

# Historic Zion Lutheran Church

## DIVINE SERVICE FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

9:00 am ..... Sunday, December 28, 2025

### 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

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**Greeting And Announcements:** *The Lord be with you!* ..... **And also with you!**

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[ Rise ] **Invocation**

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

### The Office of Confession of Sins and Absolution

*Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God, our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us 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!*

*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.*

**Entrance Hymn ..... Come Your Hearts ..... Burgundy Hymn 375**

**Kyrie**

Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have  
mer - cy up - on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

**Gloria Hymn ..... Angels We Have Heard on High .... Burgundy Hymn 368**

**Salutation**

*The Lord be with you.*

And with thy spir— it.

**Collect for the First Sunday after Christmas:** *O God, our Maker and Redeemer, You wonderfully created us and in the incarnation of Your Son yet more wondrously restored our human nature. Grant that we may ever be alive in Him who made Himself to be like us; through Jesus Christ, 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 63:7–14**

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

**Epistle of the Day ..... Galatians 4:4–7**

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

[ Rise ] **Sequence Hymn ..... Sweet Flowerets ..... RED Hymn 273**

[ The Alleluia Verse is sung immediately following the hymn. ]

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

**Holy Gospel ..... St. Mathew 2:13–23**

[ The Gospel is announced. ]

[ The Gospel is proclaimed. ]

Glo - ry be to Thee, O Lord!

Praise be to Thee, O Christ!

**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;

And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures; And ascended into heaven, And sits at the right hand of the Father; And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead; Whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the Prophets. And I believe in one Holy Christian and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, And I look for the resurrection of the dead, And the life ✝ of the world to come. Amen!

[ Be Seated ]

## Hymn of the Day ..... Let All Together..... Burgundy Hymn 389

[ All sing stanzas 1 & 2; Men alone sing stanzas 3 & 5; Women alone sing stanzas 4 & 6;

All sing stanza 7; Rise for stanza 7. ]

## Sermon

### [ 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, Voluntary

### [ Rise ] Offertory Hymn ..... Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God



Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right  
spir-it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from Thy pres- ence, and  
take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re-store un-to me the joy of  
Thy sal-va - tion; and up - hold me with Thy free spir-it. A - men.

## + The Office of the Sacrament of the Altar +

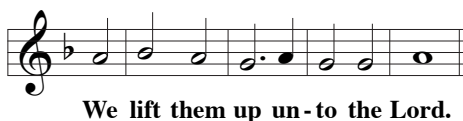
### Preface

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, Sanctus

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

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth;  
Heav'n and earth are full of Thy glo - ry; Ho - san-na Ho - san-na, Ho -  
san-na in the high-est. Bless-ed is He, Bless-ed is He, Bless-ed is He that  
com-eth in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na, Ho - san-na, Ho-san-na in the highest.

[ 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,  
Stanzas 1 and 2 Stanza 3  
have mer-cy up - on us. Grant us Thy Peace. A - - - men!

[ Be Seated ]

Distribution Hymns ..... Away in a Manger ..... Burgundy Hymn 365  
O Jesus Christ ..... Burgundy Hymn 372

[ Rise ]

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- tiles and the Glo- ry of Thy peo- ple Is - - - ra- el.



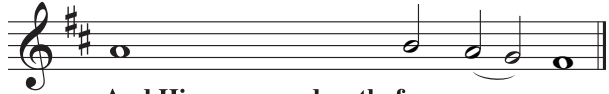
4. Glo— ry\_\_ be to the  
Father, and to\_\_ the\_\_ Son, and to the Ho- ly Ghost.



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.*



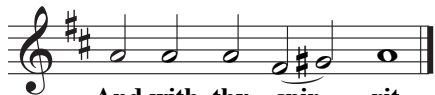
And His mercy endureth for — ev — er.

Prayer of Thanksgiving ... 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 ..... Oh, What Their Joy ..... Burgundy Hymn 675

Postlude

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## Readings for the First Sunday after Christmas

### The Old Testament Reading is Isaiah 63:7-14

I will recount the steadfast love of the LORD,  
the praises of the LORD,  
according to all that the LORD has granted us,  
and the great goodness to the house of Israel  
that he has granted them according to his compassion,  
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

For he said, "Surely they are my people,  
children who will not deal falsely."

And he became their Savior.

In all their affliction he was afflicted,  
and the angel of his presence saved them;  
in his love and in his pity he redeemed them;  
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

But they rebelled

and grieved his Holy Spirit;  
therefore he turned to be their enemy,  
and himself fought against them.

Then he remembered the days of old,  
of Moses and his people.

Where is he who brought them up out of the sea  
with the shepherds of his flock?

Where is he who put in the midst of them  
his Holy Spirit,

who caused his glorious arm  
to go at the right hand of Moses,  
who divided the waters before them  
to make for himself an everlasting name,  
who led them through the depths?

Like a horse in the desert,  
they did not stumble.

Like livestock that go down into the valley,  
the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest.

So you led your people,  
to make for yourself a glorious name.

## **The Epistle is Galatians 4:4-7**

When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

## **The Gospel is Matthew 2:13-23**

Now when [the wise men] had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

“A voice was heard in Ramah,  
weeping and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”

But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.” And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

## Hymns for the First Sunday after Christmas

### LSB375 Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising

Paul Gerhardt

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1. Come, your hearts and voices raising, Christ the Lord with gladness praising;  
Loudly sing His love amazing, Worthy folk of Christendom.
2. Christ, from heav'n to us descending And in love our race befriending;  
In our need His help extending, Saved us from the wily foe.
- W 3. Jacob's Star in all its splendor Beams with comfort sweet and tender,  
Forcing Satan to surrender, Breaking all the pow'rs of hell.
- M 4. From the bondage that oppressed us, From sin's fetters that possessed us,  
From the grief that sore distressed us, We, the captives, now are free.
5. Oh, the joy beyond expressing When by faith we grasp this blessing,  
And to You we come confessing, That Your love has set us free.
6. Gracious Child, we pray, O hear us, From Your lowly manger cheer us,  
Gently lead us and be near us Till we join Your choir above.

### LSB368 Angels We Have Heard on High

French

1. Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply, Echoing their joyous strains.  
*Refrain:* Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.
2. Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be Which inspire your heav'nly song?  
*Refrain*
3. Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King.  
*Refrain*

### TLH273 Sweet Flowerets of the Martyr Band

Bohemian, 15<sup>th</sup> cent.

1. Sweet flow'rets of the martyr band, Plucked by the tyrant's ruthless hand  
Upon the threshold of the morn, Like rosebuds by a tempest torn;
2. First victim for th'incarnate Lord, A tender flock to feel the sword;  
Beside the very altar, gay, With palm and crown, ye seemed to play.
3. Ah, what availed King Herod's wrath? He could not stop the Savior's path.  
Alone, while others murdered lay, In safety Christ is borne away.

4. O Lord, the Virgin-born, to Thee Eternal praise and glory be,  
Whom with the Father we adore And Holy Ghost forevermore.

### **LSB389 Let All Together Praise Our God**

Nicolaus Herman

Text (sts. 1, 3-7): © 1969 Concordia Publishing House; Used by permission. LSBHymnLicense.net #100012381.

1. Let all together praise our God Before His glorious throne;  
Today He opens heav'n again, To give us His own Son,  
To give us His own Son.
2. He leaves His heav'nly Father's throne Is born an infant small;  
And in a manger, poor and lone, Lies in a humble stall,  
Lies in a humble stall.
- M 3. Within an earthborn form He hides His all creating light;  
To serve us all He humbly cloaks The splendor of His might,  
The splendor of His might.
- W 4. He undertakes a great exchange, Puts on our mortal frame;  
And in return gives us His realm, His glory, and His name,  
His glory, and His name.
- M 5. He is a servant, I a lord: How great a mystery!  
How strong the tender Christ-Child's love, No truer friend than He,  
No truer friend than He.
- W 6. He is the key and He the door To blessèd paradise;  
The angel bars the way no more To God our praises rise,  
To God our praises rise.
- △ 7. Your grace and lowliness revealed, Lord Jesus, we adore  
And praise to God the Father yield And Spirit evermore.  
We praise You evermore.

### **LSB365 Away in a Manger** *Little Children's Book* (sts. 1-2); *Vineyard Songs* (st. 3)

1. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,  
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
2. The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.  
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,  
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

3. Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay  
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,  
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.

### **LSB372 O Jesus Christ, Thy Manger Is**

**Paul Gerhardt**

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1. O Jesus Christ, Thy manger is  
My paradise at which my soul reclineth.  
For there, O Lord, Doth lie the Word  
Made flesh for us; herein Thy grace forth shineth.
2. He whom the sea And wind obey  
Doth come to serve the sinner in great meekness.  
Thou, God's own Son, with us art one,  
Dost join us and our children in our weakness.
3. Thy light and grace Our guilt efface,  
Thy heav'nly riches all our loss retrieving.  
Immanuel, Thy birth doth quell  
The power of hell and Satan's bold deceiving.
4. Thou Christian heart, Whoe'er thou art,  
Be of good cheer and let no sorrow move thee!  
For God's own Child, In mercy mild,  
Joins thee to Him; how greatly God must love thee!
5. Remember thou What glory now  
The Lord prepared thee for all earthly sadness.  
The angel host can never boast  
Of greater glory, greater bliss or gladness.
6. The world may hold Her wealth and gold;  
But thou, my heart, keep Christ as thy true treasure.  
To Him hold fast Until at last  
A crown be thine and honor in full measure.

### **LSB675 Oh, What Their Joy**

**Peter Abelard**

1. Oh, what their joy and their glory must be,  
Those endless Sabbaths the blessed ones see!  
Crowns for the valiant, to weary ones rest;  
God shall be all, and in all ever blest.

2. In new Jerusalem joy shall be found,  
Blessings of peace shall forever abound;  
Wish and fulfillment are not severed there,  
Nor the things prayed for come short of the prayer.

3. We, where no troubles distraction can bring,  
Safely the anthems of Zion shall sing;  
While for Your grace, Lord, their voices of praise  
Your blessed people shall evermore raise.

△ 4. Now let us worship our Lord and our King,  
Joyfully raising our voices to sing:  
Praise to the Father, and praise to the Son,  
Praise to the Spirit, to God, Three in One.



# The first Sunday after Christmas



## Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

2313 Hanna Street, Fort Wayne, IN 46803 | 260-744-1389  
[pastor@zionfw.org](mailto:pastor@zionfw.org), [church@zionfw.org](mailto:church@zionfw.org) | website: [www.zionfw.org](http://www.zionfw.org)

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.

### The Pastoral Ministry at Zion

Senior Pastor: Rev. Douglas D. Punke, MDiv (341-5397)  
Field Workers: Nathaniel Demlow, Joshua Fuchs

### The Teaching Staff at Lutheran South Unity

Principal: Amber Bahr (744-0459; [www.lsusfw.org](http://www.lsusfw.org))  
Teachers: Yvonne Schwantz (8<sup>th</sup>, MS ELA), Michael Cullen (7<sup>th</sup>, MS Science),  
Chase Mertz (6<sup>th</sup>, MS Social Studies), Danielle Ramsey (5<sup>th</sup>), Abbey Kohler (4<sup>th</sup>),  
Rachel Wiegman (3<sup>rd</sup>), John Fink (2<sup>nd</sup>), Hannah Fink (1<sup>st</sup>), Michelle Madden (K),  
Natalie Reynolds (Art), Elisa Sawall (Music), Lee Buxton (PE), Cathie Wakeland (Literacy Coach),  
Arianna Blake (LSEM), Melissa White (FWCS) & Sarah Wheaton (EACS) (Title I Tutors)

### The Support Staff

Organist and Director of Parish Music: Michael Hollman, MM  
Church Office Manager: Melvia Culpher

## PRAYERS FOR TODAY

- + For the church, especially those bearing the cross of persecution, including Bishop Juhana Pohjola and Dr. Päivi Räsänen (case being decided by the Finnish Supreme Court)
- + For those who serve our Lord at home and abroad, especially our teachers as they start of another academic year, our fieldworkers Nate Demlow and Josh Fuchs
- + For our nation; for our leaders; for our military, including James Hall & Thaddeus Cody
- + For our schools, especially Lutheran South Unity School, Concordia Lutheran High School, and Concordia Theological Seminary.
- + For those who travel
- + For the aged and the homebound
- + For those who are on hospice care or nearing death, especially Bob Ockree
- + For the ill, distressed, and those suffering affliction, including Marty Thomas, Jim Teasdale, Estella Ramirez, Darryl Kirtz, Dick Hollman, Art Litke, Henry Williams, Debra Busche, Carl Albersmeyer, Connie Houser, Bill Weinrich, Dwight Bieberich, Jimmy Coffey, Al McFeter, Mike Ming, Earl Marcel Sisson, Elaine Seifert, Joe Harrison, Louisa Porter, Gary Phillips, David Groth, Gary Castle, Ron Rastl, Robert & Jenny Hobby
- + For God's blessing on all godly marriages
- + For the gift of life and for length of days, for pregnant mothers Hannah Fink, and Rachel Wiegman
- + For the gift of rebirth by water and the Spirit
- + For those who mourn the death of loved ones, especially Lisa & Rick Ganaway at the death of Lisa's father Gordon Kronberg
- + In remembrance of the faithful departed
- + For our communicants and for a fruitful use of the most Blessed Sacrament of our Lord's Body and Blood

## IN THE SERVICE TODAY

Today is the Divine Service for the First Sunday after Christmas. Please complete an attendance communion card, including the names of all children, and indicate if you are communing. Non-members, please read the back of the card.

## CALENDAR

**December 28, 2025 thru January 3, 2026**

<b>SUN.</b>	<b>9:00 AM</b>	<b>Divine Service</b>	<b>Church</b>
		Bible Studies are taking a break today. We start again on January 4	
<b>MON.</b>			
<b>TUES.</b>	<b>9:00 AM</b>	<b>Weekly Bible Study</b>	<b>Bauer Hall</b>
<b>WED.</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>	<b>New Year's Eve Service</b>	<b>Church</b>
<b>THURS.</b>		<b>New Year's Day — Office closed</b>	
<b>FRI.</b>			
<b>SAT.</b>	<b>11:00 AM</b>	<b>Private Confession</b>	<b>Church</b>

**January 4, 2025**

<b>SUN.</b>	<b>9:00 AM</b>	<b>Divine Service</b>	<b>Church</b>
	<b>10:45 AM</b>	<b>Education Hour</b>	<b>Various</b>

## **ZION ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**EDUCATION HOUR:** Dr. Voelz is on break. He will continue in the study of the Gospel according to St. Mark after Easter. Sem. Josh Fuchs continues with the class on Lutheran Identity in the Conference Room next Sunday. And the Adult Class will take up St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians led by Pastor Punke and our field workers.

**JOIN US AT ZION** this Wednesday for a New Year's Eve Divine Service as we begin a new year of grace with Christ in His house.

**THANK YOU** to all who ordered poinsettias for the chancel. Don't forget to take yours home after church today.

**CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS** should come down before Epiphany (we'll celebrate that on January 4). Can you help take them down on Friday, January 2? Come if you can.

**FLOWER CHART:** Rosie has put up the 2026 flower chart please mark the day you would like the Cross-bowl and Altar Vases. Thanks.

**ENVELOPES** are still on a table in the Great Hall by Julie. Pick yours up today and help us save on the cost of distributing them. Also, Melvia has put out a 2025-2026 members directory. Melvia will have giving statements ready by January 11th.

**LAST CHANCE:** if you are interested in receiving the Lutheran Witness, please make a check out to Zion for \$19 (put Lutheran Witness in the memo line) before the end of the year. Also, if you would like to renew your subscription, please get your check to Melvia.

**MEMORY VERSE CHALLENGE:** Luke 2:10-11—"And the angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.'" Last week's verse was John 1:4.

**HELP NEEDED:** If you have a couple hours to spare every couple of months, the trustees would like your assistance to keep Zion beautiful, doing light cleaning and other chores as needed. Would you consider being added to our weekend rotation schedule? Talk to Kevin Leininger for more information or call him at 615-9896. Thanks.

**WE CAN FACE COMPETING PRIORITIES** when we think about planning our estates someday. As we wrap up this yearlong consideration, we must ponder whether we see our estate plan as an expression of our Christian faith or just giving up on life. As we complete this year, we keep in mind that in Christ, we will never finish but simply transfer into the glorious life the Lord has prepared for us. We never let death have the final word, for Jesus has conquered it. Your LCMS Foundation Gift Planning Counselor can assist you in putting your life-celebrating plan together. Contact Mark Muehl at 260-241-4845 or [mark.muehl@lfnd.org](mailto:mark.muehl@lfnd.org).

**RLNI** is sponsoring a trip to the National March for Life in Washington DC, January 21st-24th, 2026, open to high school and college-age students who want to grow in their understanding of the pro-life movement, explore the nation's capital, and stand with hundreds of thousands of others who believe every life deserves protection. Registration is closed for that trip. Please note: Saturday, January 31, 2026, is the annual **Rally and March for Life**. The Rally is at Parkview Field, 1301 Ewing St, Fort Wayne. The doors open at 12:00 PM; the Rally is 12:30-1:00 PM; and the March begins at 1:00 PM. Go to [www.ichooselife.org/march](http://www.ichooselife.org/march) for more info. P.S.: Does someone want to create and have produced a "Life sign" for Zion?

## For the family of God's Priestly People at Zion

God calls His own people a "Royal Priesthood." God makes us kings and queens, princes and princesses who are bound together by the Holy Spirit in Baptism for the Christian benefit of each other. Priests **PRAY** — They talk to God about their neighbor! Priests **TEACH** — They talk to their neighbor about God! Priests **OFFER SACRIFICES** — They offer to God the sacrifice of broken and contrite hearts; they offer their bodies and work as holy services to God for their neighbors. Join in this priestly work of prayer with your fellow members.

### Morning Prayer

Matthew 2:13-23

Luke 1:1-25

Luke 1:26-38

Luke 1:39-56

Luke 1:57-80

Luke 2:1-20

Luke 2:21-40

### DAILY LECTIONARY

The First Sunday after Christmas

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

### Evening Prayer

Isaiah 63:7-14

Isaiah 55:1-13

Isaiah 58:1-59:3, 14-21

Isaiah 60:1-22

Isaiah 61:1-11

Isaiah 62:1-12

Isaiah 63:1-14

## THE DAILY PETITIONS OF THE CHURCH

[Daily] **O Lord, have mercy upon us. O Christ, have mercy upon us. O Lord, have mercy upon us.** Let us pray:

[S] For the joy of the Resurrection among us; for true and godly worship throughout the world; for diligent preaching and hearing of God's Word of Law and Gospel; for our pastors; for the teachers and students of our Sunday School; for our Bible Class leaders and their students; for our catechumens; Lord, in Your mercy, ..... **hear our prayer. Amen!**

[M] For workers; for the unemployed; for farmers; for seasonable weather; for businesses small and large; for our leaders, federal, state and local; for the economic welfare of the nations on earth; for peace in our world; Lord, in Your mercy, ..... **hear our prayer. Amen!**

[T] For the tempted; for the addicted and despairing; for the tortured and oppressed; for the lonely; for the sick, the hospitalized, and the needy; Lord, in Your mercy, ..... **hear our prayer. Amen!**

[W] For fathers, mothers, and families; for those adults who must rear their children alone; the teachers and students of Lutheran South Unity School and Concordia Lutheran High School; Lord, in Your mercy, ..... **hear our prayer. Amen!**

[T] For the Church and her pastors; for the training of ministers of the Word; for missionaries of the Church; for the leaders of the Church, including Matthew, our synod president, and Richard, our district president; for those who have not heard the Gospel; for the fruitful use of the blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood; Lord, in Your mercy, ..... **hear our prayer. Amen!**

[F] For the preaching of the Cross; for those persecuted for the sake of Gospel; the confession of the orthodox Lutheran faith in our community; Lord, in Your mercy, ..... **hear our prayer. Amen!**

[Sat] For faithfulness unto life's earthly end; for the revival of those who have withered in the faith or fallen away; for the dying; Lord, in Your mercy, ..... **hear our prayer. Amen!**

[Daily] **The Our Father**

## TO PREPARE FOR NEXT SUNDAY

**The Epiphany of Our Lord (transferred)**

Isaiah 60:1-6

Ephesians 3:1-12

Matthew 2:1-12



# What Doctor Luther Says:

## About Merit—Excluded from Salvation, Not from Fruit

Regarding merit ... we say this. If the subject is what makes a Christian a Christian, how to become pious before God and obtain forgiveness of sins and eternal life, here we are all alike; here all our merit is completely excluded, and we must not hear or know anything about it. You have not merited the Gospel or Christ or Baptism, but it is purely a gift, freely given. Our sins are forgiven free, and we become God's children and are put into heaven without any contribution on our part. ...

Now, if we are discussing the fruit that follows grace and the forgiveness of sins, we will let the terms "merit" and "reward" be used. What we oppose is the idea that works of ours like these are the highest good, which must precede them and without which they do not take place or please God. If the insistence on grace alone without any merit is preserved, then we have no objection to giving the name "merits" to the fruit that follows. Only such statements should not be distorted and applied in an antisciptural way to our meriting grace, but interpreted correctly, the way they were intended, as a consolation to Christians — especially when they have to suffer opposition, when they get the feeling and the impression that our life, suffering, and activity are pointless and useless. This is the consolation that Scripture uses everywhere in urging perseverance in good works. So in Jeremiah 31:16 it says: "Your works shall be rewarded"; and St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:58: "In the Lord your labor is not in vain."

*Luther's Works*, 21:287-88, 291.

Summary of meeting of the Council of Elders, Dec. 4, 2025  
The following summary is being provided in accordance with the congregation's bylaws, §VIII)

Attendance:

Elders present: R. Lammert (chairman), A. Litke (secretary), J. Teasdale.

Elder absent: F. Jackson, W. Krause, T. Muehl.

Pastor present: Pr. Punke.

Pastor Punke led the elders in a devotion by continuing the reading of Article V of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession.

In his report Pastor Punke reported on a recent death and a recent birth (and upcoming baptism) among Zion's members, as well as family and health matters among members and friends of the congregation. He discussed the Advent/Christmas worship schedule and the work of our seminary field workers. Pastor Punke gave updates on the work being done in response to the lightning strike last spring and informed the elders of current issues with the church's internet and phones. He then reported on LSUS, CLHS, and on musical events at Zion.

The elders reviewed Pillar 1, Goal #1: "In the current quarter of the calendar year, Zion will experience a 10% increase in average worship attendance over the same quarter of the previous year." Because of the problems with the internet, Pastor Punke could not retrieve statistics for the quarter to date. The council will review the fourth quarter 2025 data at the January meeting.

The elders reviewed Pillar 2, Goal #1: "The elders will sponsor at least annually an opportunity for providing resources and training for members to gain confidence in

inviting neighbors to Zion." The six weekly sessions of the *Every One His Witness* workshop are scheduled for 2026, beginning on January 17, and ending on February 21, with Pastor Punke as the workshop leader.

The elders reviewed Pillar 2, Goal #4: "The Council of Elders will work through an ad-hoc committee with the Administrative Council and Education Council to determine whether to proceed and how to proceed to respond to the results of the CADDs survey, with a report by January 31, 2026." The ad-hoc committee continues to work on their recommendations, expecting to finish by the end of January, 2026.

The elders began reviewing the congregational policy document *The Christian Funeral at Zion Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana*. The review will continue at the next meeting.

The meeting was closed by praying Responsive Prayer 1.

Respectfully submitted,  
Richard A. Lammert, Chairman

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# EVERY ONE HIS WITNESS

LUTHERAN EVANGELISM®



Learn how to naturally and genuinely share the Gospel with your friends and neighbors who have not heard the Good News. After this program, you will be more effective witnesses of Jesus in your everyday life!



## LSUS NOTES

### Praying for You!

**Please pray for these students/staff:**

Arosa	Karla
Eliza	Shar
Jade	Paingthu
Layla	Faculty
Callen	Staff
Josue	



## To Us a Child is Born:

Our Christmas service was held on Tuesday, Dec. 16th at Zion Lutheran Church, as we joyfully celebrated the message *"To Us a Child Is Born."* Through scripture, song, and student participation, we rejoiced in the birth of Jesus and gave thanks for God's greatest gift to us. A heartfelt thank you to our students for all of their hard work and to our dedicated faculty and staff for guiding and supporting them every step of the way.



*Christ is Born*



**PHOENIX  
SPORTS CORNER**

WEEK OF DEC. 29<sup>TH</sup> - JAN. 10<sup>TH</sup>

**CHEERLEADING**

**BOYS BASKETBALL**

**GAMES:**

Monday, Jan. 5<sup>th</sup> vs. Emmaus  
4:30pm Varsity @ Bethlehem

Wednesday, Jan. 7<sup>th</sup> vs. Holy Cross  
4:30pm Varsity @ Bethlehem

Thursday, Jan. 8<sup>th</sup> vs. Concordia  
4:30pm Varsity @ Bethlehem

**Encouragement  
Found in  
Scriptures:**

And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.  
— Luke 2:10-11



The Lutheran Schools Partnership has formed an exploratory committee to learn more about how our Lutheran schools can best serve students with special education needs. We are first seeking to learn more about the needs of our community. If you are a parent or legal guardian of a child with special education needs, or an educator or church leader, we would value your input on this anonymous survey. Visit this site: <https://shorturl.at/jNmFm> to complete the survey. Thank you for your feedback!



# December Event Schedule

FACEBOOK: BRIDGE 20/30 GROUP FT. WAYNE

2

DEC 2025

ADVENT SERIES "WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?"  
WITH PASTOR CHAD VANMETER

7 PM THE GREENHAUS  
3504 N. ANTHONY BLVD

9

DEC 2025

ADVENT SERIES "WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?"  
WITH PASTOR CHAD VANMETER

7 PM THE GREENHAUS  
3504 N. ANTHONY BLVD

16

DEC 2025

ADVENT SERIES "WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?"  
WITH PASTOR CHAD VANMETER

7 PM THE GREENHAUS  
3504 N. ANTHONY BLVD

23

DEC 2025

UGLY CHRISTMAS SWEATER PARTY

7 PM THE GARDEN  
3308 N. ANTHONY BLVD

30

DEC 2025

MEETUP: ICE SKATING @ HEADWATERS

7 PM 333 S. CLINTON STREET  
HEADWATERS PARK  
ADMISSION: \$7 SKATES: \$4