

**Zion Lutheran Church**  
**Mascoutah, Illinois**  
**December 17, 2023**  
***Children's Christmas Program***  
***3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent***  
***(Gaudete)***



*In the Name of Christ Jesus our Lord, we bid you a warm welcome to this worship service. May your experience of worship and fellowship this morning be spiritually refreshing and ready you for the week ahead.*



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## Electronic Devices

Please TURN OFF all cell phones, pagers, electronic devices, apps, and games when entering the sanctuary for worship so those around you may focus on the Word of God without electronic distraction. Thank you.

## A Prayer to Begin Worship

Holy Spirit, Keeper of the mystery, grant us to recognize Jesus of Nazareth for who and what He is, lest we become only debating pupils rather than selfless disciples calling the world to repentance and faith; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who with You and the Father are one God with dominion over us forever.

# Children's Christmas Program

## "The Gifts of the Wise Men" or "The Gift From God"

Prelude We Three Kings of Orient Are arr. Becky Slago

Opening Hymn O Come Little Children  
*(All Sing)*

- 1 **O come, little children, O come, one and all. To Bethlehem haste, to the manger so small.  
God's Son for a gift has been sent you this night, To be your Redeemer, your joy and delight.**
- 2 **He's born in a stable for you and for me, Draw near by the bright gleaming starlight to see,  
In swaddling clothes lying so meek and so mild, And purer than angels the heavenly child.**
- 3 **See Mary and Joseph with love beaming eyes Are gazing upon the rude bed where He lies,  
The shepherds are kneeling, with hearts full of love, While angels sing loud hallelujahs above.**
- 4 **Kneel down and adore Him with shepherds today, Lift up little hands now and praise Him as they;  
Rejoice that a Savior from sin you can boast, And join in the song of the heavenly host.**

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Narrator (Viviana): When people think of Christmas, most think of the presents that you give or receive, but Christmas is so much more than that. Christmas is about God's gift to us. God sent His only Son, Jesus, down to earth to atone for our sins. Jesus was the first "Christmas present." In return, wise men from afar gave Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These gifts foreshadow Jesus' life and what He would do. Gold for the King of kings, frankincense for the one true God, and myrrh for the One to die.

## Rhyming Recitation

**"The Gifts"**  
*(Youngest Students)*

*The gifts of the Wise men tell thus  
Of all that Jesus did for us.  
Gold is a proper gift to bring  
For Jesus who is our King.  
Frankincense is a gift that is best  
For God by whom we are all blessed.  
Myrrh as a gift could make us cry  
To know that Jesus came to die.  
Christmas is when Jesus came to begin  
His work of salvation for us to win.*

## Hymn

### We Three Kings of Orient Are

(The children sing stanza 1; the congregation sings stanzas 2-5.)

- 1 *We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.  
O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,  
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.*
- 2 **Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown him again,  
King forever, ceasing never, over us all to reign.  
O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,  
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.**
- 3 **Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a Deity nigh;  
prayer and praising, voices raising, worshiping God on high.  
O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,  
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.**
- 4 **Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom;  
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone-cold tomb.  
O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,  
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.**
- 5 **Glorious now behold him arise; King and God and sacrifice:  
Alleluia, Alleluia, sounds through the earth and skies.  
O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,  
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.**

## (Luke 1: 26-37)

Narrator (Bristol): Our story begins when God sent His messenger, Gabriel, to Mary to tell her that she will be the mother of the King of kings and Lord of lords; the One true God that will free all of mankind from sin, death, and the power of the devil.

Narrator (Bristol): In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to the city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.

GABRIEL (Chloe): Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!

GABRIEL (Chloe): Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.

MARY (Lucy): How will this be since I am a virgin?

GABRIEL (Chloe): The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be *impossible* with God.

MARY (Lucy): Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.

## **The Birth of Jesus Christ (Luke 2:1-20)**

Narrator (Isaiah): The King of kings was born, not in a lofty castle, but in a lowly stable. His bed was a manger, and He was surrounded by animals of the stable. The first to see the newborn King wasn't a crowd of adoring subjects, but poor shepherds from the fields nearby. The King of kings entered the world in humility, not to be served, but to serve.

Narrator (Ryan): In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloth and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

### **Song**

### **In a Little Stable**

*(Youngest Students)*

- 1 *In a little stable far across the sea was a little Baby just like you and me.*
- 2 *Not a bed or cradle, not a pillow deep, but a lowly manger was His place to sleep.*
- 3 *Shepherds stood around Him, angels watched with care, for this Babe was Jesus, lying, smiling there.*
- 4 *Oh, I love this Jesus, who was little then, for He surely loves me, little though I am.*

Narrator (Waylon): And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and they were filled with fear.

ANGEL (Ella): 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. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.

Narrator (Waylon): And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying...

HEAVENLY HOST (Girls Pre K – Grade 1): Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased.

Narrator (Waylon): When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another...

SHEPHERDS (Boys Pre-K – Grade 1): Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.

Narrator (Waylon): And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told to them concerning this child. And all who heard it wonder at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

- 1 *Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.  
The stars in the 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.*

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## **The Gifts of the Wise Men (Matthew 2:1-12)**

Narrator (Chloe): After Jesus was born, wise men from afar traveled to Bethlehem to bring gifts to the newborn King. These gifts that the wise men gave to Jesus foreshadow His ministry and eventually His death on the cross and His resurrection from the grave. The gifts proclaim who Jesus is: the King of kings, the Son of the living God, and the sacrificial Lamb.

Narrator (Taylor): Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying,

WISE MAN 1 (Dawson) Where is He who has been born king of the Jews?

WISE MAN 2 (James) For we saw His star when it rose

WISE MAN 3 (Cole): and have come to worship Him.

Narrator (Mackenzie): When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him,

CHIEF PRIEST (Benjamin): In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:  
““And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who will shepherd My people Israel.””

Narrator (Savannah): Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying,

HEROD (Isaiah): Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found Him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship Him.

Narrator (Hadley): After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was.

Narrator (Ava) When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

Narrator (Lily): And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Hymn

### The Star Proclaims the King Is Here

LSB 399

*(All Sing)*

- 1 The star proclaims the King is here; But, Herod, why this senseless fear?  
For He who offers heav'nly birth Seeks not the kingdoms of this earth.**
- 2 The eastern sages saw from far And followed on His guiding star;  
And, led by light, to light they trod And by their gifts confessed their God.**

*Stand*

- 5 For this Thy glad epiphany All glory, Jesus, be to Thee,  
Whom with the Father we adore, And Holy Spirit evermore.**

Text: Public domain

*Sit*

## Frankincense – A Gift For God

Narrator (Brady): Frankincense was one of the gifts that Jesus received from the wise men. Frankincense could be used in worship, burnt as an offering to God. When the wise men gave Jesus frankincense, they recognized Jesus as God. Throughout Jesus' ministry, He reveals Himself as the one true God through His preaching and miracles.

### (John 10:22-42)

Narrator (Ella): At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around Him and said to Him,

JEW 1 (Taylor): How long will You keep us in suspense?

JEW 2 (Mackenzie): If You are the Christ,

JEW 3 (Savannah): tell us plainly.

JESUS (Trey): I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name bear witness about Me, but you do not believe because you are not part of My flock. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

Narrator (Stella): The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.

JESUS (Trey): I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone Me?

JEW 1 (Taylor): It is not for a good work that we are going to stone You

JEW 2 (Mackenzie): but for blasphemy,

JEW 3 (Savannah): because You, being a man, make Yourself God.

JESUS (Trey): If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe Me, but if I do them, even though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me and I am in the Father.

Narrator (Grace): Again they sought to arrest Him, but He escaped from their hands.

Narrator (Gabriella): He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there He remained. And many came to Him. And they said,

JEW 4 (Ava): John did no sign,

JEW 5 (Hadley): but everything that John said about this man was true.

Narrator (Kyrielle): And many believed Him there.

### **(Matthew 14:22-33)**

Narrator (Eliza): Not only did Jesus revealed Himself as the one true God through His preachings but also through the miracles He performed. Jesus had performed many miracles, from the wedding feast in Cana, to the feeding of the five thousand. But it was on the sea that the disciples truly believe Jesus was the one true God.

Narrator (Rosemary): Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He dismissed the crowd. And after He had dismissed the crowds, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone, but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said,

JOHN (Brady): It is a ghost!

Narrator (Eliza): And they cried in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying,

JESUS (Trey): Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.

PETER (Waylon): Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.

JESUS (Trey): Come.

Narrator (Rosemary): So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out,

PETER (Waylon): Lord, save me!

Narrator (Eliza): Jesus immediately reached out His hand and took hold of him, saying to him,

JESUS (Trey): O you of little faith, why did you doubt?

Narrator (Rosemary): And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped Him, saying,

DISCIPLES (Brady, Dalton, Isaiah, Rylan, William, Max, Waylon, Ryan, Leif, Reed, Ivar, & Callan): Truly You are the Son of God.

Hymn

**Savior of the Nations, Come**

LSB 332

*(All Sing)*

- 1 Savior of the nations, come, Virgin's Son, make here Your home!  
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth, That the Lord chose such a birth.**
- 2 Not by human flesh and blood, By the Spirit of our God,  
Was the Word of God made flesh—Woman's offspring, pure and fresh.**
- 3 Here a maid was found with child, Yet remained a virgin mild.  
In her womb this truth was shown: God was there upon His throne.**
- 4 Then stepped forth the Lord of all From His pure and kingly hall;  
God of God, yet fully man, His heroic course began.**
- 5 God the Father was His source, Back to God He ran His course.  
Into hell His road went down, Back then to His throne and crown.**
- 6 For You are the Father's Son Who in flesh the vict'ry won.  
By Your mighty pow'r make whole All our ills of flesh and soul.**
- 7 From the manger newborn light Shines in glory through the night.  
Darkness there no more resides; In this light faith now abides.**

*Stand*

- 8 Glory to the Father sing, Glory to the Son, our king,  
Glory to the Spirit be Now and through eternity.**

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*Sit*

## **Gold – A Gift For The King**

Narrator (Lily): The gold Jesus received from the wise men was a tribute to a king. Jesus is the King of all kings. All authority on earth and heaven is given to Jesus. He rules over all. In the triumphant entry, we see Jesus' kingship as the crowds recognize Him as the Son of David.

### **(Matthew 21:1-11)**

Narrator (Lily): Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them,

JESUS (Ryan): Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to Me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, "The Lord needs them," and he will send them at once.



Narrator (Lily): This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'" The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and He sat on them. Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. And the crowds that went before Him and followed Him were shouting,

CROWD (Grade 4): Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!

Narrator (Lily): And when He entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up saying,

CITIZENS (Grades 2 & 3): Who is this?

CROWD (Grade 4): This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.

### **(Matthew 27:11-14, 27-31, 35-37)**

Narrator (Rosemary): The humble King eventually was betrayed with a kiss and delivered over to be killed. The Chief priest knew they could not kill Jesus with the coming Passover, so they brought Jesus before Pilate so that he could condemn Jesus to death.

Narrator (Rosemary): Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked Him,

PILATE (Samuel): Are you the King of the Jews?

JESUS (Ryan): You have said so.

Narrator (Rosemary): But when He was accused by the chief priest and elders, He gave no answer. Then Pilate said to Him,

PILATE (Samuel): Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?

Narrator (Rosemary): But He gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

### **(Matthew 27: 35-37)**

Narrator (Rosemary): And when they had crucified Him, they divided His garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over Him there. And over His head they put the charge against Him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

Hymn

**The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns**

LSB 348

*(All Sing)*

- 1 The King shall come when morning dawns And light triumphant breaks,  
When beauty gilds the eastern hills And life to joy awakes.**
- 2 Not as of old a little child, To bear and fight and die,  
But crowned with glory like the sun That lights the morning sky.**

*Hymn continues on the next page.*

- 3 **Oh, brighter than the rising morn When Christ, victorious, rose  
And left the lonesome place of death Despite the rage of foes.**
- 4 **Oh, brighter than that glorious morn Shall dawn upon our race  
The day when Christ in splendor comes And we shall see His face.**
- 5 **The King shall come when morning dawns And light and beauty brings.  
Hail, Christ the Lord! Your people pray: Come quickly, King of kings!**

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## **Myrrh – A Gift For The One To Die**

Narrator (Lucy): Myrrh is a burial spice for a dead body. The gift of myrrh foreshadows how Jesus would die for us, the sinners. From the time Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, God had planned to rescue His children from their sins. Jesus took our place upon the cross to free us, the guilty and rightfully deserving of the punishment of sin.

### **(John 3:9-17)**

Narrator (Eliza): Jesus reveals God's plan for our salvation to a Pharisee named Nicodemus. John 3:16 speaks of God's amazing love for us, that He would not have us die, but instead have His one and only Son take our place upon the cross to give us freedom from sin.

NICODEMUS (Callan): How can these things be?

JESUS (William): Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, We speak of what we know, and bear witness to what We have seen, but you do not receive Our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven expect He who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

### **(Luke 23:32-37; 39-49)**

Narrator (Max): As myrrh predicted, Jesus took our place on the cross. He was mocked, beaten, and brutally killed for our sake. When Jesus breathed His last upon the cross, death was defeated, and salvation was won. God's gift to us, a sacrifice, has given us eternal life.

Narrator (Rylan): Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with Him. And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on His right and one on His left. And Jesus said,

JESUS (William): Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

Narrator (Max): And they cast lots to divide His garments. And the people stood by watching, but the rulers, scoffed at Him, saying,

RULER (Austin): He saved others; let Him save Himself!

Narrator (Rylan): The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up and offering Him sour wine and saying,

SOLDIER 1 (Gabriella): If You are the King of the Jews,

SOLDIER 2 (Grace): save Yourself!

Narrator (Max): One of the criminals who were hanged railed at Him saying,

CRIMINAL 1 (Ivar): Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!

Narrator: But the other rebuked him, saying,

CRIMINAL 2 (Reed): Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong. Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.

Narrator (Rylan): And He said to him,

JESUS (William): Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.

Narrator (Max): It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said,

JESUS (William): Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit!

Narrator (Rylan): And having said this He breathed His last. Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, He praised God, saying,

CENTURION (Stella): Certainly, this man was innocent!

Narrator (Max): And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breast. And all His acquaintances and the women who had followed Him from Gailee stood at a distance watching these things.

Hymn

**What Child Is This**

*LSB 370*

*(All Sing)*

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

## **One Last Gift – Eternity In Heaven**

Narrator (Viviana): Upon the cross, in the grave, and when He rose, Jesus won our victory. God's gift, from the humble King born in a stable, to the sacrificial Lamb upon the cross, to the victorious Son of God risen from the grave; Jesus fulfilled God's plan of rescue. But there's more! Through the salvation won for us by Jesus, we receive the gift of eternal life in heaven, where we will praising the King of kings, the one true God, our sacrificial Lamb forevermore.

### **(Matthew 28:1-10)**

Narrator (Leif): Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women,

ANGEL (Viviana): Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where He lay. Then go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead, and behold, He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see Him. See, I have told you.

Narrator (Leif): So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said,

JESUS (Dalton): Greetings!

Narrator (Leif): And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them,

JESUS (Dalton): Do not be afraid; go and tell My brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.

### **(Revelation 21:1-6)**

JOHN (Brady): Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

VOICE (Dalton): Behold the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

JOHN (Brady): And he who was seated on the throne said,

JESUS (Dalton): Behold, I am making all things new. Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true. It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

## Processional Hymn

## Hark the Herald Angels Sing

LSB 380

*(The children sing stanza 1, the congregation sings stanzas 2 & 3)*

- 1 *Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;  
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;  
With the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"*
- 2 **Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail the incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as Man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel!  
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**
- 3 **Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings, Ris'n with healing in His wings.  
Mild He lays His glory by, Born that man no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth.  
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

Text: Public domain

## Sermon

## The Gifts of the Wise Men, and the Gift from God

## Offering

*[Please fill out a sheet in the attendance book. Visitors, please include your address. If you have a prayer request for the church prayer chain, please write it at the top of the sheet.]*

## Special Offering Music

## Silent Night

*(Ryan Hinton, soloist)*

*Stand*

# Prayer

## Salutation and Collect of the Day

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** **And with your spirit.**

**P** Let us pray. Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** **Amen.**

## Prayer of the Church

**P** We praise You, O God; we acknowledge You to be the Lord.

**C** **Heaven is Your throne and earth Your footstool.**

**P** From the beginning of creation to the present, You have shown Your concern for the welfare of the human race.

**C** **In times of trouble You have rescued us; in times of joy You have increased our happiness.**

**P** For Your steadfast love, O Lord, accept our heartfelt thanks.

**C** We confess that we have not always rejoiced in our salvation.

**P** We have failed to give You thanks under all circumstances.

**C** We have not always followed the promptings of Your Holy Spirit.

**P** We have failed to hold on to all that is good, and we have not consistently abstained from every form of evil.

**C** We have neglected to bear witness to the Light, Your Son Jesus Christ.

**P** We often forget that Your will is being done through us in unpleasant as well as pleasant circumstances.

**C** For our lack of zeal in acknowledging Your will for us, forgive us, O Lord.

**P** Help us not to quench the Holy Spirit within us.

**C** Give us a clear understanding of our responsibilities.

**P** As we have received from You the gift of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, may we reflect His light to all around us.

**C** Strengthen our sense of good judgment that we may hold fast to what is good and abstain from every evil.

**P** Use us to bring the good tidings to the afflicted, and help us bind up the broken hearted.

### WE GO TO THE LORD IN PRAYER FOR

† Marlene Lockwood, Ryan Heck, and Nathan Stangle, as they celebrate their baptismal anniversaries this week.

† All our children of all ages, that they may always treasure the message of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem.

† The congregations and church plants in Dominican Republic who celebrated the reformation with special services and with adult confirmations.

† Bob Laird, father of Sem. Rob Laird, as his health has declined.

† Members of Zion's Board of Trustees, Stewardship Committee, and Board of Finance.

† Faithfulness in support of world missions.

**P** Hasten the day of universal peace promised at Your Second Coming.

**C** We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen

### Lord's Prayer

**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.

### Collect for Grace

**P** O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, You have safely brought us to the beginning of this day. Defend us in the same with Your mighty power and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger, but that all our doings, being ordered by Your governance, may be righteous in Your sight; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

### Benedicamus

LSB 228



**L** Let us bless the Lord.



**C** Thanks be to God.

## Benediction

**L** The grace of our Lord - Je - sus Christ and the love of God  
and the communion of the Holy Spir - it be with us all.  
**C** A - men.

*Sit*

## Hymn

### As with Gladness Men of Old *(All Sing)*

LSB 397

- 1** As with gladness men of old Did the guiding star behold;  
As with joy they hailed its light, Leading onward, beaming bright;  
So, most gracious Lord, may we Evermore be led by Thee.
- 2** As with joyful steps they sped, Savior, to Thy lowly bed,  
There to bend the knee before Thee, whom heav'n and earth adore;  
So may we with willing feet Ever seek Thy mercy seat.
- 3** As they offered gifts most rare At Thy cradle, rude and bare,  
So may we with holy joy, Pure and free from sin's alloy,  
All our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to Thee, our heav'nly King.
- 4** Holy Jesus, ev'ry day Keep us in the narrow way;  
And when earthly things are past, Bring our ransomed souls at last  
Where they need no star to guide, Where no clouds Thy glory hide.
- 5** In the heav'nly country bright Need they no created light;  
Thou its light, its joy, its crown, Thou its sun which goes not down;  
There forever may we sing Alleluias to our King.

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## Postlude

### Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Kevin Hildebrand

#### Acknowledgments

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## THANKS TO OUR STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

Baro, Brooklyn  
Baro, Maya  
Clayton, Isaiah  
Clayton, Samuel  
Corey, Kyrielle  
Crismon, Callan  
Crismon, Taylor  
Ganey, Rylan  
Gryga, Alaina  
Gryga, Makenna  
Harris, Trey  
Hatcher, Connor  
Hatcher, Solomon  
Hatcher, Viktor  
Hinton, Ryan  
Hollenkamp, Bailee  
Hollenkamp, Reed  
Huth, William  
Jeffries, Gabriella  
Jeffries, Viviana  
Krausz, Mackenzie  
Krausz, Madelyn  
Krausz, Miles  
Laird, Agnes  
Laird, Cormac  
Laird, Lucy  
Laird, Stella  
Lara, Max  
Matthews, Eliza  
Matthews, Emily  
McDaniel, Lily  
Murphy, Austin  
Murphy, Savannah  
Neumann, Waylon  
Pannier, Benjamin  
Pannier, Chloe  
Peterson, Ivar  
Peterson, Leif  
Peterson, Rosemary

Peterson, Sven  
Rowold, Dawson  
Sax, Aspen  
Sax, Ava  
Sax, Bristol  
Sax, Ella  
Sax, Garrett  
Sax, Hadley  
Trame, James  
Tubbs, Ellie  
Tubbs, Mia  
Twenhafel, Brady  
Wambold, Cole  
Wambold, Dalton  
Wambold, Grace

### SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Clayton, Abigail  
Clayton, Lori  
Clayton, Nathaniel  
Clayton, Pastor Kirk  
Corey, Dawn  
Corey, Gadge  
Corey, Phoebe  
Crismon, Joe  
Frey, Gail  
Ganey, Amanda  
Huth, Kris  
Krausz, Mary Kay  
McDaniel, Marianne  
Morris, Sharon  
Pannier, Anna  
Peterson, Nancy  
Sax, Andy  
Sherrill, Carl



## **LIFE AND LIVING ITEMS AT ZION**



### **THANKS TO MAGGIE HARLAN AND ANDY SAX**

While many people have helped to make today's Children's Christmas Program a reality, we would like to give special thanks to two people: Maggie Harlan and Andy Sax. Maggie wrote this year's Children's Christmas Program, and we rejoice in her thoughtfulness and ability to lead our children through Scripture to see the meaning of God's gift to us. Andy Sax made the crosses used in the Children's Christmas Program this morning. (He also made the stable a few years back, and it is still in use!) Thanks to Maggie and Andy for their work on this program!

### **CONGRATULATIONS TO ZION'S NEW OFFICERS**

At the Voter's Meeting held on Thursday, December 14, 2023, the following people were elected to offices at Zion Lutheran Church: Chairman, Mike Twenhafel; Vice Chairman, Jon Robinson; Council Secretary, Jean Kemezys; Board of Elders, Dan Eads and Ray Kemezys; Sunday School Superintendent, Anna Pannier; Asst. Sunday School Superintendent, Dawn Corey; Board of Trustees, Andy Sax, Carl Sherrill, and Lionel Timmerman; Board of Education, Bob Eldridge, Linda Hoskins, and Cary Robinson; and Board of Finance, Deb Heck and Cheryl Sax. Thanks to all those who allowed their names to be considered for elections. We pray God's blessings for diligent and Godly leadership as we look into the future. Please extend your congratulations and thanks to these individuals for being willing to serve in the Lord's church. We would like to say a big "thank you" to those who are finishing their terms in office, including Jon Robinson, Council Secretary; Tom Sax and Jeff Fick, Board of Elders; Marianne McDaniel, Sunday School Superintendent; Dan Eads and Greg Hoskins, Board of Trustees; and Jenny Kneschke and Amy Kolweier, Board of Finance. We thank and praise God for the dedicated people He provides to give guidance and leadership in His church.

### **ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS OPPORTUNITIES TO BE IN GOD'S HOUSE**

Advent is a time to prepare our hearts for the wonderful news of God's gift of a Savior, the Baby born at Christmas. The best way to prepare for Christmas is not buying presents and going to parties and concerts but hearing God's Word in God's House. Here are the opportunities we have to gather together to hear God's Word and receive His gifts this Advent and Christmas season!

Sunday, December 17, 10:00 AM: Children's Christmas Program

Wednesday, December 20, 7:00 PM: Advent Midweek Service, Pastor Clayton preaching on "Our Lord's Authority over Death"

Sunday, December 24, 10:00 AM: 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent Divine Service

Sunday, December 24, 6:00 PM: Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols

Monday, December 25, 10:00 AM: Christmas Morning Divine Service

Please mark all of these opportunities on your calendar and join your brothers and sisters in faith in all of these services, as God comes to us to bless us and strengthen us! Being together in worship is the most important preparation for Christmas. We look forward to seeing you!

### **2024 OFFERING ENVELOPES NOW AVAILABLE**

Please pick up your 2024 offering envelopes from the table in the narthex. Thank you, Finance Board.

### **COMMUNION FREQUENCY UPDATE**

The Elders have decided not to change the overall Communion frequency at Zion, with Communion being offered on the Second, Fourth and Fifth Sundays, along with Festivals such as Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, etc. Also, for the benefit of those in the congregation who desire more frequent Communion, we will be offering the Lord's Supper after the service on the First Sunday of each month, starting in January of 2024. On First Sundays, the service will progress through the Benediction and Postlude, and after the greetings in the narthex, those who desire Communion may either remain in the Sanctuary or return to the Sanctuary to receive the Lord's Supper.

### **LADIES AID CHRISTMAS POTLUCK**

All ladies of the congregation are invited to join us on Tuesday, December 19th, for our annual Christmas party and potluck (side dishes only, meat will be furnished). We eat at 6:00 and then will have a short program. You may bring a \$5 gift for exchange; if you have a Secret Pal, that gift may be brought also. We take a collection for Concordia Seminary. It's a fun and special evening. Plan to attend. See Glenda for more details.

### **SECRET PAL PROGRAM -- TURN YOUR SHEETS IN TODAY!**

**TODAY** is the last day to sign up for the Secret Pal program. On Dec 24 and 31, we will draw Secret Pal names. You are to pray for this person and can send cards or leave cards or small gifts at church during the year. Names are revealed next December. See Glenda today.

### **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC MISSION PRAYER**

The congregations and church plants in Dominican Republic celebrated the reformation with special services and with adult confirmations in the congregations of Pueblo Nuevo, Licey, and Palmar Arriba. The seminarians at Concordia el Reformador serve in partnership with a congregation in establishing a church plant and evangelizing.

### **MATTHEW CLAYTON INVOLVMENT IN SERVICES**

Matthew Clayton is now in his third year of Pre-Seminary studies at Concordia University in Chicago. In this capacity, he is regularly assisting with leading worship and distributing the Lord's Supper as part of the chapel services on campus at CUC. He is also taking theology classes and studying Greek and Hebrew. In order to give Matthew additional experiences in preparation for serving as a pastor, the Elders at Zion have approved having Matthew Clayton assist at Zion when he is on break. This may include teaching Adult Bible Class and assisting with services throughout the Christmas season. His involvement in the services will include reading the Scripture readings and helping distribute Communion, similar to what he has been doing during services at Concordia University, Chicago.

### **ZION'S 140<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY COOKBOOKS – GREAT GIFT IDEA.... SALE PRICE \$10!**

Zion has added many new members in the past thirteen years. Have you looked through our cookbook? It contains more than 475 recipes, as well as some history about Zion and some fun entries as well. They sell for only \$10. Don't forget our wonderful cookbooks as you look over your Christmas list. They make great gifts!

### **CHRISTIAN-THEMED CALENDARS AND CHRISTMAS CARDS**

The Ladies Aid has beautiful Christian-themed 2024 calendars for sale. We have a limited number, so they may go fast! They are \$6 each. We also have a wide variety of Christmas Cards for sale at very reasonable prices. See the table in the hall outside the office to shop. See Candy or Glenda to pay.

### **VILLAGE LUTHERAN CHURCH WOMEN'S RETREAT**

Join us Saturday, January 13, 2024, for a day of fellowship and learning led by noted author Katie Schuermann. We'll celebrate our true "pew sisterhood" and discuss what it means to be a woman in the church. Katie's new book "The Saints of Whistle Grove" will be available to purchase and there will be time for the author to sign books. The Village Women's Retreat is open to all women (suggested age of 21+). Registration fee \$15 per person. A light breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack are provided. Simply register online at [villagelutheranchurch.org](http://villagelutheranchurch.org). Once we've received your online registration, you'll receive a confirmation email with payment information. Registration is confirmed and complete when payment is received. Contact Shanna Stewart at 636.578.8881 for more information. Registration closes December 31. Space is limited, so register today!

### **SID JR. HIGH RETREAT AT CAMP WARTBURG**

The SID Jr. High Retreat is scheduled for January 26<sup>th</sup> -27<sup>th</sup>. This retreat is specially crafted for youth in sixth through eighth grade, promising an unforgettable experience filled with exciting activities. Your youth can look forward to engaging in field games, indoor rock climbing, teamwork initiatives, a campfire, and much more! This year, our Bible study theme is 'Where is He?' We'll be exploring the concept that Jesus is everywhere, even

within us. It's an opportunity for personal growth, reflection, and connection with others. We'd love for your youth to join us for this enriching and fun-filled retreat. The cost is \$99, and you can secure your spot by registering today at <https://campwartburg.com/>.

### **LISTEN TO WORLDWIDE KFUE AM850**

KFUE Radio, the broadcast voice of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, shares Christ for you anytime, anywhere on KFUE.org via worship services, Bible and theology studies, practical talk programs, and sacred music. Find programs on demand at kfue.org and wherever you get your podcasts! Find us on social: @KFUEradio on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. CHRIST FOR YOU this week on KFUE AM850 & kfue.org: Look ahead to the Fourth Sunday in Advent on The Coffee Hour (12/20 at 9:00 a.m.), dive into Advent hymnody on Thy Strong Word (weekdays at 11:00 a.m.), and study 1 Corinthians 15-16 on Sharper Iron's "Nothing but Christ Crucified" (weekdays at 8:00 a.m.). The 12 Days of Christmas begins December 24 with music and messages for the Christmas Season! Find your favorite programs on demand at kfue.org or the KFUE Radio app.

### **LOOKING FORWARD TO SUNDAY MORNING...**

Issues, Etc. is a radio talk show and podcast produced by Lutheran Public Radio in Collinsville, IL and hosted by LCMS Pastor Todd Wilken. You can listen to weekly studies of the Biblical texts, prayers and hymns of the day. Pastor Sean Daenzer of LCMS Worship leads us through the three-year lectionary. Pastor Will Weedon of "The Word of the Lord Endures Forever" leads us through the one-year lectionary. You can tune in live weekdays from 3-5 p.m. on KFUE, 850 AM in St. Louis. You can also listen at your convenience at [issuesetc.org](http://issuesetc.org), the LPR mobile app and your favorite podcast provider.



FOOD BANK  
REVERSE ADVENT  
CALENDAR

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- Dec 1: Peanut butter
- Dec 2: Canned fruit
- Dec 3: Instant potatoes
- Dec 4: Oatmeal packets
- Dec 5: Stovetop stuffing
- Dec 6: Toothbrushes
- Dec 7: Toothpaste
- Dec 8: Feminine hygiene
- Dec 9: Box of pasta
- Dec 10: Canned veggies
- Dec 11: Canned tuna or chicken
- Dec 12: Box of rice
- Dec 13: Spaghetti sauce
- Dec 14: Hearty canned soup
- Dec 15: Peanut butter crackers
- Dec 16: Cake mix/boxed dessert
- Dec 17: Canned veggies
- Dec 18: Macaroni & cheese
- Dec 19: Deodorant
- Dec 20: Pancake mix
- Dec 21: Cereal
- Dec 22: Canned fruit
- Dec 23: Box of Pasta
- Dec 24: Cookies/something fun!

### **THE FLOWERS ON THE LORD'S ALTAR**

The flowers on the Lord's altar are given to the glory of God by Sem. Rob and Annie Laird, in celebration of their 22<sup>nd</sup> wedding anniversary.

### **THOSE WHO SERVE TODAY**

Proclaimer: Rev. Kirk Clayton  
Organist: Nancy Peterson  
Sound Tech: Phoebe Corey  
Elder of the Month: Jeff Fick

### **THOSE WHO SERVE WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20**

Proclaimer: Rev. Kirk Clayton  
Lector: Matthew Clayton  
Organist: Nancy Peterson  
Sound Tech: Abigail Clayton  
Elder of the Month: Jeff Fick

### **THOSE WHO SERVE NEXT WEEK, DECEMBER 24**

Proclaimer: Rev. Kirk Clayton  
Lector: Matthew Clayton  
Organist: Nancy Peterson  
Sound Tech: Abigail Clayton  
Acolytes: Rosemary Peterson & Waylon Neumann  
Altar Guild: Gail Frey  
Elder of the Month: Jeff Fick

### **THOSE WHO SERVE CHRISTMAS EVE, DECEMBER 24**

Proclaimer: Rev. Kirk Clayton  
Lector: Matthew Clayton  
Organist: Nancy Peterson  
Sound Tech: Nathaniel Clayton  
Elder of the Month: Jeff Fick

### **THOSE WHO SERVE CHRISTMAS DAY, DECEMBER 25**

Proclaimer: Rev. Kirk Clayton  
Lector: Matthew Clayton  
Organist: Nancy Peterson  
Sound Tech: Nathaniel Clayton  
Acolytes: Isaiah Clayton, William Huth, & Ryan Hinton (crucifer)  
Altar Guild: Lita Timmerman  
Elder of the Month: Jeff Fick

**THINGS WE ARE DOING AT ZION**

Sun.	<b><i>Children's Christmas Program</i></b>	
	No Confirmation Class	
	Children's Christmas Program Practice	8:30 AM
	Bible Class	8:45 AM
	Worship & Children's Christmas Program	10:00 AM
Tues.	Ladies Aid Christmas Potluck	6:00 PM
Wed.	Choir Rehearsal	6:00 PM
	Third Advent Midweek Service	7:00 PM
	Hand Chime Rehearsal	8:00 PM
Thurs.	Trustees Meeting	7:00 PM
Fri.	Senior Meal Delivery	10:30 AM
Sun.	No Confirmation Class	
	Bible Class	8:45 AM
	Sunday School & Youth Bible Class	8:45 AM
	Worship DS III w/communion	10:00 AM
	<b><i>Christmas Eve</i></b>	
	Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols	6:00 PM
Mon.	<b><i>Christmas Day</i></b>	
	Worship Hymn Setting Divine Service w/communion	10:00 AM

**ATTENDANCE DECEMBER 10:** Sunday: 165

**ATTENDANCE DECEMBER 13:** Wednesday: 48