

Third Sunday of Advent, Dec. 14, 2025
10 a.m. *Worship at Zion's Lutheran Church*

Welcome Friends and Guests: A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

Serving this Sunday:

Worship – Pastor Lisa Rygiel, Julie Wersal & John Strecker-Baseler
Musicians – Connie Pallone & Cristy Street
Ushers – Tracy Wahl & John Rygiel
Communion – T.M. Garner & Terry Watson



Worship: In God's boundless diversity, we are made in God's image! If you are visiting or new to our faith family, please sign our guest book so that we have a record of your visit. *Come back and worship with us each Sunday at 10 a.m.*

Communion: We celebrate open communion. This is Christ's table, all are welcome. You may come forward for the sacraments or cross your arms across your chest for a blessing. Our bread is gluten free and both wine and white grape juice (center of communion tray) are available.

Fellowship: Please join us after worship today as we continue to prepare the sanctuary for Christmas Eve, then join us in the Fellowship Hall for coffee and conversation.

Other Information: Large print bulletins are available upon request from the ushers. Restrooms are in the Fellowship Hall adjoining the sanctuary; our ushers can direct you. For pastoral care, call Pastor Lisa Rygiel at the church (719-846-7785) or contact her via email: zionsluth@gmail.com. Additional information about Zion's can be found on our website at: zionsluth.org.

Zion's Lutheran is a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregation.

~Gathering~

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Gathering of Prayers & Call to Advent Worship

God of Light, bless this Advent candle.

This is the time for caring and sharing, a time for smiling and singing, a time for rejoicing in life itself! Let us open our hearts fully to others. Let our faces radiate the joy of Your coming so that everyone we meet will know of you and the gift of life you bring.

O Jesus, our hearts are open. **Amen.**

Advent Call to Worship: #240 Light One Candle, vs. 3

Confession & Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation...and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

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 neighbors 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.**

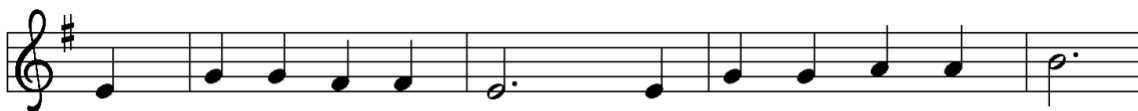
God, who is rich in mercy...through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn: #242 Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

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



- 1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.
- 2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.
- 3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.



We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.
Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

Prayer of the Day

Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

~Word~

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10

¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God.

³ Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
"Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you."

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;

⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert;

⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸ A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹ No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰ And the ransomed of the Lord shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsive Reading: Psalm: 146:5-10

⁵ Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help, whose hope is in the Lord their God;

⁶ **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;
who keeps promises forever;**

⁷ who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger.
The Lord sets the captive free.

⁸ **The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
the Lord loves the righteous.**

⁹ The Lord cares for the stranger;
the Lord sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

¹⁰ **The Lord shall reign forever,
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!**

Second Reading: James 5:7-10

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors!

¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Acclamation



Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

The holy gospel according to Matthew, Chapter 11.

Glory to you, O Lord.

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴ Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written,
‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

¹¹ “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

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

Sermon: Pastor Lisa Rygiel

Hymn of the Day: #715 Christ, Be Our Light

New Members by Faith Acclamation

Dear friends, we give thanks for the gift of baptism and for our brother David, one with us in the body of Christ, whom we welcome as a new member into the life and ministry of this congregation. In baptism, we are welcomed into the body of Christ and sent to share in the mission of God.

We are called to live among God’s faithful people, to hear the word of God and share in the Lord’s supper, to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, to serve all people, following the example of Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth. As a sibling in Christ, we are pleased to welcome you to our church family. David, do you intend to continue in the covenant of your baptism among God’s people in this place?

I do, and I ask God to help and guide me.

People of God, do you promise to support and pray for these new members in their life in Christ?

We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.

Affirmation of Faith

With the whole church, let us all confess our faith. Do you believe in God the Father?

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

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

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 to the dead. 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 to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

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.

Let us welcome David to our community of faith.

We rejoice with you in the life of baptism. Together we give thanks and praise to God and proclaim the good news to all the world.

Prayers of the People

God of power and mercy, we praise you for Jesus and his acts of healing and liberation. Lead us to proclaim the good news from generation to generation, that all may place their hope in you. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

When lands are parched and dry, bring rain and snow; where wilderness is barren, sow seeds of life. Fill the lands with trees that grow, plants that flower, and creatures that thrive, as nature proclaims the wonder of your works. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

When there is injustice or corruption among nations and leaders, root it out. Turn their attention to inequity and the cries of the poor. Instill a deeper sense of compassion and care in all who govern. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

When bodies weaken and hearts grow fearful, speak your blessing, help us to celebrate the good things in our lives, especially today we pray for...In uncertain times, remind us of the promise spoken to our ancestors in faith. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

When people are imprisoned, held captive, or unfairly detained, break the chains and offer release. Strengthen the work of the church in restorative justice, breaking cycles of poverty, and welcoming the immigrant *especially we pray for Global Refuge and Lutheran Social Services*, as well as Colorado Rapid Response Network and the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

As we await your coming, we give thanks for the faithful who have lived and died in faith *especially Mary, mother of Jesus and John of the Cross*. May their boldness of faith inspire our witness and work. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. **Amen.**

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also, with you.**

~Meal~

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Offering

As evident through all of creation, God has given freely to us as we freely give now.

*You can give via check or cash, by mail to 510 Pine Street, or online at:
https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/1334741.*

Offertory: #253 He Came Down, vs. 3

Offering Prayer

God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

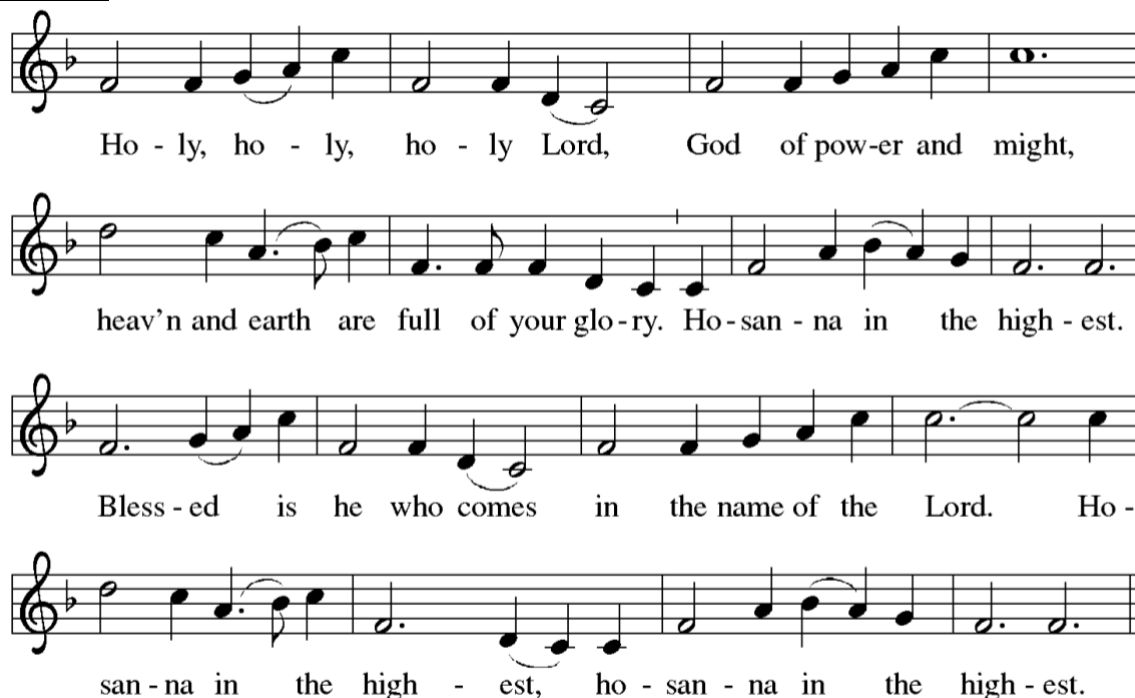
The Lord be with you. **And also, with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, Holy, Holy



Thanksgiving at the Table

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... 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.**

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

God's love is wide. God's table is big. No one is excluded.

Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

Our bread is gluten free & both wine and white grape juice are available. God comes to us in worship and song. God also comes to us in silence and stillness.

Please use the time before and after you commune for silent contemplation.

Communion Hymn: # 737 He Comes to Us as One Unknown

Song of Thanksgiving



☞ Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.



Let ev-'ry-one who seeks the Lord re-joice and proud-ly bear his name.



He re-calls his prom-is-es and leads his peo-ple forth in joy



with shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Communion Prayer

God for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

~Sending~

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Announcements & Special Blessings

Benediction

Let us journey into the world with our God, **to rebuild shattered hearts with hope.**

Let us spend each day with Jesus, **mending brokenness with love.**

Let us share our hearts with the Spirit, **so we may be with those who are waiting for peace.**

And may the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn: #266 All Earth Is Hopeful: Toda la tierra

Dismissal

Go in love, give warmth and light to each person you meet this holy season.

Thanks be to God.

~Announcements~

- ✚ **Fellowship:** Please join us after worship today in the Fellowship Hall for coffee and conversation.
- ✚ **Church Council:** Council meets after worship today, downstairs in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome.
- ✚ **Advent Soup Suppers:** Last week's Advent soup supper was canceled due to weather. We will try again next Wednesday night. The next supper will be at 6 p.m. on Dec. 17. Sign-up sheets to bring soup, bread, or dessert are in the Fellowship Hall.
- ✚ **The Way Ministry:** At 1 p.m. each Sunday, Zion's welcomes the Way ministry to our fenced lower yard as they offer food and worship to the unhoused and others in need. In the event that weather makes dining outside difficult, the meal will be moved to the Fellowship Hall.
- ✚ **Yoga:** At 5:30 p.m. Friday, join Cora Gardiner for yoga in the Fellowship Hall.
- ✚ **Newsletter:** The December newsletter was sent out Wednesday morning via email; copies also are available in the back of the Sanctuary and in the Fellowship Hall.
- ✚ **Toys for Tots:** Thank you to everyone who contributed to this year's *Toys for Tots*.
- ✚ **Giving Tree:** Again, this year, Zion's will partner with First National Bank to support Santa's Gift Tree. Please remember to take your wrapped gifts to the First National Bank main lobby or to Jo Moss, no later than Monday, Dec. 15.
- ✚ **White Elephant Christmas Exchange:** On Sunday, Dec. 21 following worship, we will have a White Elephant Christmas gift exchange. Bring a new, wrapped present, \$20 limit, for exchange. We suggest that you provide items that people will want to use. Numbers will be drawn to determine who gets to pick a mystery gift from the pile or, better yet, stolen from someone who has already opened theirs!
- ✚ **Church Directory Updates:** Julie Wersal is working on the Zions 2026 Church Directory. She placed a copy of the 2025 directory in a pink binder in the Fellowship Hall. Please take time to look at that directory and make any changes or updates to your information. If you would like to be added to the directory, there are pages in the back of the binder to add your information. Also, if you would like a new photo, please indicate that in your review as well.
- ✚ **Worship Assistance:** We are preparing the worship assistance lists for 2026 and are looking for ushers, lectors, communion preparation/clean, and worship assistants. We also need people who are willing to step in when we need a substitute. If you are not on the list and are willing help support our worship services, let Jo Moss know.
- ✚ **Save the Dates:**
 - Dec. 21 — White Elephant Gift Exchange — 11:30 a.m.
 - Dec. 21 — Blue Christmas Worship — 5:30 p.m.
 - Dec. 24 — Christmas Eve Evening Worship — 7 p.m.
 - Feb. 1 — Annual Congregational Meeting (after worship)