

**Welcome to Zion Lutheran Church!**

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*Rooted in Faith \* Growing in Spirit \* Reaching out to Those in Need*  
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**A Service of Lessons and Carols**

**First Sunday of Christmas                      8:30 am                      December 31, 2017**

*The Twelve Days of Christmas are a reminder that the Church is countercultural. As the world is putting away the Christmas trees and nativity scenes, the Church continues to celebrate the birth of the Savior of the world. For Christians, the season of Christmas is a holy time, dedicated to welcoming the Christ child into our midst.*

**PRELUDE**

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**DIALOGUE**

We gather in the name of the Father, + the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

**We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.**

To us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

**In the Word was life, and the life was the light of all people.**

All things in heaven and on earth came into being through the Word of God. This Word incarnate is the source of life, hope, and salvation for all who believe.

**Come, let us worship him in truth.**

**OPENING PRAYER**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray. Gracious God of heaven and earth,

you have thrown a lifeline to us in our darkness—

a beam of light that shines through Jesus.

Though born in a manger, he is the firstborn of all creation.

Though crucified on a cross, he is the Lord of life.

Fill us with the wonder and joy of his presence in the world and in our hearts.

**Amen.**

|                |                                |   |
|----------------|--------------------------------|---|
| FIRST LESSON   | Isaiah 9:2-7                   | <i>God promises a king</i>                  |
| SPECIAL MUSIC  | Sue Gates ~ piano              |   |
| SECOND LESSON  | Micah 5:2-5a                   | <i>The king will come from Bethlehem</i>    |
| CAROL          | “Once in Royal David’s City”   | ELW #269                                    |
| THIRD LESSON   | Luke 1:26-35, 38               | <i>The annunciation to Mary</i>             |
| CAROL          | “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming” | ELW #272                                    |
| FOURTH LESSON  | Luke 2:1-7                     | <i>The birth of Jesus</i>                   |
| CAROL          | “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”    | ELW #276                                    |
| FIFTH LESSON   | Luke 2:8-16                    | <i>The shepherds go to see their Savior</i> |
| CAROL          | “Angels We Have Heard on High” | ELW #289                                    |
| SIXTH LESSON   | Luke 2:21-35                   | <i>Jesus receives his name</i>              |
| CAROL          | “Love Has Come”                | ELW #292                                    |
| OFFERING       |                                |   |
| OFFERTORY HYMN | “Away In A Manger”             | ELW #278                                    |

## OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. God of faithfulness, you call your church to be a fellowship of love, a sign of a renewed human community by the gift of your Spirit. We pray that you will bless, these offerings, those who gave them, and to all whose lives will be affected by them. May our tithes, offerings, and lives be a sign of your grace and peace; through Jesus Christ, who makes us one. **Amen.**

**SEVENTH LESSON**      **Matthew 2:1-11**      *The magi follow the star*

**CAROL**      **“Angels, from the Realms of Glory”**      **ELW #275**

**EIGHTH LESSON**      **John 1:1-14**      *The mystery of the incarnation*

**CAROL**      **“O Come, All Ye Faithful”**      **ELW #283**

## RESPONSIVE PRAYER

Let us gather our hearts together as one and offer our prayers to God.

*(Silence is kept for reflection and meditation.)*

Lord God, you have blessed us beyond our wildest imagination; you have given us family, home, faith community, work, play and all we need for each day.

**Help us to be truly grateful.**

It is you, loving God, who breathes life into bodies;

**It is you who calls us into existence.**

This Christmas and always draw all people to kneel at the manger

**to gather in wonder with the humble shepherds.**

Into Christ’s holy presence, draw your people;

**to greet the Messiah with joyous hearts.**

In the comfort of the promised King,

**draw all to sing praises with the angels.**

It is you, loving God, who meets us on our way.

**In a field, a stable, in our homes and hearts you meet us. Bring healing to the hurt and broken. Bring comfort to those who mourn. Bring all to life eternal.**

**Amen.**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray,

**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, Amen.**

## BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

May God our Father fill you with the light of divine love.

**Amen.**

May Jesus, our Emmanuel, bring you assurance he will come again in glory.

**Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit lead you until the dawning of the new day.

**Amen.**

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

**Thanks be to God.**

**CAROL**      **“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”**      **ELW #288**

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*First Sunday of Christmas*

*December 31, 2017*

*8:30*

**LEADING OUR WORSHIP:**

**Donna, we won't have the lessons on the screen, but may have an image to go with each reading.**

**FIRST LESSON      Isaiah 9:2-7**

The people who walked in darkness  
  have seen a great light.  
For those who lived in a land of deep shadows—  
  light! sunbursts of light!  
You repopulated the nation,  
  you expanded its joy.  
Oh, they're so glad in your presence!  
  Festival joy!  
The joy of a great celebration,  
  sharing rich gifts and warm greetings.  
The abuse of oppressors and cruelty of tyrants—  
  all their whips and cudgels and curses—  
Is gone, done away with, a deliverance  
  as surprising and sudden as Gideon's old victory over Midian.  
The boots of all those invading troops,  
  along with their shirts soaked with innocent blood,  
Will be piled in a heap and burned,  
  a fire that will burn for days!

For a child has been born—for us!  
  the gift of a son—for us!  
He'll take over  
  the running of the world.  
His names will be: Amazing Counselor,  
  Strong God,  
Eternal Father,  
  Prince of Wholeness.  
His ruling authority will grow,  
  and there'll be no limits to the wholeness he brings.  
He'll rule from the historic David throne  
  over that promised kingdom.  
He'll put that kingdom on a firm footing  
  and keep it going  
With fair dealing and right living,  
  beginning now and lasting always.  
The zeal of God-of-the-Angel-Armies  
  will do all this.

**SECOND LESSON      Micah 5:2–5a**

But you, Bethlehem, David's country,  
  the runt of the litter—  
From you will come the leader  
  who will shepherd-rule Israel.  
He'll be no upstart, no pretender.  
  His family tree is ancient and distinguished.  
Meanwhile, Israel will be in foster homes  
  until the birth pangs are over and the child is born,  
And the scattered brothers come back  
  home to the family of Israel.  
He will stand tall in his shepherd-rule by God's strength,  
  centered in the majesty of God-Revealed.  
And the people will have a good and safe home,  
  for the whole world will hold him in respect—  
  Peacemaker of the world!

**THIRD LESSON      Luke 1:26–38**

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to the Galilean village of Nazareth to a virgin engaged to be married to a man descended from David. His name was Joseph, and the virgin's name, Mary. Upon entering, Gabriel greeted her:

Good morning!  
You're beautiful with God's beauty,  
Beautiful inside and out!  
God be with you.

She was thoroughly shaken, wondering what was behind a greeting like that. But the angel assured her, "Mary, you have nothing to fear. God has a surprise for you: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call his name Jesus.

He will be great,  
be called 'Son of the Highest.'  
The Lord God will give him  
the throne of his father David;  
He will rule Jacob's house forever—  
no end, ever, to his kingdom."

Mary said to the angel, "But how? I've never slept with a man."

The angel answered,

The Holy Spirit will come upon you,  
the power of the Highest hover over you;  
Therefore, the child you bring to birth  
will be called Holy, Son of God.

"And did you know that your cousin Elizabeth conceived a son, old as she is? Everyone called her barren, and here she is six months pregnant! Nothing, you see, is impossible with God."

And Mary said,

Yes, I see it all now:  
I'm the Lord's maid, ready to serve.  
Let it be with me  
just as you say.

Then the angel left her.

#### **FOURTH LESSON                      Luke 2:1-7**

About that time Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, David's town, for the census. As a descendant of David, he had to go there. He went with Mary, his fiancée, who was pregnant.

While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the hostel.

#### **FIFTH LESSON                         Luke 2:8–16**

There were shepherders camping in the neighborhood. They had set night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in David's town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. This is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger."

At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises:

Glory to God in the heavenly heights,  
Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.

As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherders talked it over. "Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing.

#### **SIXTH LESSON                         Luke 2:21-35**

When the eighth day arrived, the day of circumcision, the child was named Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived.

Then when the days stipulated by Moses for purification were complete, they took him up to Jerusalem to offer him to God as commanded in God's Law: "Every male who opens the womb shall be a holy offering to God," and also to sacrifice the "pair of doves or two young pigeons" prescribed in God's Law.

In Jerusalem at the time, there was a man, Simeon by name, a good man, a man who lived in the prayerful expectancy of help for Israel. And the Holy Spirit was on him. The Holy Spirit had shown him that he would see the Messiah of God before he died. Led by the Spirit, he entered the Temple. As the parents of the child Jesus brought him in to carry out the rituals of the Law, Simeon took him into his arms and blessed God:

God, you can now release your servant;  
release me in peace as you promised.  
With my own eyes I've seen your salvation;  
it's now out in the open for everyone to see:  
A God-revealing light to the non-Jewish nations,  
and of glory for your people Israel.

Jesus' father and mother were speechless with surprise at these words. Simeon went on to bless them, and said to Mary his mother,

This child marks both the failure and  
the recovery of many in Israel,  
A figure misunderstood and contradicted—  
the pain of a sword-thrust through you—  
But the rejection will force honesty,  
as God reveals who they really are.

#### **SEVENTH LESSON          Matthew 2:1-11**

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory— this was during Herod's kingship—a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, "Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signaled his birth. We're on pilgrimage to worship him."

When word of their inquiry got to Herod, he was terrified—and not Herod alone, but most of Jerusalem as well. Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?"

They told him, "Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote it plainly:

It's you, Bethlehem, in Judah's land,  
no longer bringing up the rear.  
From you will come the leader  
who will shepherd-rule my people, my Israel."

Herod then arranged a secret meeting with the scholars from the East. Pretending to be as devout as they were, he got them to tell him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, "Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I'll join you at once in your worship."

Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time!

They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh.

#### **EIGHTH LESSON          John 1:1-14**

The Word was first,  
the Word present to God,  
God present to the Word.  
The Word was God,  
in readiness for God from day one.

Everything was created through him;  
nothing—not one thing!—  
came into being without him.  
What came into existence was Life,  
and the Life was Light to live by.  
The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness;  
the darkness couldn't put it out.

There once was a man, his name John, sent by God to point out the way to the Life-Light. He came to show everyone where to look, who to believe in. John was not himself the Light; he

was there to show the way to the Light.

The Life-Light was the real thing:

Every person entering Life  
he brings into Light.

He was in the world,  
the world was there through him,  
and yet the world didn't even notice.

He came to his own people,  
but they didn't want him.

But whoever did want him,  
who believed he was who he claimed  
and would do what he said,

He made to be their true selves,  
their child-of-God selves.

These are the God-begotten,  
not blood-begotten,  
not flesh-begotten.

The Word became flesh and blood,  
and moved into the neighborhood.

We saw the glory with our own eyes,  
the one-of-a-kind glory,  
like Father, like Son,

Generous inside and out,  
true from start to finish.