

# Christmas Eve Worship

December 24, 2023

10:00pm

Christmas Strings Concert (9:30pm)

Rachel Handlin, violin

Brandon Lamm, violin

Hannah Lamm, violin

Michael Beert, cello



## CHRISTMAS GOSPEL - Luke 2:1-7

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

## CHRISTMAS CONFESSION

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, the Word made flesh, our life and our salvation.

**Amen.**

Trusting the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior, let us confess our sin.  
God of life,

**you promise good news of great joy for all people, and call us to be messengers of your peace. We confess that too often we hoard our joy, our resources, and our security. We nurture conflict and build barriers. We neglect the needs of our neighbors and ignore the groaning of creation. Have mercy on us. Where we are self-centered, open our hearts. Where we are reluctant, give us courage. Where we are cynical, restore our trust. Renew us with your grace and give us again the hope of eternal life in you. Amen.**

Hear the good news: We are children of God and heirs of God's promises through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In ✝ Jesus we are forgiven and redeemed. Sing with joy, for all the ends of the earth shall know the salvation of God.

**Amen.**

## ADVENT WREATH

My friends in Christ, we light our Advent Wreath to remember the journey toward Christmas! The light shines in the darkness! You are set free to follow the star that leads to the manger, that leads to the cross and empty tomb! Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to all people of goodwill.

**Glory to God in the highest and peace to God's people on earth! Amen!**

SONG "Of the Father's Love Begotten"

1. Of the Father's love begotten ere the worlds began to be, he is Alpha and Omega, he the source, the ending he, of the things that are, that have been, and that future years shall see, evermore and evermore.
- 2 Oh, that birth forever blessed, when the virgin, full of grace, by the Holy Ghost conceiving, bore the Savior of our race, and the babe, the world's redeemer, first revealed his sacred face, evermore and evermore.
- 3 This is he whom seers in old time chanted of with one accord, whom the voices of the prophets promised in their faithful word; now he shines, the long-expected; let creation praise its Lord evermore and evermore.
- 4 Let the heights of heav'n adore him; angel hosts, his praises sing; pow'rs, dominions, bow before him and extol our God and King; let no tongue on earth be silent, ev'ry voice in concert ring evermore and evermore.
- 5 Christ, to thee, with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to thee, hymn and chant and high thanksgiving and unwearied praises be: honor, glory, and dominion, and eternal victory evermore and evermore! Amen.

## CHRISTMAS LIGHT

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.

**And also with you.**

We light the Christmas candle in the wreath tonight. We remember that the light shines in the darkness,

**And the darkness shall never overcome the light of Christ.**

Let us hear the message of the angels tonight!

**It is the will of God that our ears are open to hear the message of the angels and see the messengers all around us.**

We toil and struggle in the fields and tune out the song of the angels that praise God.

**Open our ears to the praise of the angels. Shine upon us this night as we join the angels' praise!**

## SONG

### “Angels We Have Heard on High”

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.  
Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be; which inspire your heav'nly song? Refrain

Come to Bethlehem and see, Him whose birth the angels sing;  
come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn king. Refrain

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray, Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

## SPECIAL MUSIC

FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 9:2-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. <sup>4</sup>For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. <sup>5</sup>For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. <sup>6</sup>For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup>His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

R: The word of God.      **C: Word of Hope.**

SONG

“Away in a Manger”

Away in a manger, no crib for his 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.

The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,  
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.  
Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay,  
close by me forever and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,  
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

SECOND LESSON: Titus 2:11-14

<sup>11</sup>For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, <sup>12</sup>training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, <sup>13</sup>while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup>He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

R: “The word of God.”

**C: Word of Hope.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION “Joy to the World”

- 1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;  
let ev'ry heart prepare him room and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.
- 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
- 3 No more let sin and sorrow grow nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.
- 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-20

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. <sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" <sup>15</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

SONG

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

1. O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.  
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.
  
2. For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above;  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.  
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,  
And praises sing to God the king, And peace to all the earth!
  
3. How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.  
No ear may hear his coming; but, in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

4. O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray.  
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;  
Oh, come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!

SERMON

Pastor Michael Thomas

SONG

“The First Noel”

The first Noel the angel did say, was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
In fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,  
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Chorus Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, Born is the King of Israel!

They looked up and saw a star, shining in the east beyond them far;  
And to the earth it gave great light,  
and so it continued both day and night. Chorus

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us pray. Gathered with all who seek the Christ child, let us pray for the church,  
the world, and all who are in need. Lord in your mercy...

**Hear our prayer.**

Into your gracious hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your  
steadfast mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.**

OFFERING

“O Holy Night”

Soloist Aria Beert

Offering envelopes are available at your seat to designate gifts toward the ministries of Zion.  
The Offering Box is in the back by the pole near the elevator exit.

**A CAROL SETTING FOR HOLY COMMUNION**

Let us pray. Good and loving God, we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among  
the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts, let  
them be blessing for others. With the trees of the field, with all earth and heaven, we  
shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

PREFACE (Tune: *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*)

Oh, may the good Lord be with you.

**And, may the Lord be with you, too.**

Lift your hearts to God in praise.

**To the Lord our hearts we raise.**

Let us offer praises true.

**It is fitting so to do: gratefully we sing to the Lord, our King!**

PROPER PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with all of creation, the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (Tune: *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*)

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord! God of Hosts, by all Adored!

Heav'n and earth cannot contain all the glory of your name!

Hail, Hosanna, God Most High! Blest is He who now draws nigh

In the name of God the King! Hallelujahs glad we sing:

Hail, Hosanna! Praises due be forever, Lord, to You!

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

We gather tonight living under the reign of God. We recall anew the words of Jesus when he gathered with his disciples before he died. As they were eating, 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.

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.**

COMMUNION

"O Come Little Children"

Brunson Family Strings

## POST-COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**Amen.**

Let us pray: God of wonder, in Jesus we behold the light of the world come near. As you have come among us now, send us out in joy, hastening to share the good news of your love. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit dwelling among us now and forever.

**Amen.**

## SENDING HYMN "Silent Night, Holy Night"

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright; Round yon virgin mother and child.  
Holy Infant, so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;  
glories stream from heaven afar, heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!  
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

**(Please raise your candle for verse three)**

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light  
radiant beams from your holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

## BENEDICTION

Christ is with us; Christ is within us; Christ is under us!

**Christ is behind us; Christ is before us, Christ is beside us.**

Christ will comfort and restore us; Christ is above us, Christ is in the quiet; Christ is in our hearts, minds and body. We are the body of Christ created,

**forgiven and set free to do mercy, love justice.**

Let us walk humbly with the holy one.

**AMEN!**

## POSTLUDE





# Merry Christmas!

Zion Lutheran Church

925 Fifth Avenue - Rockford, IL 61104

815-964-4609

[www.zionrockford.com](http://www.zionrockford.com)

Join us Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup> for  
First Sunday of Christmas worship at 9:15AM



*Twentieth Anniversary*

## Celebrating Dreams

January 14, 2024  
Sunday at 11:00am

*"FOR EVERYONE BORN... A PLACE AT THE TABLE..."*

Celebrating the Legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

*Legacy Award Recipient: Janice Forrest*



Sponsored and Held at Zion Lutheran Church  
925 Fifth Avenue - Rockford, IL 61104

### Musicians

Kamyra Brunson – Bass

Thorin Brunson – Cello

Zamarianna Brunson – Violin

Xeonia Brunson – Viola

Malayja Brunson – Cello

Isabelle Olson – Cello

Annabelle Olson – Violin

Pastoral Intern Rachel Perkins-Gama

Ja'Nyshja Forrest



*2023 Poinsettia Garden | Joy Fund*  
*Christmas Blessings to Everyone at Zion!*



We have contributed to the Christmas "Joy Card" in lieu of sending Christmas cards to our friends at Zion. These monies will be given to Ruthie's Closet.

Toni Wallin	In Memory of Loved Ones
Les & Betty Morgan	Merry Christmas to Zion Friends
Sally & Ina Miller	In Memory of Ken Miller & Loved Ones
Vandenbergen Family	In Memory of Loved Ones
Pastor & Tammy Thomas	Merry Christmas to the Zion Community
Don Carlson	In Memory of Linda Carlson, Mauritz Carlson, Robert Carlson and JoAn Carlson
Sue Drilling	In Memory of Bill & Hazel Drilling
Angeles Polcher	In Memory of Egon J. Polcher
Ken & Mary Franzen	In Memory of Loved Ones
Connie Heden	In Memory of Ellerd & Ann Wallenberg, Emil & Louise Heden, Jay Gagliano, Karin Carlson, Terry Heden, and loved ones
Ann Harkabus & Pat Lyman	In Memory of Dorothy Graham, Carolyn, Rudy & David Larson
Jim & Kathy Rasch	In Memory of Loved Ones
Kathy & Jeff Hand	In Memory of Elizabeth, Daniel & David Henry, and Beverly Wessman
Kathy & Jeff Hand	In Honor of Gene Wessman
Dick & Linda Reinhardt	In Memory of Loved Ones
Torg & Margaret Hallin	In Memory of our Parents
Jan Vincent	In Memory of Quinten Lind, Phyllis Lind, & Jeffrey Lind
Nancy Johnson	In Memory of Chet & Mary Anderson
Deb & Neal Tolodxi Sr.	In Memory of Destiny and Family Members
Gerry Swan	In Memory of Marilyn Freden and Fred Pierce
Steve & Susan Ege	Merry Christmas to Everyone
Ina Miller	In Memory of Ken Miller & Loved Ones
Rachel & Nathi Perkins-Gama	Merry Christmas to Zion Community
Pastor Denver & Pam Bitner	Merry Christmas to Zion Community
Pr. Jerry & Lois Peterson	Merry Christmas to Zion Community
Bonnie Dahlberg	Merry Christmas to Zion Community
Ken & Mary Franzen	Merry Christmas to Zion Community
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Ken & Mary Franzen	Merry Christmas to Zion Community
Karen Kermgard	In Memory of George Kermgard; June & Sanford Adolphson