust him! He is your salvation.

On behalf of Zion’s staff—myself, Mike, and Melvia—thank you for the privilege of serving you with this Gospel. May the Lord in the coming year continue to bless Zion, Zion’s school LSUS, and her ministries with His grace, and may the Lord make His Zion ever more zealous to proclaim this great mystery of salvation in Christ to the world.

We are truly blessed to be among this family of Christ at Zion. Beloved, we will continue to pray for you as we know you do for us. We pray today the blessings of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be yours now, in this Holy Season of the birth of our Lord, and forever.

Yours in Christ,

*Pastor Pinke*

