



Blue Christmas

DECEMBER 15, 2024 ~ 10:30 AM

WELCOME TO ZION

PRELUDE — Jill Sousek

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

The sign of the cross ☩ may be made in remembrance of Baptism.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon. **Amen.**

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of mercy, we confess that we have sinned. We trust earthly powers and human authority alone. We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts. God of might, we confess that we have sinned. We have turned away from our neighbors. We have trusted false promises. God in our midst, we confess that we have sinned. We plead: come to us. Bring your mercy to birth in us. A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of God through ☩ Christ Jesus, whose day draws near. Amen.

These words are trustworthy and true: Christ bore our sins once, for all, on the cross, swallowing up death forever. For his sake, you are ☩ forgiven and God remembers your sin no more. Let your heart be glad again, and rejoice in your salvation. **Amen.**

HYMN #254 — *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*

GREETING

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

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Loving God, as we gather here, we bring our burdens, our grief, and our pain. We ask for Your comfort, that You would meet each one of us where we are. Remind us of Your constant presence and love, even in our darkest nights. Amen.

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

The Christ candle represents the light of Christ, which no darkness can extinguish. We light this candle to symbolize His love and presence with us, even in our sorrow.

Light the Christ candle.

HYMN #257 — O Come, O Come, Emmanuel [vs. 1-4]

W O R D

FIRST READING — *Zephaniah 3:14-20*

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away the judgments against you; he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the LORD.

SECOND READING — *Philippians 4:4-7*

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

The Holy Gospel, according to St. Luke, the third chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord!

GOSPEL — *Luke 3:7-18*

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin 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. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

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

CHILDREN’S SERMON

THE SERMON — Pastor Scott Ludford

HYMN #785 — *It Is Well with My Soul*

CANDLE LIGHTING OF REMEMBRANCE

APOSTLES’ CREED

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

THE OFFERING

OFFERING PRAYER

Creator God, you made the whole world, even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us. We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine. Strengthen us with this food that we may live in expectation for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMUNION

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER [TRADITIONAL]

COMMUNION VOLUNTARY — Jill Sousek

BLESSING

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

As you go from this place, may the God of all comfort be with you. May you feel His light in your darkness, His hope in your sorrow, and His love through every trial. Go in peace, with the promise that you are never alone. Amen.

SENDING

BENEDICTION

HYMN #281 — *Silent Night, Holy Night*

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Encourage one another in Christ.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE — Jill Sousek

*Christ
IS Coming!*



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A member congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

