Second Sunday of Advent

A Service of Word & Sacrament December 7, 2025



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

85 E. Brandt Boulevard Landisville, PA

Connecting with God; Connecting with others; Connecting others with God

GENERAL INFORMATION

WELCOME TO ZION! We are glad you have chosen to worship with us this morning! The service contains the four parts of the Lutheran liturgy (The Gathering, The Word, The Meal, and The Sending). Please note that those who are remembered in the liturgical calendar are included in the Prayers of the Faithful.

WELCOME NEWELL EMBLEY as Guest Pastor this morning! It is nice to have Pastor Embley with us at Zion today while Pastor Tim is out of town.

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AT ZION

IN-PERSON: All are invited to join us for worship at 9:00 a.m. each Sunday morning.

ONLINE: If you are unable to worship in-person, the service is live-streamed and can be viewed on the church YouTube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIy 3AeK pExuVhcUfI2cSw

SUNDAY MORNING INFORMATION

- * Restrooms are available by the front entrance of the church in the narthex and in the hallway off the back door. <u>Infant changing tables</u> can be found in the women's and men's bathrooms in the hallway off the back door.
- ❖ Children are welcome to be active participants in the worship service. There are bags located at the back of the sanctuary with quiet worship activities and goodies to take home. Kids of all ages are invited to come forward for the Children's Chat. After the Children's Chat, all children are welcome to leave the service to attend Sunday School. Currently, nursery care is not available but you may use the nursery room or the parlor as a calming room while also still being able to listen to the service.
- ❖ <u>Ushers</u> are located near the front and back of the worship area to direct people to seating, assist with other matters, and to answer questions.



Second Sunday of Advent

P: Pastor A: Assisting Minister C: Congregation (bolded)

† THE GATHERING †

INTRODUCTION

At the heart of our Advent preparation stands John the Baptist, who calls us to repent and make a new beginning. As the darkness increases, we turn toward the approaching light of Christ. For Christians he is the root of Jesse, the righteous judge who welcomes all, especially the poor and meek of the earth. We wait with hope for that day when the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and there will be no more hurt or destruction. From the Lord's table we are sent in the spirit of John the Baptist to proclaim that in Christ the kingdom of God has come near.

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Please stand if you are able.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure.

C: Amen.

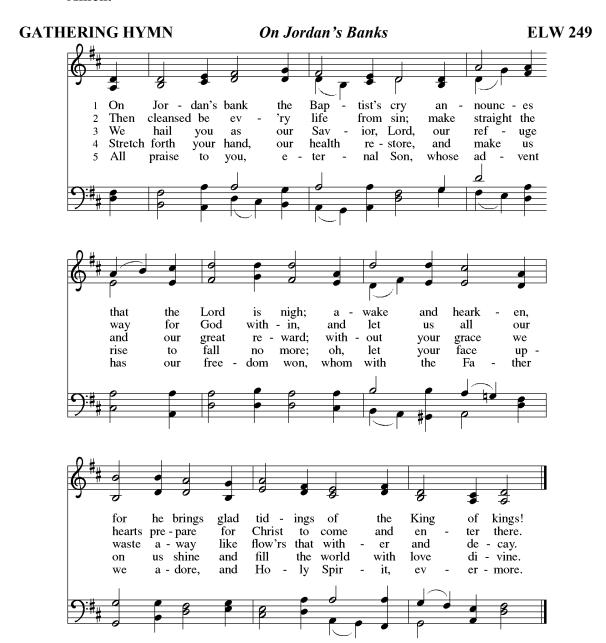
Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Long-expected God,

we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake. Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.

God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. \pm You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior. **Amen.**



Text: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749; tr. composite Music: PUER NOBIS, European tune, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621

GREETING

- P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- C: And also with you.

let us

pray to the Lord,

KYRIE



let us

pray to the Lord.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Please be seated.

† THE WORD †

ISAIAH 11:1-10

Isaiah foretold that God would use Assyria to discipline Israel for its unfaithfulness, bringing conquest and ending the Davidic dynasty ("the tree of Jesse"). Yet he also promised that God would preserve a faithful remnant and restore the dynasty, ushering in a time of remarkable peace, prosperity, and security.

A: ¹ A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. ² The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. ³ His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear, ⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them. ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. ⁹ They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰ On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM 72:1-7, 18-19

Please chant responsively.

This coronation psalm for Davidic kings reflects themes from Isaiah, celebrating justice, righteousness, and global peace under God's rule.



PSALM 72:1-7, 18-19

Please read responsively.

A: ¹Give the king your jus- | tice, O God, and your righteousness to | the king's son; ²that he may rule your | people righteously and the | poor with justice;

³that the mountains may bring prosperity | to the people, and the | hills, in righteousness.

⁴Let him defend the needy a- | mong the people, rescue the poor, and crush | the oppressor.

⁵May he live as long as the sun and | moon endure, from one generation | to another.

⁶Let him come down like rain upon | the mown field, like showers that wa- | ter the earth.

⁷In his time may the | righteous flourish; and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall | be no more.

¹⁸Blessed are you, Lord God, the | God of Israel; you alone do | wondrous deeds!

¹⁹And blessed be your glorious | name forever, and may all the earth be filled with your glory. A- | men. Amen.

ROMANS 15:4-13

Paul warned that Christians in Rome, like elsewhere, were at risk of division between Jewish and Gentile believers. He emphasized that church unity (koinonia) is essential. This unity is made possible through Holy Communion, as tangible and certain as the unbroken body of Christ, and is expressed through mutual service—both in local community and by sending aid to distant communities in need.

A: ⁴Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. ⁵May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ⁸ For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the ancestors ⁹ and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will confess you among the gentiles and sing praises to your name"; ¹⁰ and again he says, "Rejoice, O gentiles, with his people"; ¹¹ and again, "Praise the Lord, all you gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him"; ¹² and again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the gentiles; in him the gentiles shall hope."

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

Will We Know Him

Nancy Price and Don Besig

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

Dave & Dottie Wauls

Week 2: Partnership

Reader:

This week we light two candles and think about all the ways God calls us to partnership. We light these candles in gratitude for companions on the pilgrimage of earth.

Amen.

Light the first and second candles.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 1:18-20

Reader:

"Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit." Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace,

planned to divorce her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.'"

All: Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus. Kindle your light within us, join our lives with one another in love, and make us partners in your peace.

Amen.

CHILDREN'S CHAT

Please stand if you are able.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION King of Kings

BB 69

Sing twice through
King of kings and Lord of lords, glory, hallelujah!
King of kings and Lord of lords, glory, hallelujah!
Jesus, Prince of Peace, glory, hallelujah!
Jesus, Prince of Peace, glory, hallelujah!

MATTHEW 3:1-12

Matthew's Gospel introduces Jesus through his genealogy, birth announcement, the visit of the Magi, and the Holy Family's flight to Egypt and return to Nazareth. The narrative then jumps decades ahead to the Jordan River, where John the Baptist announces the coming ministry of Jesus.

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 3rd chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

P: ¹ In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ² "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." ³ This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.""

⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, ⁹ and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ "I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

The Gospel of the Lord.

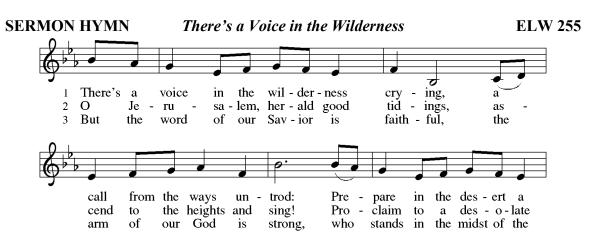
C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

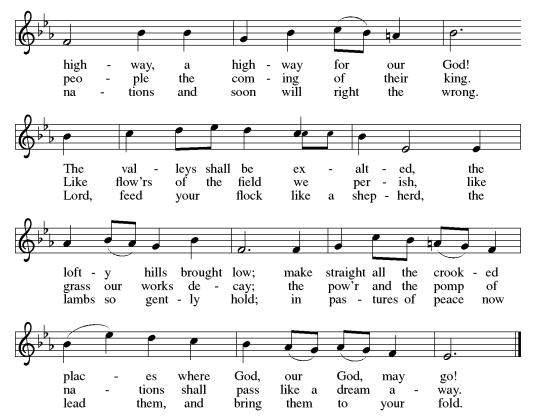
MESSAGE

Pastor Newell Embley

Please stand if you are able.







Text: James Lewis Milligan, 1876-1961, alt. Music: ASCENSION, Henry Hugh Bancroft, 1904-1988 Music © Estate of Eldred Bancroft. B. Burrows, Executor.

NICENE CREED

P: Let us profess our faith together.

C: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.* With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

ELW note: "and the Son" reflects the Western tradition.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

P: In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

With wisdom and understanding, inspire the faithful around the world. Unite hearts and minds in work to address poverty, access to housing, and equity among peoples. We pray especially for the United States, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and Lancaster County, that leaders and communities may seek the common good with courage and compassion. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

With counsel and might, move us to care for creation, especially the watersheds that sustain life in Lancaster County, including the Conestoga River watershed, the Pequea Creek watershed, the Octoraro Creek watershed, and the Little Chickies Creek watershed. As we dream of the day when all creatures will flourish alongside one another, guide us in ways humanity and all creation will mutually thrive. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

With righteousness and faithfulness, encourage nations to live in harmony with one another. We pray for international student and teacher exchanges, for our partner churches, for the Lutheran World Federation, and for the shared mission of Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran Disaster Response. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

With steadfastness and encouragement, strengthen those who have lost hope in the face of grief, depression, or disease, including those on Zion's prayer lists. Renew the spirits of those recovering from surgery and medical procedures. God of grace, hear our prayer.

With welcome and hospitality, embolden us in our shared ministry to overcome all that divides. In acts of repentance, reconciliation, and the hard work of repairing what has been broken—in our relationships, our communities, and our world—may we serve in the way of Christ. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

With joy and peace, we remember our ancestors in the faith, especially Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (died 397), and Lucy, martyr (died 304), and all those before us who formed us in faith. Fill us with the hope of the Holy Spirit now and into the ages of ages. God of grace,

hear 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.

THE SHARING OF THE PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you.

C: And also with you.

† THE MEAL †

PRAYER

A: Let us pray. Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come.

C: Amen.

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

P: Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

C: Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

- P: 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.
- C: Come, Lord Jesus.
- P: 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.
- C: Come, Holy Spirit.
- P: All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.
- C: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

- P: We pray together.
- C: 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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

Please be seated.

PARTAKING IN THE BREAD AND CUP OF SALVATION

All baptized Christians are welcome to partake of the Holy Sacrament. Those who do not or choose not to partake of the sacrament may receive a blessing.

For those not able to have red wine, there is grape juice in the outer circle of every tray. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request. When given the bread and cup, the communion ministers will say: "The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you," to which you may respond: "Amen."

Please use this time for quiet reflection until all worshippers have communed and have returned to their seats.

COMMUNION MUSIC

Please stand if you are able.

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

P: The body and blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A: Let us pray. God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.

C: Amen.

† THE SENDING †

BLESSING

P: May God who comes among us, Father, & Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always.

C: Amen.



Text: Johann G. Olearius, 1635–1711; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt. Music: FREU DICH SEHR, *Trente quatre pseaumes de David*, Geneva, 1551

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Keep awake.

C: Thanks be to God. We will keep awake!

POSTLUDE

THIS WEEK AT ZION

Sunday, December 7 – Advent 2

- * The altar flowers are sponsored by Jeanette Bomberger in memory of her mother, Helen Gensemer, whose birthday was December 4, 1917.
- * The altar flowers are also sponsored by John Hinkle in memory of Pat K. Hinkle on the anniversary of her death, December 5, 2024.
- * The bulletins are sponsored by Pastor Tim and Ann to celebrate the marriage of their oldest child, CJ, on Saturday. They honor with profound joy the bride and her parents.
- * The communion elements are sponsored by Amy & Jeff Thompson in honor of Jeff's dad Jim and his 95th birthday on December 4.

Worship – 9:00 a.m. (In-Person & Livestreamed/Recorded)

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIy 3AeK pExuVhcUfI2cSw

Children's Sunday School – Kids are excused after the Children's Chat

Adult Sunday School – 10:30 a.m.

Bible Study Class – Parlor Wired Word Class – Zone

Monday, December 8 – Angel Tree Gift Deadline

Food Pantry – 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Men of Zion -7 p.m.

Property – 8 p.m.

Tuesday, December 9

Bible Study -9 a.m. (Parlor)

Finance -6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 10

Food Pantry -10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Christmas Decorating – 6 p.m.

Thursday, December 11

Choir -6 p.m.

Community Meal – 5 p.m.

Friday, December 12

Saturday, December 13

Sunday, December 14 – Advent 3

Worship – 9:00 a.m. (In-Person & Livestreamed/Recorded)

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIy 3AeK pExuVhcUfI2cSw

Children's Sunday School – Kids are excused after the Children's Chat Adult Sunday School – 10:30 a.m.

Bible Study Class - Parlor

Wired Word Class - Zone

ANNOUNCEMENTS, UPDATES, & EVENTS



CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP Wednesday, December 24 at 7 a.m.



SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

Sunday, December 28 at 9:00 a.m. Invite a friend ... spread the word!

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

All children are invited to go with their teachers after the Children's Chat for Sunday School. Class will be held each Sunday at this time during the service. Questions? See Denise Haun.

JOURNEYS: A GROUP TO SUPPORT WELLNESS

Journeys will gather next on December 16 at 6:30 p.m. in the parlor. Sign up or just come on over! You are welcome to bring a friend!

BIBLE STUDY

The weekly Bible Study meets on Tuesdays at 9 a.m. in the parlor and focuses on the scriptures and their related topics. Everyone is welcome – come discover the message God has for each of us!

JOYFUL NOISE OFFERING: DECEMBER

This month contributions will go to Day of Smiles. Contributions collected be disbursed between the various organizations in the community that this annual event supports. Day of Smiles is a way to remember and honor the smiles and generosity that locals Erin (McCartney) and Max Nusbaum shared with many before their tragic death 20 years ago; Erin was 27 and Max was 30.

CHRISTMAS TRIVIA - December 21 after worship

On December 21st after worship, all are invited to come to the social room for Christmas Trivia! Even if you don't typically go to one of the Sunday School classes, you are welcome to join in the fun on this morning!

CHURCH EVENTS AT A GLANCE December

8: Angel Tree Gift Deadline

11: Community Meal (5 p.m.; Social Room)

15: Poinsettia Sponsor Form Deadline

16: Journeys (6:30 p.m.; Parlor)

21: Christmas Trivia (10:30 a.m.; Social Room)

21: Hempfield H.S. Holiday Concert (2 p.m.; Sanctuary)

24: Christmas Eve Worship (7 p.m.)

28: Service of Lessons and Carols (9 a.m.)

COMMUNITY MEAL AT ZION (LANDISVILLE) Come Join Us for a Free Meal

Come Join Us for a Free Meal and to Meet Your Neighbors!

THE FINAL THURSDAY EVENING
MEAL THIS FALL WILL BE ON
DEC. 11 AT 5p.m.

FOOD PANTRY THANK YOU & REQUESTED ITEMS

Thank you to Pack 37 who meet here at the church! The scouts collected over 6,500 lbs of food items for families in Hempfield struggling with food insecurity.

- * Chicken rice soup * Chunky soups * Cream of celery soup * Lentils (1lb pound)
 - * * Dry beans * Chick peas * Black beans * Canned chicken (small size) *
 - * Canned tuna * Pancake syrup *

ZION ARTS SERIES: Holiday Concerts

➤ Hempfield High School Holiday Concert Sunday, December 21 at 2 p.m.







ADVENT BANNERS



As we begin preparations for the coming birth of Jesus, the anticipation builds as a banner in front of the Sanctuary is added each week. The First Advent Banner has a large, open hand of God with a heart in the middle of the hand and a swirl descending to us. The idea is that God chooses us in grace and stirs our hearts in love and power. The 2nd Advent Banner has a candle with a heart in its flame and a swirl rising upward symbolizing prayer and commitment to God. This banner represents our turning to God.

First Banner

Second Banner



WATER STREET VOLUNTEER UPDATE & DIAPER DRIVE

We give thanks for Jim Lawrence, a friend of Pastor Tim and Ann, who often worships with us at Zion along with his wife, Rachel, and their newborn daughter, Violet. Jim recently completed his volunteer orientation at Water Street Rescue Mission and shared with us an important need he learned about there:

Water Street is currently facing a diaper shortage, especially in sizes 7–8. Last year, the shelter cared for 31 children. This year, that number has already increased to 36 children, many of whom are one-year-olds, which greatly increases the need for diapers.

We invite the congregation to support this effort by donating diapers (sizes 7–8 preferred). Donations may be placed in the collection area in the narthex.

Thank you for your generosity and care for our neighbors.

HELP BEAUTIFY THE SANCTUARY AT CHRISTMAS

Sponsor forms can be found on the usher table in the narthex and on the window sill in the back hallway across from the choir room.

HELP DECORATE!

Wednesday, December 10 @ 6:00 p.m.

PLACE THE POINSETTIAS!

Saturday, December 20 @ 10:00 a.m.

Questions?

Contact Kim P. (krpkc@aol.com)

POINSETTIA SPONSOR FORM	
Cost: \$10 per poinsettia Deadline: Monday, December 15	
I would like to sponsor poinsettia(s) Name:	***
In honor of	-
In memory of	
In memory ofOther	
Other	to line on your check, note it on your online t note or envelope if you pay with cash.
Other Please mark "Poinsettias" on the men contribution, or mark it on a post-i You may return this sponsor form and paym window still on the wall with the mailbox	



STAY UP TO DATE WITH WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE SYNOD & ELCA

Interested in knowing what is going on in the Synod and around the world in other congregations? Subscribe to the

weekly email, "WE News." Go to the Lower Susquehanna Synod website and subscribe today! The homepage for the Synod is: https://www.lss-elca.org/we-news-signup/ and the direct link to subscribe is: https://www.lss-elca.org/we-news-signup/

ONLINE GIVING

Interested in online giving? The link is on the homepage of the church website, or go directly: https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZM24/home

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Devotionals can be found on the ushers' table, on the kiosk across from the mailboxes, and on the window sill ledge in the back hallway across from the choir room.



THANK YOU NOTES

From Jan Reeves

Thanks for remembering my birthday with the yellow rose on the altar! It was so lovely. Thanks too for all the birthday cards and greetings. It was all so very special.

From The Generosity Team

Thank you to everyone who has returned their intent card! We are getting closer to the goal of 50! If you have not yet, you still can! Cards are on the table in the narthex by the sanctuary entrance. You may place them in the offering plate or in the office mail basket.



The Lutheran Camping Corporation of Central Pennsylvania

Kirchenwald, Nawakwa, and The Wittel Farm PO Box 459, Arendtsville, PA 17303 717-677-8211 • www.LutheranCamping.org



ADVENT/CHRISTMAS IN A BARN

Sunday, December 21; 7p.m. – 8:30 p.m. @ The Wittel Farm

Join us for an intimate evening of scripture, hymns and songs, prayers and joyful music. We gather in the barn around a manger with candlelight, hot cocoa and cookies.

FOR MORE INFO & TO REGISTER

https://www.lutherancamping.org/

Angel Tree Gift Donations

DEADLINE IS TODAY!

Thank you for helping share love and joy with local families this Advent/Christmas season!

The Social Outreach Team will deliver all gifts to the school social workers by Fri., Dec. 12.

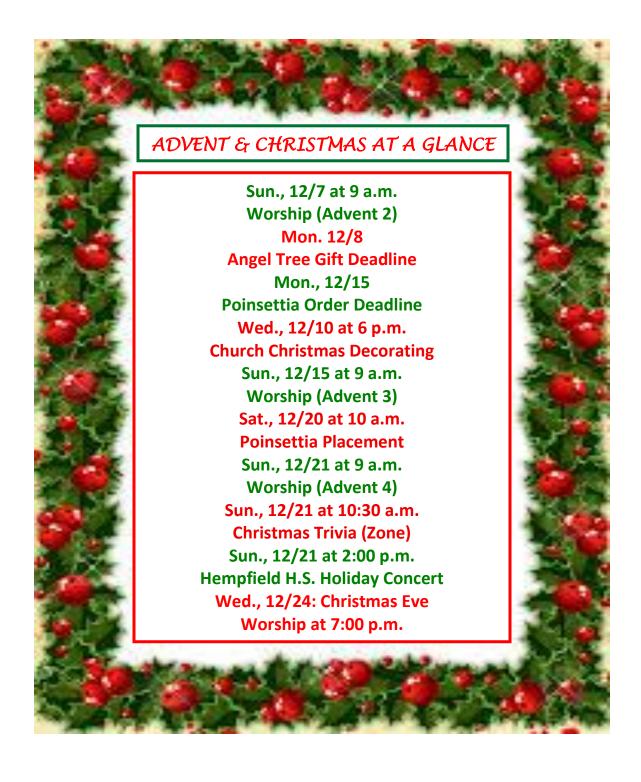
Please keep Hempfield School District students and households who are receiving Angel Tree gifts this season, as well as the Hempfield School District Social Workers, in your prayers this season.



John & Joanne
Marrs will be
performing in
this concert!

They extend a personal invitation to all their Zion friends to get tickets!

They'd love to see you there!



PRAYER LIST HEALING

Janet Musselman

A1 A1sedek

Julia Grove

Holly Hoover

Deb Overly

John Gerlach

Dave Wauls

Connie Alsedek

Bob Shirk

Kathryn Kochel

Dave Wise

Joe Adams

Tom Grzybowski

Jess Barcaro

Kay Crawford

Judie Ingersoll

Bill Grove

Barb Williams

Sam King

Kate Donnan

Angie Immel (Step-Granddaughter of Bob & Judy Traup)

Tina Weigner (Friend of Adele King)

Dennis Barcaro (Jess Barcaro's father-in-law)

Arabelle Page (Student of Amy Thompson)

Sandy Marrs (Mother of John Marrs)

Lissa James (Niece of Connie Alsedek)

Joanne Myers (Friend of Connie Alsedek)

Fred Boyle (Friend of Bob & Judy Traup)

Jack Taylor (Son of Deb Grube's niece)

Deb Hobaugh (Friend of Deb & Rick Long)

Ron Kessler (Brother-in-law of Ann Seitz-Brown)

Mike LaFata (Son-in-law of Bill & Julia Grove)

Zac & Cindy Zibura (Neighbor of John & Joanne Marrs)

Randy Smith (Father-in-law of Adele King's daughter)

Harmony & Family (Friends of Kim & Jim Paternoster)

Kara Escalante (Goddaughter of Barb & Tom Williams)

James Marks (Grandson of Thelma Pearson and nephew of Dennis & Marie Dezort)

COMFORT, PEACE, STRENGTH, & SAFETY

Lucy Davis

Arlene Wise (Sister-in-law of Dave Wise)

Brooke Ross (Friend of Barb Williams)

Bill Piper

Jennifer Kready (Daughter of Dave & Donna Dumeyer)

PROTECTION FOR MILITARY & FIRST RESPONDERS

Doug Kautter

Chris Andrew

Evan Benedict

Justin Gorlaski

Christopher Wright

Thom Whitesel

Corey Landis (Nephew of Jesse & Pat Landis)

Benjamin Hansen (Grandson of Al & Connie Alsedek and son of Holly)

David Adams (Son-in-law of John & Kathleen Hay; husband of Liz)

WIDER CHURCH

Masebe congregation

Konde Diocese

Stephen Herr (Bishop, LSS)

Pastor Subi Mwakitalima

Yehiel Curry (Presiding Bishop, ELCA)

Pastor Lucille ("CeCee") Mills (Secretary, ELCA)

Geoffrey Samuel Mwaihaba (Bishop, Konde Diocese)

Imran M. Siddiqui (Vice President of the ELCA)

CELEBRATING & REMEMBERING

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

7th: Bradley Green

11th: Bill Flood

13th: Sarah Chapman, Nina Laliberte

<u>COINDOLENCES</u> to Dennis and Marie Dezort and their extended family on the death of Thelma this past Thursday evening. At 102 years and 2 months old, Thelma lived an extraordinarily long and full life. To think about the changes she saw and lived through over the past century is remarkable.

Cards may be sent to Dennis & Marie at home: 121 Home Ln., Landisville 17538

AMY-JILL LEVINE'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES

When we read the Bible, it's easy to carry old assumptions with us—especially about groups like the Pharisees and Sadducees. For a long time, Christian teaching has turned them into automatic "bad guys." Amy-Jill Levine, a Jewish New Testament scholar, invites us to pause, take a breath, and look again. She helps us read Matthew with fresh eyes and without falling into harmful stereotypes about Judaism.

Seeing the Pharisees and Sadducees in a new light

Levine reminds us that the Pharisees and Sadducees were not villains. They were respected Jewish leaders in Jesus' time, though they stood in very different places:

- Pharisees helped ordinary Jewish people live faithfully in everyday life.
- Sadducees were connected to the Temple and its priestly leadership.

They disagreed about many things such as how to interpret Scripture, whether resurrection was real, what counted as true tradition. Their differences were so strong that they would rarely work together. So when Matthew places them side by side in the story of John the Baptist, he's using a storytelling technique. He's heightening the drama, not reporting a historical partnership.

John's harsh words are part of a Jewish family argument

When John calls them a "brood of vipers," he's not rejecting Judaism. This is the kind of sharp language that Israel's prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Micah—used when calling their own communities back to God. It's "family talk," the way passionate insiders speak when they want their people to wake up, repent, and return to the heart of their faith.

Levine urges us not to misread this as Christianity versus Judaism. John is a Jew speaking to other Jews. He stands firmly within the Jewish prophetic tradition, pointing his own people toward justice, compassion, and covenant faithfulness.

Repentance means real change, not guilt

A key point Levine highlights is what repentance means in Jewish thought. It's not mainly about feeling bad. Repentance is about:

- repairing harm,
- restoring relationships,
- living differently in concrete ways.

So when John tells the Pharisees and Sadducees to "bear fruit worthy of repentance," he is asking for actions, not empty displays of religious identity. His warning not to rely on being children of Abraham isn't a dismissal of Jewish heritage. It's a reminder that identity is a gift, not a shortcut to righteousness.

A Jewish debate about God's future

Levine's lens also helps Christians step back from supersessionism—the idea that Christianity replaces Judaism. John's message about judgment and renewal fits squarely inside Jewish hopes for God's future. The tension in this passage isn't between two religions. It's between different *Jewish* understandings of how God is moving and what faithful response looks like.

What this means for us today

When we hear the text without old anti-Jewish assumptions, its challenge comes through more clearly. Instead of pointing fingers at ancient Jewish groups, we can ask ourselves:

- Are we bearing fruit worthy of repentance?
- Do we ever rely on inherited identity—religious background, family name, national story—more than on actually living with justice and mercy?
- How do we respond when prophetic voices call us to change?

Levine helps us rediscover Matthew 3 as a living word—a call to humility, ethical responsibility, and renewed community life. It's less about judging the Pharisees and Sadducees and more about letting the Spirit reshape us today.

MINISTRY LEADERS

Ministers Members of the Congregation Pastor Rev. Timothy Seitz-Brown

Music Director John Landis
Parish Administrator Anne Rankin

Lay Ministry Assistant

Council President

Kim Paternoster

Council Vice President Denise Haun

Sexton Tom Miller

WORSHIP, SUNDAY SCHOOL, & CONTACT INFORMATION

Worship Sundays @ 9:00 a.m.

Livestream Link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIy_3AeK_pExuVhcUfI2cSw
Bible Study Class (Parlor)

Wired Word Class (Zoom)

Sundays @ 10:30 a.m.

Joint Gathering for Christmas Trivia 12/21 @ 10:30 a.m. (instead of adult classes)

Children's Class Sundays: Start in service, then excused until communion

Morning Bible Study Tuesdays @ 9:00 a.m.

Church Office 717-898-2911 Pastor 717-332-4216

Parish Administrator 717-945-4585 Council President 717-342-3796

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Music Director Email johnplandis@gmail.com

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Online Giving https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZM24/home



To download Zion's app, visit Sharefaith.



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- * The Rev. Dr. Mark Oldenburg (retired) from ULS/Gettysburg Seminary: author of the reading introductions

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